

THE GLORIOUS RETURN
The Coming of the Son of Man
Matthew 24:29-31

In this passage, Jesus describes what will be the most momentous event of all time...*His return to earth in divine glory*. Throughout the history of the church, believers have looked forward with *intense anticipation* to the *second coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”

~Titus 2:11-13

In *intense anticipation* of this event...believers should continually live *righteous* and *holy* lives...motivated in great part by the continual expectation of the Lord’s return at any moment.

I. THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS: (vs. 29)

But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken (vs. 29)...

The central sign of Jesus’ return will occur **immediately after the tribulation of those days**...that is, at the *end* of the **Great Tribulation (vs. 21)**...at the *end* of the *second three and a half years* of the *seven year Tribulation period*.

Those days refer to the *preceding days of tribulation* that Jesus has been describing back in **verses 4-28**...the days following the *abomination of desolation (vs. 15)*...the days of *unsurpassed catastrophic events* that will mark the end of this present world as we know it...days in which the *Holy Spirit will have been removed* from the earth and Satan will have *unrestrained freedom* in his last futile attempt to rule the earth for himself.

At this point the whole universe will rapidly begin to disintegrate... **the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.**

These events are described in greater detail in **Revelation 8** with the opening of the **4th Trumpet Judgment**. At the sound of the **fourth (4th) trumpet**...the light of the sky will be reduced by *one third*. Without a *third of the sun*...a *third of the day* will be lacking normal light and a *third of the night* will be without light from the *moon* and the *stars*. Life as we know it today will cease to exist.

Seven centuries before Christ came the *first time*, **Isaiah** predicted this *end-time devastation*.

“Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light.”

~Isaiah 13:9-10

“And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; all their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers from the vine, Or as one withers from the fig tree.”

~Isaiah 34:4

Other Old Testament prophets also prophesied about these catastrophic events.

“When I extinguish you, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud and the moon will not give its light. All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you and will set darkness on your land,’ declares the Lord GOD.”

~Ezekiel 32:7-8

“...The earth quakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and the moon grow dark and the stars lose their brightness...The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes...The sun and moon grow dark and the stars lose their brightness.”

~Joel 2:10, 31; Joel 3:15

“It will come about in that day, declares the Lord GOD, that I will make the sun go down at noon and make the earth dark in broad daylight.”

~Amos 8:9

II. THE SIGN APPEARING: (vs. 30)

Jesus now begins to *answer the disciples question* that they asked Him back in **verse 3**, when they asked Him “...*what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?*”.

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory (vs. 30)...

“Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.”

~Revelation 1:7

“I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him...”

~Daniel 7:13-14

The sign of the *setting aside of the nation of Israel* was the *departure of the glory from the temple*. The sign of the Lord’s return will involve *the return of that glory*...the **Shekinah glory** returning.

“Now the cherubim were standing on the right side of the temple ...Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple...”

~Ezekiel 10:3, 18

The **sign** isn’t just the *return of His glory*...its *Christ Himself*...it’s the **Son of Man** who will *appear in the sky*. In other words, Jesus Himself will be the *ultimate and most glorious sign* of His coming.

Just as the *catastrophic events* of the **Great Tribulation** will be utterly *unparalleled* (vs. 21)...so will be this *manifestation* of the **power and great glory** of Jesus Christ.

Just as Jesus *ascended to heaven* in the clouds...He will also *return* in just the same way.

“They also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven’.”

~Acts 1:11

At the end of that excruciating period of *darkness* and *torment*, the *light will come*...not by the *reillumination* of the **sun, moon, and stars**...but by the *brilliance* of Christ’s *own divine glory*, that which *will later light* the eternal *new heaven* and *new earth* (**Revelation 21:23; Revelation 22:5**).

- **Adam** and **Eve** had a glimpse of God’s glory as they *walked* and *talked* with Him in the **Garden of Eden**.
- The **children of Israel** had glimpses of it in the *pillar of fire* that led them through the *wilderness* during the night.
- **Isaiah** had a glimpse of it in his *heavenly vision*.
- **Peter, James, and John** had a glimpse of Christ’s glory on the **mount of transfiguration**.

But no human being has yet to see the *full unveiled glory of God* in Christ...and no one ever will see it...that is, until Jesus appears at His *second coming*. And then...all mankind will see Him at once.

III. THE SENDING OF ANGELS: (vs. 31)

And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other (vs. 31)...

“And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.”

~Mark 13:27

Trumpets are used in Scripture in several different ways...especially in the Old Testament...

- Trumpets were used to *summon people to worship*...(Numbers 10) (**I Chronicles 16**).
- Trumpets were also used to *prepare people for war*...(Numbers 10) (**Judge 3**) (**Nehemiah 4**).
- Trumpets were used to *assemble God’s people*.

- Trumpets were used to *announce the arrival of kings*.
- Trumpets were used to *proclaim great events*...such as **The Jubilee** and **Festivals**.

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

~I Corinthians 15:52

Here they are used in a very similar way...they are *calling the people together*...the elect from *every corner of the earth*.

His elect from the four winds...relates to the *four corners of the earth*.

This involves the gathering of those who will have become believers during the **Seventieth Week of Daniel**...the *seven year tribulation period*...and those who will have been scattered over the various parts of the world because of the persecution (**Matthew 24:16**).

This gathering will also involve all Old Testament saints, those whose resurrection will occur at this time, so that they may share in Messiah’s kingdom.

“Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever...But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age.”

~Daniel 12:2-3. 13

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- God doesn’t want His church to be uninformed and therefore function out of fear when these catastrophic events begin to take place during the end times. He tells us exactly what to expect as signs of those birth pains.
- God isn’t finished with His plan of redemption. He is still at work drawing people to Himself for salvation.
- God is coming again! He has already come once...He will come again.