

Lighthouse Bible Church

January 25th, 2015

Matthew 24: 27 – 31 *Scripture Reading: Luke 21: 25 - 33*

‘Jesus Coming on the Clouds of Heaven’

Stand – Read – Pray

The disciples had asked Jesus ‘what will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age’ back in Matthew 24: 3. And so Jesus has been giving them several signs that are the beginning of sorrows. He says when you see these happening more and more frequently you will know My return is near.

He told them about the signs of the false Christ’s coming in His name, He told them about the sign of wars and rumors of wars and nation rising against nation. He told them about the signs of famines, pestilences and earthquakes. He told them about the signs of persecution against true believers because lawlessness will abound and the love of many will grow cold.

He told them about the sign of the abomination of desolation written about by Daniel that will be fulfilled by the anti-Christ in the 3rd temple in Jerusalem that he will desecrate with an image of himself that can breath and talk. He told them that when they see that specific sign they are to run for their lives because there will be tribulation on the earth like never before.

He said that in order to protect His elect, chosen people, both Jews and Gentile believers, that He would shorten the length of a day, which He does in a very dramatic way. He said, again, to watch for those false Christ’s and false prophets that will prey on the vulnerable, scared people by telling them Jesus has already come and that they have Him in the desert or an inner room. Jesus says don’t believe it, because when I do come back you and everyone else will know it and that takes us to Verse 27.

Verse 27: for as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

How are people going to know that Jesus has come back the second time to earth when deceivers are telling them that He already came back and He is over here or over there?

Well, Jesus says His own coming will be sudden, visible and with power and great glory. Remember when Jesus ascended into heaven in **Acts 1: 9 – 11** and the angels said to the disciples that were watching this happen **why do you stand gazing up into heaven, this Jesus who was taken up from you will (what) come in like manner as you have seen Him go to heaven.**

It is visible, bodily and everyone will see Him when He comes back, no one will miss it. In **Revelation 1: 7** it says **behold, He is coming in the clouds and EVERY EYE will see Him..** and for every born again believer alive when that happens, it will be a glorious event, they will come out from hiding and rejoice in His glorious appearing. But for every unbeliever they will, as **Revelation 6: 15 – 16** says **hide in the caves and cry out for the rock and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Jesus and His wrath.** Things will be different when He comes back.

Verse 28: for wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

The picture is of a scavenging bird seeing a dead animal on the ground and gathering together to feed on it. That word **carcass** is *ptoma* and it is used of corpses or dead human bodies other places in scripture. There are several interpretations to this particular verse.

One interpretation says these birds of prey gather where the carcass is and descend upon it, just like the judgments of God descending upon the corrupt state of humanity.

Another interpretation is that just as the gathering of eagles or vultures scavenger birds shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs that Jesus has given shows that the end is near.

Another interpretation says that just like the carcass is visible from a long distance away by the birds of prey, so too the return of Jesus Christ will be visible, much like the lighting is seen far away and by everyone.

Whichever interpretation you choose, one thing is clear, when Jesus does come back, everyone will see Him and He will be coming in judgment to devour His enemies much like an eagle or vulture will devour a carcass. That is visibly illustrated in **Revelation 19: 17 – 18** right after Jesus comes back to earth. It says **then I saw an angel standing in the sun and he cried with a loud voice saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven ‘come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and those that sit on them and the flesh of all people, free and slave both small and great.** Then look at Verse 29:

Verse 29: Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Jesus has just finished giving them all of the signs of His coming and the end of the age that He describes in Matthew 24: 21 as the **great tribulation**, that last 3 ½ year period of time.

And now He is going to tell them exactly when He is coming back and exactly what will be happening on a world-wide scale just moments before He returns.

He says **immediately after the tribulation of those days...**

Those days He has just described in Matthew 24: 4 – 26 and the **great tribulation** of Verse 21 marked by the abomination of desolation in Verse 15. He says **immediately after** those days, there will be something else that will happen just before I return.

The sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

In the parallel account of **Luke 21: 25 – 27** it says **there will be signs in the sun, in the moon and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud.**

Just as Jesus prepares to come back, the whole universe is going to fall apart and go dark. The end of Verse 29 says the **powers of the heavens will be shaken**. Not heaven but the heavens, will be shaken, all that area from where the birds fly, to the sun, moon and stars, to the entire universe will be coming apart.

You say, well how is it all held together and how is it going to fall apart. Well, in **Colossians 1: 17** it says **in Him all things consist** or literally **hold together** and it is done as **Hebrews 1: 3** says **He upholds all things by the word of His power**. It is going to fall apart when Jesus withdraws just a small portion of His power.

When that happens, **the sun will be darkened** and when the happens **the moon will not give its light** and at the same time **stars will fall from heaven** to the earth. Without sunlight, the temperatures will plummet, the tides will be changed, not to mention all the destruction caused by the stars hitting the earth.

And the interesting thing about this; this event was predicted thousands of years ago in the Old Testament. *Read **Isaiah 13: 6 – 13***. In **Isaiah 34: 4** it says **all the host of heaven shall be dissolved and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll. All their host shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine ...**

In **Joel 2: 10 – 11**: it says **the earth quakes before them and the heavens tremble and the sun and moon grow dark and the stars diminish their brightness ... for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, who can endure it?**

Jesus has given them several signs showing that the end is near and His return is at hand, but now there is going to be one final sign that reveals Jesus coming back to earth.

Verse 30: then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven...

Jesus gave them several signs in Verses 4 – 14, He gave them the sign that will begin the 2nd half of the tribulation in Verse 15 and now He tells them to watch for the final **sign of the Son of Man** and that the sign will **appear in heaven.**

Well, remember now that it will probably be near or total darkness across the globe because, as Verse 29 said, ‘the sun is darkened and the moon does not give its light. So whatever this sign is, it somehow, in order for every eye to see His coming, must involve light.

So what is the **sign**? There is nothing mentioned here or anywhere else when it comes to the return of Jesus Christ and some type of sign preceding it. So when you look at the word **sign** in scripture it is often times used in the **objective genitive case** which means something to which the sign points.

Example.

The word for sign here is in the **subjective genitive case** which means the sign points to itself, not something else. In other words the sign isn’t something pointing to Jesus, the sign IS Jesus.

That is why in the parallel passage in **Mark 13: 26** it doesn’t mention any type of sign but just the **Son of Man coming in the clouds**, because He is the sign.

It is like in **Matthew 12: 39** where the people were asking for a **sign** and Jesus says **no sign will be given except the sign of the prophet Jonah..** it is not a sign pointing to anything but being the thing itself. In **Romans 4: 11** it says **he received the sign of circumcision..** there was nothing pointing to circumcision, it was the circumcision that was the sign showing his faith.

As a matter of fact, at the end of Verse 30 it says that Jesus will **come in power and GREAT GLORY**. His glory will illuminate the entire sky just like a lightning bolt lights up the sky, but this will be far greater and more powerful and no one will miss it.

Remember in **Matthew 17: 1 – 2** where Jesus took Peter, James and John on a **high mountain and He was transfigured before them**, it says **His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as the light**. Can you imagine multiplying that by a million times at His return.

As a matter of fact, in **Revelation 21: 23** and **22: 5** it says that the **city of heaven needed no sun or moon because God and the Lamb are its light**. So that is why Jesus says that every eye will see Him, because He will be coming back in power and great glory in the midst of the darkness. In **Zechariah 14: 6 – 7** it says **it shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light, the lights will diminish and it shall be one day which is known to the Lord...** then Jesus will appear in the clouds of heaven.

And when that happens, Verse 30 goes on to say **and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory**. Rather than rejoicing at His coming and repenting of their wickedness many will mourn and many will, as **Revelation 6: 16**, **cry out for the rocks to fall on them and they will hide their face from His wrath**.

But there will be some who will mourn at His coming because they finally recognize Him as their Messiah and will mourn over their sin and will experience His saving grace. **Zechariah 12: 10** says when Jesus comes back, **I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplications then they will look on Me whom they pierced, yes they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son...**

It is like what Paul wrote in **Romans 11: 26 – 27** when he said **that after the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, at the return of Jesus, all Israel will be saved as it is written ‘the Deliverer will come out of Zion and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob for this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins’**.

And when Jesus does come back, Verse 30 says **He will come on the clouds of heaven** just as the disciples saw Him leave in **Acts 1: 9 – 11**, in the clouds.

Daniel prophesied that that was how Jesus would return. In **Daniel 7: 13 - 14** coming with the clouds of heaven ... that all peoples nations and languages should serve Him. **Revelation 1: 7** says behold, He is coming with clouds and every eye will see Him... And maybe all that is being said because of what **Psalm 104: 3** and **Isaiah 19: 1** says; **God makes the clouds His chariot and He rides of a swift cloud.**

And just so we don't miss it; Jesus is also coming back in **power**. When He comes back, **Zechariah 14: 4** says He will **split the mount of Olives in two**. He will **strike the nations** and kill His enemies **Revelation 19: 15, 21** says with just a spoken word so that **their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet and their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths** as **Zechariah 14: 12** says. He will completely change the animal kingdom to be at peace with each other and with mankind **Isaiah 11: 6 – 9** says. And much, much more.

So Jesus is coming back in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory and everyone will know it. You say what about us? I would like to see that too. Well, not from earth's perspective, believe me, that means you would have had to go through the whole tribulation and all that happens during that time.

But we will get to see it first hand. Let me show you what I mean. Remember we, born again believers, the church, have already been raptured. We are in heaven with Christ enjoying the marriage supper of the Lamb and maybe receiving our rewards. In **Colossians 3: 4** it says **when Christ who is our life appears**, when He comes back to earth in glory, then it says **then you also will appear with Him IN GLORY.**

Turn with me to **Revelation 19: 8, 14.** *Explain*

Then, finally, look at verse 31.

Verse 31: and He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The angels of heaven are going to be sent out by Jesus to gather His children from all across the earth. And it will be with **a great sound of a trumpet**, the trumpet that sounds the gathering of His people.

In **Matthew 13: 41** it says **the Son of Man will send out His angels and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness and will cast them into the furnace of fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth but the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom...**

Matthew 13: 49: so it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from the just and cast them into the furnace of fire.

2nd Thessalonians 1: 7 – 9 says **Jesus is revealed from heaven with His might angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction.**

Matthew 16: 27 the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels and then He will reward each according to his works.

Well, that is our Lord's own description of His return to earth at His second coming and the signs that will be leading up to it. Up to this point, all the information we have been looking at is all in a time yet future to us. And if we believe that the rapture of the church is going to happen before the tribulation starts, then we have nothing to fear when these things begin to happen because we will be in heaven.

So the question we should ask ourselves after looking at all of this is; what application does it have for me, how does this apply to me if I am not going to be here for any of this. Good question!

First of all you need to ask yourself the question; will I be in heaven when this happens and how do I know that for sure? And then secondly; if I am in heaven when this all begins, and I know all of this is going to happen, how should that affect the way I live now. We will look at that next week as we conclude the signs that the end is near.

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Introduction and Review

Verse 27:

Acts 1: 9 – 11, Revelation 1: 7, 6: 15 – 16

Verse 28:

Revelation 19: 17 – 18

Verse 29:

Luke 21: 25 – 27, Colossians 1: 17, Hebrews 1: 3
Isaiah 13: 6 – 13, Isaiah 34: 4, Joel 2: 10 – 11

Verse 30:

Mark 13: 26, Matthew 12: 39, Romans 4: 11
Matthew 17: 1 – 2, Revelation 21: 23, 22: 5
Zechariah 14: 6 – 7, Revelation 6: 16
Zechariah 12: 10, Romans 11: 26 – 27
Acts 1: 9 – 11, Daniel 7: 13 – 14, Revelation 1: 7
Psalm 104: 3, Isaiah 19: 1, Zechariah 14: 4, 12
Revelation 19: 15, 21, Isaiah 11: 6 – 9
Colossians 3: 4, Revelation 19: 8, 14

Verse 31:

Matthew 13: 41, 49, 2nd Thessalonians 1: 7 – 9
Matthew 16: 27

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Matthew 17: 1 – 2, Revelation 21: 23, 22: 5
Zechariah 14: 6 – 7, Revelation 6: 16
Zechariah 12: 10, Romans 11: 26 – 27
Acts 1: 9 – 11, Daniel 7: 13 – 14, Revelation 1: 7
Psalm 104: 3, Isaiah 19: 1, Zechariah 14: 4, 12
Revelation 19: 15, 21, Isaiah 11: 6 – 9
Colossians 3: 4, Revelation 19: 8, 14

Verse 31:

Matthew 13: 41, 49, 2nd Thessalonians 1: 7 – 9
Matthew 16: 27