

Christ's Greatest Prophetic Discourse Part 6 of 8

Turn with me to Matthew 24:29-31. This is part six of a series entitled Christ's Greatest Prophetic Discourse. If you poll most people in the United States and the world, you will find that Christians who believe in the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ are derided as the lunatic fringe of religion. So I welcome you, fellow lunatics, as we humble ourselves before the infallible record and endeavor to understand more of the truths of what Jesus said about His second coming.

The events that Jesus has been describing, that we have been studying, concerning God's wrath as well as His mercy, all of that which will occur just before His second coming, should cause all of us to shudder; to tremble at His holiness and righteous indignation; to bow in humble adoration at His sovereign power. To think that we worship a God who can orchestrate the end from the beginning. That's an amazing thought. As we study prophecy we find great comfort in His purposes knowing that His plan cannot be thwarted by man or by devil. I think of Job 42:2, "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You." In fact the vast body of prophetic literature reveals truths that help confirm His sovereign might in our hearts. Along with that it gives confidence to our faith when we examine Scripture and we see all the amazing things He prophesied and have been fulfilled literally. Therefore we have great confidence that all the rest of the things He has promised will likewise be fulfilled as He has said.

All that He has promised will be fulfilled. In Ephesians 1:11 we read, "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will." I rejoice in those wonderful truths. Once again we approach the infallible record with utmost care. We will, as always, endeavor to rightly divide the Word of truth as found in the Lord's Olivet Discourse. The dominant theme is the *parousia*, the manifestation, the coming presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's a subject that requires great care as we examine it. One of the parallel books to Matthew 24 is the book of Revelation, the *Apokalupsis Jesou Christou*, or the revealing, unveiling, the uncovering of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we look at that book we find that there is a special blessing reserved for those who study and obey the prophecies of the book of Revelation, which parallel Matthew 24. In Revelation 1:3 we read, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time (era, epoch, season of the Lord's coming) is near."

Likewise in Revelation 22:18 we read that there is a special warning against anyone who would dare edit anything in the prophetic Word. Hardly an allegory, not something we would spiritualize, but rather things that we would take very seriously as we look at the normal meaning of words that are in God's Word. The same warnings in the book of Revelation would apply to all of Scripture, and the words of Jesus. That's why we want to use the same method of literal interpretation that is used to understand Christ's first advent, we want to use that same method in understanding His second advent. Therefore we must interpret words with their natural meaning while at the same time we want to consider the extensive use of figurative and symbolic language that's found in the prophetic literature.

I pray that the prophetic Word we study will continue to stir your hearts with eager anticipation. I hope you join with me in longing to see, I just cannot wait to see, the Lord face to face. I can't wait to get rid of this sinful body that's gradually beginning to fall apart. I can't wait to see certain loved ones that have gone on before. It's for this reason that I autograph my book with Titus 2:11-14. There we read, "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

Christ's Greatest Prophetic Discourse Part 6 of 8

blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us." That is my prayer for all of us.

By way of review, as you look at Matthew 24, Jesus in verses 4-14 has been answering the disciples' questions about the nature and duration of Israel's desolation, which Jesus has pronounced upon them because of their wickedness. Jesus is speaking to the disciples, who are really the representatives of the Jewish remnant that will be alive during the tribulation. He has described six very specific signs that will precede His coming. They are called "birth pangs" in verse eight. Jesus has described the events of this time in the first seven verses of Matthew 24. There's going to be false messiahs, nations at war, natural disasters of epic proportions, and then there will be a great calamity, a great time of suffering that He mentions in verse 15, "...when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand.)"

Then He goes on to warn the people living in that time that they better run for their life. That abomination that causes desolation literally triggers what the Lord describes in Matthew 24:21 as the "great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will." As a reminder, the first four seal judgments in Revelation, that of false peace, war, famine and death, have taken place now in the first three and a half years of the tribulation, what Jesus called "the beginning of birth pangs" in Matthew 24:8. Now in the second half of the tribulation the frequency and severity of the birth pangs will increase as God pours out the full fury of His wrath. There we will see the rest of the signs that Jesus predicted, that of persecution of tribulation saints, defection of and betrayal by false believers and mass evangelism, unprecedented death and destruction, demonic deception and so on.

Now we're going to see in verses 29-31 the Lord elaborating on the sequence of events that will lead up to His glorious appearing, this unmistakable sign of His presence. The text says, "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. 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, and He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."

I would like to divide this text in three basic divisions. We will see Jesus describing the *scene* of His second coming, the *sign* and the *splendor*.

In verse 29 notice the *scene*, "But immediately after the tribulation of those days." The days are those that He has been describing in verses 4-28. This will be the time of the end of the great tribulation, the last half, the three and a half years. It's sometimes described as the day of the Lord. Let me elaborate on that for a moment. The future day of the Lord is not a twenty-four hour period of time as we look at the Scripture. But rather the day of the Lord refers to the final outpouring of apocalyptic judgment upon the earth at the end of the seven year tribulation. There's also a portion of it that is ultimately fulfilled at the end of the millennial kingdom.

Unlike the rapture of the Church when we are snatched away, which will not be preceded by any signs, the day of the Lord will have numerous precursors announcing its arrival. In fact, the day of the Lord is explicitly described in the Old Testament nineteen times and four times in the New Testament as a

Christ's Greatest Prophetic Discourse Part 6 of 8

time of unprecedented, cataclysmic judgment on the wicked. Let me review those signs for you a bit as we look in a general way at Scripture.

The first sign of the day of the Lord is found in Malachi 4:5 when we read of an Elijah-like forerunner that must appear. That text tells us, "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord..." and according to Luke 1:17 that was fulfilled in John the Baptist.

A second sign is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:2-3. There Paul is comforting the Thessalonian believers, they thought they were living during this time of terrible judgment. They thought they had missed the rapture, and he is comforting them. He says that the day of the Lord "will not come unless the apostasy comes first." There's another precursor, a worldwide system of false religion. We see a staggering fulfillment of this tragic reality in our day, and it's just going to get worse.

The third sign of the day of the Lord is found in that same text in verses 3-4, the day of the Lord will not come until "the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God." This is a reference to the Antichrist.

The fourth sign will be that of the battle of Armageddon, when the nations will assemble in the valley of decision for the unimaginable slaughter. Joel 3:2-14 describes this, as well as Zechariah 12:3 and Revelation 19:11-21.

A fifth sign of the day of the Lord is the inconceivable disruption in the heavenly bodies. We read this in Joel 2:30-31, "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord." You can read more of this in Isaiah 13:10, as well as Jesus' words in Matthew 24:29, in Luke 21:25 and Revelation 6:12-13 and 8:12.

There is a sixth sign that encompasses all of the "birth pangs" which Jesus has been describing in Matthew 24 as well as paralleled in the first five seal judgments in the book of Revelation. Then when the false messiahs have successfully duped the ignorant and rebellious masses into believing that there is still going to be some hope of peace and prosperity, the Holy Spirit reveals to us in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3, "the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

This differs with our president's and many other people's very optimistic view of the world, that things are going to get better and better. In fact, there will never be any peace until the Prince of Peace comes and brings about peace. So, Jesus says in verse 29, "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light." He's describing the unprecedented cosmic disturbances that will indicate that He is about to arrive. He speaks of this as well in Acts 2:19-20 where we have a description of the day of the Lord as a time of "wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come." The moon is not literally going to turn into blood, but this is probably a reference to the reddish copper color of the moon that occurs during an eclipse. This, combined with unprecedented atmospheric pollution and disturbances

Christ's Greatest Prophetic Discourse Part 6 of 8

would indicate that as they look into the sky, those in that day would not even be able to see the moon in its full brightness, but rather be more of a reddish copper color.

So Jesus is describing this scene; the time immediately after this season of divine wrath, the great tribulation, the day of the Lord. He goes on to say “the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.” He adds more insight to this in Luke’s account in Luke 21:25-26. There the Spirit of God through Luke reveals more of the horror of this time. There we read, “and there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves.” Let me pause for a moment. If the moon is disrupted, so too will the tides, because the moon controls the tide. This will no doubt be a result of the catastrophic disruption of the solar orbits.

Jesus goes on in Luke 21 to say, “men [will be] fainting from fear.” In the original language fainting literally means “to die from fright”. If you can imagine everything you have always known, that has always been there is now being disrupted, combined with all of the other cataclysmic judgments that Jesus has described, certainly this would not be farfetched to believe that men would actually be dying from fear. He goes on to say, “men [will be] fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”

So Jesus continues in Matthew 24:29 and says “...and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” Please hear this. Think of it this way. The One who “upholds all things by the word of His power” according to Hebrews 1:3, is filled with righteous indignation at Satan. He’s filled with rage against a world that has mocked and scoffed Him for years and years—rage against those who have rejected the gift of the gospel of grace that has been proclaimed by the two witnesses, by the angel in heaven, by the 144,000 during the time of the tribulation. The One who upholds all things by the Word of His power, the Creator and Sustainer of all things is about to become the Consummator of all things. He’s about to, shall we say, pull the plug on his sustaining work. He is going to let things begin to unravel.

We know that He’s not going to do it fully, because the world will not be *uncreated* and *recreated* until the end of the millennial kingdom, but it’s about to be *renovated*. Before all of that He is going to bring massive disruption upon His creation. He will supernaturally shake His created universe, that’s the concept in the original language. The very creation that was, according to Romans 8:19-22, “subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God, For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”

Can you imagine the horror of that day? The horror in the hearts of men and women, as they witness the heavens being shaken? All navigation on land and sea and in space will cease. Global positioning will become impossible. Satellites will be jarred out of their orbit and careening off into space out of control, which means worldwide communication will no longer exist. We’ve had samples of that when we’ve had a power shutdown, haven’t we? It’s amazing how quickly everything shuts down. You can add about ten digits to that and square it by a thousand and you get an idea of what will be going on. Like a mother about to give birth, the pangs of divine wrath will increase in severity and frequency until the glorious earthly kingdom is born, just as He has promised.

Christ's Greatest Prophetic Discourse Part 6 of 8

Here in verse 29 Jesus is actually quoting Isaiah's prophecy that was given some 700 years earlier concerning the immediate fall of Babylon, which, as is typical in much of the prophetic literature, foreshadowed a devastation that far exceeded the severity and scope of that event in 539 B.C. Something that was projected onto a future judgment. So in Isaiah 13:6-13, this passage from which the Lord is quoting, here's what we read.

“Wail, for the day of the Lord is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all hands will fall limp, and every man's heart will melt. And they will be terrified, pains and anguish will take hold of them; they will writhe like a woman in labor, they will look at one another in astonishment, their faces aflame. 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. Thus I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud, and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless. I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold and mankind than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I shall make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of the Lord of hosts in the day of His burning anger.”

Likewise, the prophet Haggai in chapter 2:6-7 tells us, “For thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. And I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations; and I will fill this house with glory.’” We can also read in Joel a description of a locust invasion that he used to picture the catastrophic devastation and cosmic disorder that will occur in the coming day of the Lord. Here's what he says in Joel 2:1-2, 10, 30-32, “Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord is coming, for it is at hand: a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness...The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness. The Lord gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; Who can endure it?...And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the remnant whom the Lord calls.”

Even 100 years after Joel's prophecy, Isaiah also reveals this same scene as he describes the worldwide catastrophes associated with this time of judgment, which is previewed by his prophecies concerning the comparatively mild and geographically localized judgments upon Babylon by the Medo-Persians. Here's what he said in Isaiah 34:1-5, “Draw near, O nations, to hear; and listen, O peoples! Let the earth and all it contains hear, and the world and all that springs from it. For the Lord's indignation is against all the nations, and His wrath against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to slaughter. So their slain will be thrown out, and their corpses will give off their stench, and the mountains will be drenched with their blood. 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. For My sword is satiated in heaven, behold it shall descend for judgment upon Edom, and upon the people whom I have devoted to destruction.”

Edom is a reference to the region where the battle of Armageddon will be fought. Edom being the southernmost boundary of that battle, stretching 200 miles north all the way to Lebanon, according to Revelation 14:20. I must stop for a moment. I have to keep you balanced here as we read these incredible predictions of what is going to happen. This is a foretaste of the eternal hell that awaits many of our friends and family members. This is a foretaste of what those who stand in rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ are going to experience. Those who, according to Romans 2:5 are full of "stubbornness and an unrepentant heart...you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed." I trust that your heart is in agreement with the apostle Paul's in 2 Corinthians 5:11 where he stated, "knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men." We need to be persuading our children, our wives, husbands and friends. Nothing else has any meaning in comparison to these incredible realities that will fall upon the wicked someday. Yet for the most part people today are far more concerned about men chasing a football than they are about the coming day of judgment and divine wrath. What a tragic testimony to the depravity of man.

That's the *scene*. Let's look at the *sign* in verse 30. Jesus says, "and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky." This is very important. The grammar in the original language helps us understand something here. When it says "the sign of" this does not refer to something *pointing to* the Son of Man, but rather the sign will *be* the Son of Man. For Greek students, this is not an *objective* genitive, but a *subjective* genitive. The sign is the Son of Man. Against the backdrop of all the darkness and chaos, the ineffable Light of the World will finally appear. The dazzling brilliance of His Shekinah will blaze forth in resplendent glory and majesty. Then, as we read in Revelation 1:7, "every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him."

No Bible student should be unfamiliar with the general idea of what Jesus is describing here. The light of His presence was a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night that led the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt. It was the same light that radiated on Mount Sinai in the giving of the Law. It was the Shekinah glory that hovered between the cherubim over the Mercy Seat that divided the Law in the Ark of the Covenant from the presence of God. It was that which blazed forth in the holy of holies in the tabernacle and later on in the temple. The glorious light of His presence surrounded the birth of Christ. In Luke 2 the angel announced the Lord's birth to the shepherds, and there we read that the "glory of the Lord shone" around them and how terrified they were. In Matthew 2 we read of the blazing light of God's presence that led the Persian kingmakers from the East to the sight of the Savior and King. Later, Jesus said in John 12:46, "I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness." We read about it in His transfiguration when He peeled back His flesh and allowed the effulgence of the glory of God to emanate from His very person. This is the same light that Paul encountered on the road to Damascus, and on and on it goes. This same glorious light is going to blaze forth again someday.

Let me digress for a moment to help you understand a little more of what Jesus is describing. As we look at Scripture we read that the triune God describes the glory of His presence as being this resplendent, brilliant, ineffable, unapproachable, dazzling light. I don't know how else to stack up the adjectives to get you to see this. In fact, in Daniel 2:22 we read that He emanates light without shadow, saying, "Light dwells with Him." In Psalm 104:2 it says "He covers Himself with light as with a garment". Paul describes Christ Jesus to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:16 as "dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power." And obviously someday every man is going to see Him. In 1 John 1:5 we read "...that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

It's fascinating to me to read what scientists have to say about light. They have no explanation for the original source of light. They don't know where it came from. Of course the lunatic fringe knows where it came from, because in Genesis 1:3, on day one of creation after God created the material universe, we read that God created light by divine fiat, He spoke it into existence. There He said "'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good." The uncreated God of the universe who dwells in unapproachable light spoke the first created light into existence.

Light is very easy to take for granted. Yet it's an amazing thing because it emanates from the very God who created it. Can you imagine a world without light. Nothing could exist. Light is the single most important source of energy and heat on the earth. Light is the very essence of God. It gives life to all things. It's interesting to read physicists try to explain what they know about light. And they know some fascinating things, but they also admit that there are a lot of things they don't understand. They struggle to understand light.

In my feeble way—I'm a theologian not a physicist—I want to describe to you a few things that they say about light and I want you to begin to see how this ties in to the second coming of the Lord Jesus. They tell us that light is a form of energy made up of both particles and waves. Light acts like particles. There are things called light photons that are like miniscule little bullets that stream from its source and move at a measurable velocity, and they call this the speed of light! I checked on this, the speed of light is 299,792,458 meters per second. Now that's fast! When certain objects obstruct light particles, it produces a shadow. But they also say that light is very different than a particle, it's characterized by this wave that does not even exist in finite space. Am I beginning to lose you? Me too. They say that light has no beginning and it has no end. Well obviously, it emanates from God, who has no beginning and no end; the eternally existent God—what a beautiful illustration of the God of glory, the Father of Light who dwells in unapproachable light.

They go on to tell us light waves are like ripples in space instead of bullets. This explains how a rainbow works. They say this wave-particle duality is one of the most mystifying principles of physics. That is that light waves behave like particles as well as the particle-like photons can behave like waves. They don't fully understand how all this works. These waves transfer energy from one point to another without the transfer of matter. This is very different than the particle motion of the photons, they tell us. Because light has both electric and magnetic fields, it is also referred to as electromagnetic radiation. Light waves come in continuing varieties of sizes, frequencies and energies. They refer to this continuum as the electromagnetic spectrum.

Bear with me. They tell us that the human eye cannot even see light, and that light is completely invisible. All we see is light interacting with tiny particles of matter in the air that reflect it. The colors that we see in light literally depend upon varying wavelengths in the spectrum of light and they say that visible light occupies only 1/1000 of a percent of the spectrum of light. It is only in this minute portion of this vast light spectrum that we're able to see colors. Think of this energy spectrum of light. They tell us in the continuum it goes from radio to microwave to infrared and then you have in the middle this tiny visible light where we can see, and on the other end of the spectrum you have ultraviolet light, x-ray and Gamma Ray. It's staggering to think of this. All of the beautiful colors we can see make up only 1/1000 of one percent of the spectrum of light. And yet look at all the glory that we can see in that minute portion of the spectrum. Inconceivable! Obviously you know where I'm

going with this. What's it going to be like when you see the full spectrum? Your brain begins to smoke at the thought.

Now, if you think of this continuum of light, if we were to say that this light continuum is one mile, 1/1000 of a percent would be smaller than the width of a human hair in one mile. Yet God has allowed us to see all that we see in this miniscule range of light, all of the dazzling colors. Here's my point with this lesson in physics: *God has only revealed a miniscule portion of Himself through His creation and through His Word.* But dear friends, *the whole world will see His full spectrum of glory when He returns again as the Son of Man appearing in the sky.* As the prophet said in Numbers 24:17 "...a star would come forth from Jacob." A *kochav*, a blazing forth, will come forth from Jacob.

Back to Matthew 24:30, notice what the Lord goes on to say, "and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn." I don't believe this is a mourning of repentance, but one of despair over impending judgment. Admittedly, many will mourn over their sin in heartfelt repentance, we see this in Zechariah 12:10-11 where there is a graphic portrayal of the hearts of many repentant Jews of that day. But here, it says "all the tribes (families) of the earth" are *kopsontai*, in Greek it's the idea of mourning in despair at the horrific prospect of divine judgment. If I had shaken my fist at God and the Lord Jesus Christ all my life as the text indicates these people have, and suddenly I see Him in all of His glory, I'd be mourning too. This is consistent with Revelation 1:7 where the Holy Spirit promised, "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."

As a footnote, it's unimaginable, but according to Revelation 16:9, despite the inconceivable agonies of divine wrath that are poured out upon the earth during this time, "they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent, so as to give Him glory." That is amazing. The same thing is repeated in a different way in Revelation 16:11 and 21. Beloved, we've seen the *scene* and the *sign*, now let's look at the *splendor*.

In verse 30 He says "and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory." I don't fully understand what this means. I've read virtually all that has been written on this in terms of the different positions and nobody really understands. It's probably a reference to a supernatural phenomenon that will allow the glorious light of His presence to be seen around the globe all at one time. I've not read anybody that has really thought through the implications of the light spectrum and I believe that perhaps some of this will be part of the Lord's appearing. I don't think it will be nice fluffy clouds all around the world that everybody can see. It would seem to be far more glorious than that.

It's interesting in Daniel 7:13-14 God reveals Himself to Daniel as "with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man...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." In Revelation 1:7 the Holy Spirit promised that "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him." Perhaps some kind of a glory cloud, I don't know. But it will be glorious.

What an amazing scene. Suddenly the ineffable brilliance of divine glory will illumine the whole world that is being shaken and is filled with chaos and wickedness and darkness. You want to know what's even more amazing? When He appears, *we are going to appear with Him.* A lot of people are confused

Christ's Greatest Prophetic Discourse Part 6 of 8

by this. They think that we're waiting for the second coming. I'm not waiting for the second coming; I'm waiting for the rapture of the Church. I'm waiting to be snatched away. In the rapture of the Church we read that He comes for His saints, we meet Him in the air. In the second coming we come with Him. In Colossians 3:4 it says, "When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

Let me give you a bird's eye view. The Church has been raptured, the bride of Christ has been attending what Revelation 19:7 describes as "the marriage supper of the Lamb," along with the Old Testament saints who in verse 9 are "those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." The bride doesn't need to be invited, the Old Testament saints I believe will be. Apparently the Old Testament believers, those who placed their faith in God's merciful grace before the incarnation, along with the bride—the Church that has been raptured, who need no invitation to the wedding feast—apparently we will all accompany our Savior and King when He descends upon the earth and goes into battle.

In Revelation 19:14 we read, "And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean (a reference to our righteousness in Jesus Christ), were following Him on white horses." The idea perhaps not literally on white horses, but horses always seem to indicate a force, a power, but somehow we will be coming with Him. As you read these texts you read that we are unarmed in glorified bodies, but the Lord Jesus is armed. He is armed with the broadsword of truth and holiness, the *ramphia* as it's described, that's coming from His mouth according to Revelation 19:15, "that He may smite the nations; and rule them with a rod of iron."

I will never forget the first time I ascended Mount Carmel in Israel. You will recall that Mount Carmel is the place where Elijah did battle with the prophets of Baal and the Lord sent down fire. The first time I ascended that Mount I was able to get on top and gaze across much of the vast valley of Meggido, that valley where the battle of Armageddon will be fought. I remember when I stood there I found myself overwhelmed with the prophetic truths that surround this particular scene someday. To know that someday, after we have been snatched away for seven years, having been with the Lord, we suddenly come with Him as we are revealed with Him in glory, Colossians says. We are going to descend upon the wicked world. Someday, up there, I'll be coming down with my Savior and my King.

My eyes filled with tears and those I was there with started discussing these passages and began to sing together. To think that someday we will follow our invincible warrior King as He enters the fray—a heavenly army of overcomers, the true Church, those of us saved by grace, the lunatic fringe.

As I was thinking about this that great phrase in that hymn,

Lead on O King Eternal,
We follow, not with fears;
For gladness breaks like morning
Where'er Thy face appears;
Thy cross is lifted o'er us;
We journey in its light:
The crown awaits the conquest;
Lead on, O God of might.

Indeed, He will lead on, He will come as He says at the end of verse 30, "...with power and great glory." Dear friends, He'll come again someday, not in humility as He did the first time, but in glory. He will come in power to defeat those who oppose Him, both man and demon. All of the mockers and scoffers will be silenced forever. He will come in unveiled glory that no human eye has ever been able to see. A time of judgment, and a time of reconciliation, and even a time of renovation when He renovates the earth and returns it back to Edenic splendor for the long-awaited promise of the millennial kingdom. This will be the time when the fullness of the Gentiles described in Romans 11:25-26 has now been completed. We read there "and thus all Israel will be saved (not a reference to the Church, as the Church is already saved, it will be the time when Israel will be saved); just as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.'"

Then Jesus adds in verse 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." What an astounding thought. To think that there will someday be a mighty host of holy angels that will gather both the wheat and the tares in a worldwide harvest. The wheat, the believers, will be gathered to receive their rewards of eternal blessings that are prepared for them. They will also be prepared to enter into the millennial kingdom. Those who have trusted Christ during the seven year tribulation will be gathered. The Old Testament saints, according to 1 Corinthians 15:23 will also at this time receive their resurrected bodies.

But the unbelievers, the tares, will be gathered together to meet their judge. In fact, Jesus spoke of this in His parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13:39-43, "and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears. Let him hear."

What a merciful God who still tarries for yet another sinner to repent. If that is you, I pray that you will not wait until it is too late. If you're without Christ, today is the day you should trust Him as your Savior and Lord. And believers, I pray that the hope of His coming will stir your hearts to a new level of loyalty and faithfulness as we endeavor to serve the One who deserves our utmost. The One whose face we could see at any moment.

Permissions: You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that you do not alter the wording in any way and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Olive Tree Resources.

Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: By Dr. David Harrell. © Olive Tree Resources. Website: olivetreeresources.org