



“Jesus Proclaims His 2nd Coming”

Luke 21: 25-28

July 26th, 2020

This morning we behold in the pages of Scripture the most stunning event that will ever take place in human history. We are talking about the personal, visible, bodily return of Jesus Christ to this earth with power and with great glory. The description of this is recorded for us in the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 21. These are the words of Jesus Himself as He described His return for us.

As we prepare our hearts for what is here, let me tell you that what we have in this text is a forceful reminder of that fact that God is Judge; that God will in fact unleash judgement upon the unrepentant sin of this earth. God’s anger toward sin is intense. It is pure. It is holy. The time is going to come when it is released.

There have been some points in human history when God judged sin on this earth indirectly. We recall throughout the pages of Biblical history how He used human beings and human armies as instruments of His judgment upon Israel when they went into unrepentant sin. We read how God used the Assyrians, and how He used the Babylonians. Here in Luke Chapter 21, we have read how He used the Romans toward the end of the First Century. So there have been some points in time when God has brought judgment indirectly.

However, there are other times where we have seen that God has brought His judgment in a direct way. Men and women, at the end of this age, this world will see the most astonishing intervention of God into human history of them all.

It will far exceed God’s judgment upon Egypt, when His strong right arm released ten plagues upon that nation as recorded in the Exodus. It will be far more intense than the fire and sulfur that was rained down upon Sodom and Gomorrah. It will even exceed the fury that was released in the flood during the days of Noah.

This will be that one moment to culminate history when God Himself appears for all the human race to see Him visibly. It will be that moment when God tears the veil that separates heaven from earth, and He unleashes the holiness of heaven upon this earth that we live upon. It will be that moment when Christ Jesus, God the Son, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, returns visibly, majestically, and powerfully in the immensity of His being, filling the very skies that are above us with His presence for all the world to see.

This is the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, the right word to describe what is before us in this portion of Scripture today is awesome. It is awesome! I pray that the Holy Spirit will produce that sense of awe within us as we read what is recorded for us here.

Jesus Himself takes us to that moment. Luke records it for us in a concise, yet power-packed way. Let's read as Jesus transported us to that time when the times of the Gentiles come to their close, and Jesus the Christ Himself appears to this earth.

Luke Chapter 21 and Verses 25 through 28:

²⁵And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

At this point in *The Olivet Discourse*, we go from prophetic to apocalyptic. Much of this chapter is prophetic in nature as Jesus proclaimed what God will do and has done in the midst of human history. That is the nature of prophecy. What we have here is a special and concentrated form of prophecy that is called apocalypse.

This is God breaking into human history. This is God putting an end to the world as we know it. This is a time of fearsome judgment upon some who continue in sin and rebellion against the Living God, and this will be a time of glorious salvation and redemption for those who have entered into the grace of our God through faith in the Messiah.

Let me just remind you that as we look here at this teaching from Jesus Himself that looks forward to something amazing that is yet to come, He did not reveal these things to dazzle our interests or to satisfy our curiosity about unusual or even paranormal type of events. Rather, the kinds of teachings that Jesus will give us in the paragraph that we are going to study next week, is given to us to inspire us toward godly, holy, and sanctified living by the power of the grace of God.

This kind of teaching is given to us that it might wake us up; that it might make us spiritually alert in the midst of a world that would lull us to sleep. This is to keep us caffeinated in our Christianity. This is to keep us walking with eyes that are alert in the ways of the Lord as we live as witnesses for His Everlasting Kingdom here on this earth. This is to be the focus of our lives.

The focus of our lives as the body of Christ is not to pursue home ownership. It is not to get the vehicle of our dreams. It is not to save up for a healthy retirement. Although these things are good and can be done in a way that glorifies the Lord, but make no mistake about it, the focus of our lives is the Eternal Kingdom that we are a part of that is going to break into this world in the most stunning of ways.

Ahead of that time, God has us here to be His witnesses; to be an outpost of heaven; to be a kingdom community that witnesses to the glory and the grace and the salvation and the coming judgment of Jesus Christ our Lord. This is to be the focus and the passion of our lives.

That is why Jesus revealed these things to us. I pray that the Holy Spirit will be operating in us in such a way that our eyes will be opened to eternal things, things that are even going to break into this world in an awesome way.

So we will take a close look at what is here, approaching it with this question: How will Christ come back? How is He going to return? From this portion of Scripture let's think about a few ways. Let's think about how He will return.

How will Christ come back? First,

1. He will come with fearsome signs (21:25-26)

I am not even sure that that word *fearsome* is strong enough to describe the signs that will directly precede His coming. He will come with dreadful signs—with terrifying signs that will occur in the cosmic realm and in the skies and on the earth.

These signs will be so overwhelming that the people of this earth will be dropping like flies as they happen. Did you notice that here in this text? Let's see what is written in Verses 25 and 26. Jesus said:

²⁵And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Here in this text we see these awesome realities. The power of the heavens will be shaken. Here in Southern California some of us tend to pride ourselves in our ability to cope with earthquakes when they happen.

We in the Saltzmann family, when we have visitors from back east come, they are always concerned that there is going to be an earthquake while they are here. We always tell them that it is no problem. We have been through so many earthquakes. They are a piece of cake and you will just be fine.

Many of us deem ourselves pretty calm and cool and collected when it comes to earthquakes. But this text is not describing any mere earthquake. This is not something that just occurs on the fault lines of the earth. The powers of the heavens will be shaken!

The Almighty Hand of God will lay ahold of what He has created. From God's perspective, ever so slightly will He shake the cosmos and it will cause all of these disturbances that we have read about to take place.

The sun will cease shining. Therefore, the moon will also change in its glow. It will turn blood red, as another prophet described it. There is going to be shaking on the earth. The boundaries of the seas are going to be no more.

Seal Beach, which we live close to, will be under salt water. That is the kind of thing that Jesus described here. It says that in response to all of these things, people on this earth will be fainting with fear. Passing out. Did you notice that? They will be fainting with fear and foreboding.

Back when I was in high school, my friends gave me a number of nicknames. One of those nicknames was *The Fall Guy*, because I had the tendency to faint and to pass out. This happened from about the age of fifteen all the way to nineteen. I passed out way too many times right in the middle of class.

I remember the first time that it happened. It was in biology class. They were showing a video on child birth, and I got really woozy. My head began spinning. I went out to the hallway to get a drink of water, and I woke up on the floor. It also happened in health class. They were talking about STDs and all the symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases. This got in my head and my head started spinning. I woke up on the floor in my health class. It happened in geometry class as well. My geometry teacher started describing in vivid detail a stomach surgery that he had. Too much detail for me. It got in my head, and my head began spinning. I ended up on the floor. I will never forget looking up and seeing my classmates all around me, saying, Somebody get him a doctor.

I had the tendency to overthink things back then. Things would get in my head and I had the propensity to pass out. Most humans beings don't have that. But what we described here is something different. There will be a collective experience of people all over the earth seeing these things that are taking place all around them.

It will be more than the human frame can handle. It will be overwhelming. People will be passing out with fear and foreboding about what is coming upon the earth. It is going to be so, so crazy. Jesus described it for us here.

That word *foreboding* is an interesting word. It is a word that indicates something that is yet to come. Foreboding has the element of anticipation. It is an experience of premonition. You see things that are happening around you, and you have a growing, rising sense that it is going to get worse. Something bigger is coming and it's not going to go well for you. That is what his language of foreboding is all about.

They will have this fear and foreboding when all these signs start taking place on the earth, and it will lead to the grand and glorious moment that we read in Verse 27:

²⁷And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

How will Christ come back?

2. He Will Come With Glorious Power (21:27)

We see it described for us here in this portion of Scripture. Stunning power!

There are all kinds of different forms of power in this world. We have seen the use of hydraulic power, electric power, atomic power, and we have seen nuclear power. But here we are going to have the breaking in and the appearance and the manifestation of divine power, of almighty power, as Jesus Christ comes back to this earth.

What we have described for us here in Verse 27, with the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and with great glory, this is a continuation of the coronation scene that is given to us in the oh so important prophetic Scripture of Daniel Chapter 7. It is an amazing scene.

In that text you have the throne room, with multiple thrones that are being set up. On one of them you have seated one who is called the Ancient of Days. This is a depiction of God the Father. He is there with gleaming white hair. He is there in gleaming white robes.

There is fire in His eyes. This is a picture that depicts holiness. Then there is myriads of angels all around Him. At that time in what is depicted in Daniel Chapter 7, there is also an awareness in this scene of a defiant horn on the earth that is representative of the antichrist that will rise to power. That antichrist is put to death in judgement. Then there is a picture of one like the Son of Man coming forward in coronation.

Here is how it is described. Daniel Chapter 7 and Verses 13 and 14:

**¹³I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,**

That is where Jesus got that title. It is the title that He used of Himself most often, and it is taken straight from Daniel Chapter 7.

**there came one like a son of man,
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.
¹⁴And to him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.**

We have this coronation scene in heaven and there in what we read in Luke Chapter 21, it now becomes visible on the earth. There was the Son of Man in those clouds of glory in that heavenly scene, now we have the Son of Man in those same clouds of glory, returning to this earth with power.

He came the first time into this world in humility as a Lamb to come and pay the price for our sins in His mercy. Hallelujah! When we read all of these depictions of judgment such as the one that is before us this morning, our hearts ought to go straight to the cross of Jesus Christ where He went, and our sin was imputed to Him.

He paid the price to satisfy the holiness and the righteousness of God and set sinners like us free with forgiveness, if we will turn to Him in faith. He came the first time into this world as the Lamb slain for the sins of this world. But make no mistake about it, He is coming back to this earth, and He is coming back as the Lion of Judah. And He is going to rule with an iron rod.

He will be the King who comes with His scepter of strength and He will judge the sin of this earth. This is coming upon the sinners of this world who continue in rebellion against God and not coming to faith in Christ, the one way that God has mercifully and graciously provided for the forgiveness of our sin.

It says in this text, they will see Him. Do you see that in Verse 27?

²⁷And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

They. Who are they? It is very interesting as you follow along through *The Olivet Discourse* that is here for us in Luke Chapter 21. Jesus spoke of this curious group of people all throughout this body of teaching. Jesus kept referring to these people as *they*. In Verse 12 it says, They will lay hands on you and persecute you. This chapter goes on to say they will hand you over to rulers. They will flog you in synagogues. They will do this. They will do that.

With that phrase, we are talking about the unbelieving mockers, harassers, scoffers, persecutors, and revilers. All of those opposed to Christ and His reign, they will see Him come in power and glory. Then they will fall under the judgment of the One who first came to die for our sin.

So this message must go out. Christ saves sinners. This message must go out during this age of grace that we are living in now, that people might hear this message and come to a living faith in Christ. We see this text that is before us.

Jesus will return, and how is He going to return? First, He is going to return with fearful signs. Second, He is going to return with glorious power. Third, as we continue in what is here in this text, we also read that:

3. He Will Come With Full Redemption (21:28)

He will come with full redemption for His people. Remember as we look at what is here, we have Jesus, the one who is going to return in this way, it is His voice that is recorded here. It is His voice that we hear now speaking about this glorious moment of redemption for the people of God.

Did you see it here as was we look at what is in Verse 28? Jesus said:

²⁸Now when these things begin to take place

These things being everything that we have just had described for us. When these things, being cosmic upheaval, being widespread human distress, being people fainting with fear and foreboding about what is coming upon the earth:

²⁸Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

It is going to be a time of glorious liberation for the people of God. The fullness of our redemption is going to be manifested at that time.

A big question that needs to be considered when looking at what is written for us in Verse 28 is this: Christians, the people of Christ, they will be there on the earth at the moment when He comes back. It is the Christians that are to look up, to stand up straight, and to say, King Jesus, we welcome your arrival.

Jesus was not speaking about them and them anymore. He was speaking to the people of God. His eyes were on His disciples. He was speaking of His people, so a question might rise up: how is it that the people of God, the people who believe in Christ, are still on the earth at that time? They were supposed to be caught up and raptured out seven years earlier. Pre-Seven Year Tribulation Rapture, right?

So what is this company of believing people there on the earth at the moment of His stunning and glorious return to this earth? This is understood in different ways among the body of Christ. Some believe in the Pretribulation Rapture. Their understanding of what is taught about this is that these are the so-called tribulation saints.

They believe that some at the Pretribulation Rapture seven years earlier, they may have been in a lukewarm condition. They will have one foot in the world and one foot in the church. Because they are not following Christ, they will not be caught up. They will be left behind. I have heard evangelical teach that very thing.

Others will tell you that there will be widespread evangelism that will take place, so that there will be scores of people, including some Jews, coming to faith in Christ during that tribulation period. That is how some people understand this.

There are others who will say that there isn't a Pretribulation Rapture. The getting caught up to be with the Lord in the air, that is something that takes place at the moment of His return. It is kind of like the people of God are here on this earth and, as so often happened in antiquity, a king would arrive then his loyal subjects would come out to meet him. Then they would be his entourage when he came into the city.

So what is depicted here is Christ coming back to this earth, catching His people up to be with Him in the air. Then with His people with Him in the clouds, He brings the judgment that is to come upon the sin of this world. That is how many evangelical Christians understand this.

I was raised up in Pretribulation Rapture theology, and that is still my autopilot. That is what I hold on to but I am going to be very honest with you that when I read the two prominent rapture portions of Scripture—Matthew Chapter 24 and Verses 29 through 44 and 1 Thessalonians Chapter 4 and Verses 13 through Chapter 5 with the language about the Second Coming of Christ—to me the easiest way to understand these things is that the people of God, they are going to be there at that moment of His glorious Second Coming.

It is going at that moment that they are captured up with Him in victory. To understand Pretribulation Rapture, we must understand that all the language that takes place in 1 Thessalonians Chapter 4:13 through 18, is about the trumpet call of God, the archangel and his loud command, and the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is private so the world does not see it.

I read through those texts, and it has not been syncing with my heart for years. The easiest and the plainest way to understand these things is that the church is going to be here when Christ returns. We will then be snatched up with Him, and I would encourage you to read through those portions of Scripture and ask yourself what is the plainest way to understand it all.

That being the case, I still go back to my autopilot a lot. I go Pretribulation because I have understood the arguments. I have even taught the arguments. But then as I read through Post Tribulation, I feel that text is plain to understand. It may very, very, very well turn out that way. Either way, I am excited about what is this text.

Before we look further at the scene that is depicted for us here, understand that in the church, when it comes to eschatology, pre-trib, mid-trib, post-trib, these are things in the church where we have strong God-honoring, Scripture-loving, Spirit-filled, Christians seeing these things differently.

These are things that we can discuss and even debate, but not divide over. What we agree upon is that Christ is coming back and it is going to be glorious. One way or the other, however you want to understand it, what is undeniable in the pages of the New Testament is that there will a large company of Christian people on the earth at the end of that tribulation when Christ comes back.

The people of God, they will be here. We see it depicted here in this text. What a contrast between the people of the world and the people of the Christ. It is like night and day. It is night and day! Here we see the people of the world and they are perplexed and astonished. There is fear and foreboding, a widespread experience of fainting and passing out everywhere.

That is how the people of this world are depicted, but then we have the people of God here on the earth, carried by the Spirit of God through it all. They are looking up and their eyes are to the heavens. Their spine is straight! I can't imagine that their arms are not going to be lifted as they see what is happening.

In that glorious moment of worship and of the power of God, they will be caught up in the power of our Messiah. At that moment, fullness of redemption is going to occur, according to what Jesus said right here.

Look at what it says again in Verse 28. When all these crazy cosmic things are happening:

²⁸Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

Redemption, the final liberation in the Christian experience. Straighten up. Stand tall. Look at what is coming! This is what Jesus exhorted.

We get into the language of being straightened up in posture. That language is used one other time in the Gospel of Luke. It is back in Luke Chapter 13. I wonder if you remember that story of a woman found in the Capernaum Synagogue and she was hunched over. Her back was wrenched. She had been in that condition for eighteen-years.

Her body had been afflicted a disabling spirit. She was constantly bent over. She could not stand straight. She could not straighten herself out. She was in the synagogue, and Jesus saw her and approached her. Luke Chapter 13 and Verses 12 and 13

¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your disability." ¹³And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God.

It is beautiful language that is used in that text. Jesus told the woman that she was freed, she was set free from her disability.

Brothers and sisters, this is the language of redemption. Redemption is all about setting captives free; being set free from different forms of slavery. When Christ returns to this earth, there will occur that final installment of the redemption of the people of God through faith in Jesus; through faith in the one who came as Lamb and who is coming back as Lion.

When we turn to Him and say, I am a sinner and I need your cleansing and forgiveness and your new life. I need you! When we come to Jesus, the first installment of our redemption occurs. We are set free from the penalty of sin.

In addition, according to the Scripture in Romans Chapters 6 through 8, we are set free from the power of sin. We are not dominated by it in the way that we were before. We are not enslaved to it in the way that we were before.

Yet, at the same time, we know that, while we are not enslaved to sin, its presence still lingers. There is still elements of Adam in us. Christians, let's be honest here, do we or do we not know the humbling effects of sin that remain present in us?

Not only did we need the Savior at the beginning of the Christian life, we still need our Savior and His grace. We need to be constantly going back to Him because we still have the presence of sin and it pulls us and tempts us. As long as we are living in these mortal bodies that still have the trace element of sin.

However, at the time of the return of Jesus Christ, that is when the resurrection occurs as laid out in this passage and in other places in Scripture. That is the final redemption. Christians who were on earth in their mortal bodies, they are going to be caught up to be with Him. They will be transformed and they will be given their resurrection bodies, which will be totally free from any presence of sin whatsoever.

There will be no more heaviness, or despondency, or discouragement. None of these things will be the reality anymore. We will be set free from it all, as Jesus gives us everlasting bodies, risen in Him; custom designed for His presence that will last forever and ever and ever without ever getting sick or being humiliated. There is always going to be power and strength and glory.

That is the final redemption. Jesus said to those who are on this earth and seeing these things taking place, When you see it all, look up to heaven because your redemption is at hand. Brothers and sisters, what a ride that will be. Talk about the experience of the fear of the Lord and the worship of the Lord, all the while we will be upheld by His grace!

Yes, during the tribulation, there will be Christians that are martyred. How is that any different from what is happening since the church began? Christians have been martyred all through the ages. I remember reading about John Hus, one of the early reformers. He was martyred for translating the Bible into the common tongue of the people in the region of Bohemia.

I remember reading his journals in seminary where he was saying, I don't if I can follow through with this. Poor me, John Hus. But he had the sense that it would be the power of God taking him through that, and it was the power of God that did.

There will be Christians martyred during the end times. But there will be many who make it through, whether in martyrdom or in the resurrection, it will be the grace of God that empowers it within the people of the Lord. It is all going to culminate in this redemption and this resurrection that is going to issue forth.

It is going issue forth in a kingdom that is glorious, that is joyful, that is filled with laughter and love and happy dancing that won't be out of rhythm. These are the things that we have to look forward to, because Jesus is coming and His Kingdom is forever.

Christ is coming back. How will Jesus come? He will come with fearful signs. How will Jesus come back? He will come with glorious power. How will Jesus come back? He will come with final redemption. How is all of this sitting with you?

When you think about Jesus coming back, is the propensity within you to recoil or is it to say, Maranatha, come soon, Lord! It is said that thoughts of the return of Christ can be a litmus test of a person's condition before the Lord.

If you are listening to this and you are recoiling because you have never come to faith in Jesus Christ, understand that the one who is going to bring judgment on this earth for sin, experienced it and He did it for us by His grace, that we might be forgiven and set free in Him. Come to Jesus. Put your trust in Him. Take refuge in Him and find new and everlasting life in Him. Come to Jesus today in faith.

If you are listening to this and in your walk with Christ, you have been lukewarm, you have been carnal, not taking the things of the Lord seriously, I pray that you would find in Jesus mercy and grace to be alive in the faith in the way that you ought to be.

I pray that you will be awake and alert; that your hold would be loosened by God's grace on the things of this world that would hinder your walk with Christ, and that you would just fall into the freedom of the mercy and the grace of Jesus; that you would be worshiping Him because that is where true life and joy is found.

The more that we are filled with His Spirit, the more that we are going to think about His Second Coming. And the cry of the heart will be: Come soon, Lord. Come soon. May the Lord bless you and give you discernment in His Spirit as you weigh these things up. We preach Christ crucified, risen, and coming again.

Let's close in a word of prayer.