

The Second Coming of Christ

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Bible Verse: Revelation 1:7-8
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Well, the Bible promises to believers in Christ the ultimate eternal gift, the eternal blessing of the ultimate sight, of the ultimate vision. In Job 19 verse 26 we read, "In my flesh I shall see God." In Psalm 17 verse 15, we read, "I shall behold your face in righteousness." In Matthew 5 verse 8, Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And then the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:12 said, "Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face." And in 1 John 3:2, the Apostle John says, "We shall see him as he is." And the Bible practically ends on the same theme in Revelation 22, verse 4, when it says, "They will see his face." And beloved, everything earthly is subordinate to that, everything earthly pales in comparison to that. Those of us that are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ by his grace, we will see him face to face and Scripture says that when we see him, we will be made like him because we will see him as he is, and Philippians 3 says that he will transform us into his image by the power that he has to subject all things to himself. And so to be a Christian is to be on a path toward the ultimate victory, where as we were just singing, justified, sanctified, one day we will be glorified in the presence of Jesus Christ and that is the ultimate thing that we should set our hope on. That is the ultimate thing, not political change, not financial change, not employment change, relationship changes, none of that is worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed to us and so we set our hope on these things, the blessed hope of the appearing of our Lord Jesus as it says in Titus chapter 2.

Well, our next text in Revelation as we continue verse by verse through this book, looks to the time when everyone will see God and I invite you to turn to Revelation chapter 1 verse 7, which we started at our Good Friday Communion, as I recall. Revelation chapter 1 verse 7 builds on this theme, expands on this theme to make it clear that there will be a universal appearance of all of humanity seeing the display of the glory of God for believers unto blessing, for unbelievers and everyone else unto judgment, and so the theme of today's text could not be any loftier, of any greater eternal significance, of any greater earthly compulsion to look and to see exactly what this text means and what it is saying to us about what lies ahead in the program of God. Revelation chapter 1 verse 7,

7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. 8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come."

Now, this text reveals to us five aspects of the future, Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This text is a summary statement of everything that unfolds in the rest of the book of Revelation. It doesn't go into all of the details about the millennium or rapture or anything like that, it simply states in a summary way that the Lord Jesus Christ is returning to earth and that everyone will see him when he comes in glory. And so this is, you know, it's really remarkable that we have a privilege like this that we have here today to be able to see a preview, a divinely authenticated and certified preview of what the ultimate outcome of all human history will be and what the intervention of Jesus Christ will look like when he intervenes into the world that he created, and so it's with a sense of the holiness of God, the privilege of opening his word, and with dependence upon the Holy Spirit himself that we open up this text to see these five aspects of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the first couple of points that we're going to look at, we already discussed on the last time that we looked at this on Good Friday and so I've retitled the points a little bit just to make them flow a little bit better for today, but some of this is summary and then we'll get into other things. If you did not hear that message, of course it's available online or CD should be available in the lobby. What can we say about the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, first of all, it is a prophetic event. It is a prophetic event and if you're taking notes, the title of today's message is simply "The Second Coming of Christ," and here we see that one of the aspects of it is it is a prophetic event, meaning that this is an event that from long before the time of Christ, the prophets of God, his servants, the prophets, were foretelling, they were predicting in advance certain aspects of this that come to the full fruition of manifestation in the book of Revelation. And so as we read verse 7, we see that the Apostle John is drawing upon Old Testament prophecy in this verse. We looked at this last time. Look at it there in verse 7, where it says, "Behold," and a word, as we saw, is this word "behold," is designed to grab your attention. It is as if the Spirit of God is grabbing you by both your left and right cheeks and saying, "Pay heed to what I am about to say here." This is a wake-up call; when John says "Behold," this is something that is to be, everything else is to be put aside in order to focus exclusive attention on what lies ahead.

"Behold, he is coming with the clouds and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him." Now, last time we saw that this verse draws upon Daniel 7, verses 13 and 14. It also draws upon Zechariah chapter 12. And so, those two verses in particular from the Old Testament are alluded to and quoted here in Revelation chapter 1 verse 7, but there's a fullness of Old Testament background to everything that's being said here about the Second Coming of Christ. Beloved, all of Scripture points in this direction, and it is important for you to understand that when you think about what is biblical Christianity, what is the truth that we confess, what is the faith that has been once for all delivered to the saints as it says in the book of Jude, you must understand that the bodily, visible return of Jesus Christ is an essential aspect of biblical Christianity. The world is not going to continue on as it is today. It has not always been like it is today, and it will not always be like it is today. We are living in a parenthesis of time, to put it this way in terms of calamitous events, between a worldwide flood that's described in the early chapters of the

book of Genesis and the coming return of Jesus Christ. While this has been going on for thousands of years, it does not mean that the world will just continue on in the way that it always has. God has definitively declared that it will not.

Jesus Christ will return and so we read in verse 7 this prophetic statement that Christ is coming with the clouds, that he will return to earth, and as we said, we took a moment or two last time to just consider the aspect of what the verb "to come" means, and we said that it's such a common word that it's easy for us to just kind of forget the elements that are involved in such a simple term, but to come someplace means that you are going from there to here. If a mother calls her child to come to supper, she's telling him, "You're over there. You're away from the dinner table. Come here. Go from there to where I am so that we can have supper together." You move from a place that is considered there to a place that is here. And so when John wrote these words in verse 7, when he says he is coming with the clouds, John is writing as one who is on earth and he recognizes the fact that Christ is away there in heaven where he had bodily ascended in Acts chapter 1, and what he's saying is, I just never, I never cease to be astonished at the profound things that Scripture can say in the simplest of terms and I hope that you grow in your appreciation for these things as well. When John says he's coming with the clouds, it's a summary statement that Christ, who is in the heavens at the throne of God, where we cannot see him, we cannot physically access him, and we cannot go there on our own power, he's there in heaven, he's going to leave there and he is going to move down from heaven to earth where we are, he's going to come from there to here in order to establish his kingdom and to establish himself. And it's not just that he's going to do that but he's going to come with the clouds. We saw that that's not an indication of the weather forecast, that it'll be partly cloudy or overcast when the Lord comes. No, it's a statement that he's going to come on clouds of glory and we looked through many Old Testament illustrations of that. And so at the ascension in Acts chapter 1, Christ went from here to there in heaven. He ascended from here on earth to there in heaven and at the Second Coming, he will move from there to here in order to carry out the plan of God.

Now, beloved, for all of the simplicity with which Scripture speaks of these things, understand that this will be a supernatural, infinitely radical reorienting of everything about the events and humanity on earth. This will be supernatural and this will be universal. And let me just say, and we'll see this as we go along, and I've alluded to this and explained this in my book, "When Christ Shall Come," the teaching known as partial or full preterism that wants to say that the coming of Christ was somehow fulfilled in AD 70 at the fall of Jerusalem, that teaching is so biblically incorrect that any system of theology that is built on that assumption is wrong from the beginning because there is a universal aspect to the coming of Christ and just as he went up visibly in the clouds and the eyes of the apostles saw him when he ascended, Scripture says the physical eyes, the organ of vision, will see him when he returns and that did not happen in AD 70 at the temple, at the fall of the temple of Jerusalem. And so it's a crying shame to see people flocking after that kind of teaching. It's important for you when you hear those things, when you hear teaching that wants to emphasize the return of Christ at AD 70 and all of that, to realize that you're hearing a teaching that is in error and to protect yourself and to exclude yourself from the many that are going in that direction because it happens to be

the latest flavor of eschatology in certain circles of Christianity. And all of that is laid out in great detail in my book, and so while I'm alluding to it in a summary fashion here today, the receipts are there for everyone to see. Jesus Christ is going to return to earth in fulfillment of biblical prophecy in a way that every eye will see him.

Now, I kind of got ahead of myself on my second point here, but the return of Christ will be a glorious event. It will be a glorious event. It will be with a mighty display of the power and splendor and majesty of God. Look at verse 7 with me again where it says, "Behold, he is coming with the clouds," and when Jesus Christ ascended in Acts chapter 1, he ascended with clouds, this was an indication of the supernatural nature of what was happening. Where have we ever seen a man rising through the atmosphere and through the heavens by his own power being received up into the clouds without any manner of rocket propulsion enabling him to do so? Christ ascended in Acts chapter 1. His ascension was a display and a manifestation of the glory of God. No wonder the disciples gazed upon what they had just seen, trying to take it in and absorb the magnitude of what had just happened. Well, what Scripture says is that there is a divine symmetry to the ascension and the return of Christ. After his resurrection, Christ ascended to heaven in a glorious cloud. In Scripture, clouds are associated with the manifest presence and glory of God. As God led the people of Israel through the wilderness, one of the ways that he manifested his presence and led them was by a pillar of cloud, a display of his glory, a supernatural act of self-manifestation. And when the temple was dedicated, when the tabernacle was dedicated, God manifested himself in glory and clouds surrounded it in such a way that in the most pulsating thunderstorms that we see around us, where the clouds billow and you realize that great power is being displayed before your very eyes, as you wait for the thunder claps, the flashes of lightning, the downpour of rain, and you realize that there's just this pulsating tension of power in the sky above you, beloved, understand that somehow in a way not yet fully revealed to us, when Christ returns there will be an even greater, an infinitely greater pulsating manifestation of the glory of God when he does that will be seen by all and it will be a manifestation of the power of God so that we rightly say that when Christ returns it will be a glorious event that manifests his person visibly to all who see. That didn't happen in AD 70. It's a ridiculous scheme of eschatology to say that it did.

What we see in Scripture is that supernatural clouds will somehow accent the return of Christ. It will somehow testify to the return of Christ. There will be this heavenly display of the manifest presence and glory of God that will heighten and magnify and display the glory of Christ when he returns. This is what we're looking forward to. This is what still lies ahead, beloved, and as we will see, I keep giving away the future points of my message here this morning, God himself has testified that this is what is going to occur. God, by his own authority, has put his own stamp of veracity and attestation onto the things of which we speak here today. We are on most holy ground as we talk about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It's been prophesied. You can follow the themes of this in the Old Testament and into the New in the words of Jesus as he himself spoke about his return. It's a prophesied event spoken about beforehand so that we would know in advance that it was coming. It will be a glorious event when Christ displays his glory in a

different way. I'm going to pause here and just go on a little bit of a tangent that I want to re-emphasize.

Beloved, there are just such manifold manifestations of the glory of Christ when you study Scripture. At his First Coming 2,000 years ago, Christ displayed his glory in a particular way, a particular aspect, as he came in his humiliation. He humbled himself in a way that was supernatural. He laid aside the glories of heaven and took on human flesh and walked among us. Scripture says we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten Father, from the Father full of grace and truth. The fact that the eternal Son of God would humble himself to walk among men, who would humble himself to walk in obedience to the law of God, who would humble himself, Philippians 2, even to the point of death, even death on a cross, displays something of the glory of Christ in a way that is utterly contrary to human expectations. We live in an age where even in the church people think glory is displayed by big numbers and flashing lights and loud music and, you know, repetitive singing and that somehow that manifests the glory of God, the bigger the better. Well, understand, beloved, you must understand this, that that is not the way Christ displayed glory, and it is wrong for us to associate bigger and better with a natural, necessary manifestation of the glory of God because Christ did it in exactly the opposite way. He came in humility. He came in obscurity. He suffered and bled and died on the cross and there in his suffering displayed the glory of God in his sacrifice for unworthy sinners in order to redeem his people from their sins. There was a whole manifestation of the glory of Christ in his incarnation and in his crucifixion that far transcends anything that man could concoct. His glory was displayed at the cross as he hung in what by outward appearances seemed to be utter defeat.

Well, in his Second Coming, that was the end of the tangent, in his Second Coming, his glory is going to be displayed in a different way, displayed in supernatural clouds, in supernatural power, in a remarkable display of authority and sovereignty, whereby his coming he asserts, "I am here and I am in charge, and now things go as I say they will go." And the permission that's been given to Satan and to sinners to have their way is going to be removed as Christ asserts his authority with a rod of iron, as we read in the later chapters of Revelation, and it will be an entirely different display of glory. But make no mistake, this is what Scripture, this is what the prophets of God have been saying would be happening for thousands of years. Here we see it in summary form in the book of Revelation to be expanded upon in all of its details in what follows. It will be a glorious event and as it says in Philippians chapter 2, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. To the glory of God the Father. Everything associated with the end when Christ is universally acknowledged will be glorious and it will redound to the glory of God the Father.

So, it's a prophetic event, it is a glorious event, this Second Coming that is still future to us here today in the 21st century. Well, as we move along now, that was all by way of a bit of review, thirdly, we see that it's a universal event. It is a universal event and as I was just saying, it really wasn't that much of a tangent, it was just an early preview of the third point, I guess. At his First Coming, Christ was clothed in obscurity and in humility. Think about it this way, and you know sometimes we just allude to different events in the

gospels or in the Old Testament, and all of that kind of presumes that you're a people, that you're a man, you're a woman that has a pattern of somehow or another reading the Bible, reading through the Bible, that you've become acquainted or you're becoming acquainted with the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, so that we make loose references on the assumption that this connects with you and you understand. Remember, as we speak about the obscurity and the humility of Christ, that his contemporaries, especially his opponents, completely misjudged him. They looked at Jesus—I think this is in Mark 6—and said, "Is this not the carpenter, the son of Joseph? Where did he get this power? Who does he think he is to say these things?" And they were they were enraged at him because the point being is that by outward appearance in his incarnation Christ looked like any other human being. He didn't walk around with a halo over him that distinguished him. What distinguished him was his impeccable character, his mighty teaching, his mighty works, and those things are what distinguished him, but in physical appearance, he was clothed in obscurity and in humility so that no one without the eyes of faith could look on him and see that they were looking at the eternal Son of God.

We know very little about the first 30 years of his life. We know a few facts about his birth, some of the things that happened in the first two years after that. There's a brief snapshot at the end of Luke chapter 2 that speaks about how he was 12 years old at the temple, he was growing in wisdom and stature before God and before men. But very, very little. You know, the Bible doesn't give us a traditional, what we now consider to be a traditional biography that walks through as many details as possible of the early life and the formative influences of the man about which we are reading or the woman about which we're reading. Scripture doesn't do that. It speaks of his birth, a couple of years later there's some events, there's the event when he's 12, and then there's silence until the man becomes and our Lord became 30 years old, and then was revealed in his public ministry. All of that just to emphasize this point, beloved, that in the First Coming of Christ, it was clothed in humility. His public ministry, even when that came, was essentially confined to what's known as the land of Palestine, you know, that area of the modern-day nation of Israel and some of the surrounding lands there. You know, he didn't travel. His death on the cross did not outwardly display glory in the way that men think about glory and triumph and raising trophies and military conquests. There was nothing about that in his life whatsoever. It had its own divine kind of glory, but not what men associate with glory, and so his First Coming, obscurity, death, death on a cross, rejection, opposition, hostility, so much associated with it. Only for a brief window of time at the transfiguration was the veil pulled back and supernatural clouds at that point enshrouded those who were there, but his glory was veiled in his First Coming. Very important to have that clear in your mind because his Second Coming will be another matter altogether. Another matter altogether. Whereas few during his earthly life saw him for who he was, in verse 7, no one is going to miss it at his Second Coming.

Look at it there in verse 7 with me. "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him." Do you see the universal nature of what's going to happen? Every eye will see him. And at the trial of Jesus, there was this hint at the contrast between his First and Second Comings. I invite you to turn to the gospel of Mark for a few moments, Mark

chapter 14. In Mark chapter 14, in one of the six trials that Jesus endured before his crucifixion, we read, let's start in verse 56 to just set a little more context to it. In verse 56 we read, "For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, 'We heard him say, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'" Yet even about this their testimony did not agree." Now watch this, verse 60, "And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, 'Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?'" So the incongruity of it, this human high priest with a little bit of earthly authority, a sinner on his way to perdition, standing before the eternal Son of God, the high priest thinking he's in authority over the eternal Son of God, that illustrating how Christ in his First Coming was there in humility, not displaying his intrinsic glory. Here in verse 61, we read that in response, Christ "remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?'" So Christ is on trial under accusation, under false accusation, not calling upon the legions of angels that were at his disposal. He submits to all of it, being reviled, he did not revile in return, and for all the world looking like an impostor as he stood there with no one alongside him to defend him. You would never guess if you were a natural man looking on this with natural eyes, observing it, that the eternal Son of God was in front of you. You would never have guessed that. But in response to that question from the High Priest, we read in verse 62, "Jesus said, 'I am.'" Yeah, I am the Christ. I am the Messiah. I am the anointed one. I am the Son of the blessed God. And looking to the future with a future tense he says, "and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Exactly what we see written here in Revelation chapter 1. The Second Coming of Christ is certified by Christ himself and he says to these unbelievers in front of him, "You will see this," because it will be a universal event.

Beloved, when we read about the incarnation in the gospels, and for those who were there in the first century who saw him and became his disciples, it took eyes of faith to recognize that you were looking at the Son of God. In fact, it took revelation from God the Father. Peter said, "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven." Beloved, if you can see with eyes of faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, understand that God has blessed you by his Spirit by giving you illumination and opening your eyes and circumcising your heart in order to make that happen. But at his future return in the Second Coming, no one will be able to contest it. No one will be able to contradict. As we'll see in a moment, they'll hate it, they'll fight against it, but no one's going to be able to say, "Look at him." There's no glory associated with him. What's going to happen at the Second Coming of Christ is that every eye will look on him and say, "That is glory. That is something beyond earth."

And so how is it that every eye will see him? Well, whether he's seen directly, you know, Scripture doesn't exactly say; today with our ubiquitous personal devices, our smartphones and iPads and all the different things, it's not at all hard, it's not at all difficult to envision, even if there's not some kind of supernatural display where there's a personal physical presence in it, it's not difficult to imagine if it happened right in this

hour, that people could look at their cell phones and see this display, to see live reports of this glorious coming of Christ. It's not difficult to imagine at all, is it? We see world events at our fingertips now. Well, how much more when God supernaturally comes with the intention of displaying Christ to every eye? I'm not saying that the text means it's a reference to our personal devices, I just want you to see that based on existing technology now, it's not at all difficult to imagine how easily, how much Providence has put into place the easy availability to see things that are happening somewhere else. And so, you know, whether they see him directly face to face, like you see me face to face in the room, or whether it's mediated through technology, I don't know. It doesn't matter. The point is, is that Christ will be universally acknowledged, universally seen by everyone. Every eye will see. Every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess. And beloved, what that means is this, is that Jesus Christ in his Second Coming is going to confront all of humanity without exception. It's a staggering thought that with seven, eight billion people on the earth now, they're all going to see it. It's all going to be displayed. Somehow the return of Jesus Christ will be manifested to every man, woman, and child on the face of the earth.

Now, let me address another mishandling of these supernatural events, and I don't follow the trends of Christian fiction or anything like that, and hopefully you don't either. That's a waste of time. But back in the day, you know, there were popular books. written by men like Frank Peretti and others and Tim LaHaye that fictionalized things related to the rapture and all of that, blending biblical themes with the author's imagination, and those books have been wildly popular over the decades; people have made themselves incredibly rich and their publishers incredibly rich with all of it. But, beloved, that just creates such a wrong approach, cultivates in the minds of those who read and drink that stuff in, it creates a desperately wrong view and attitude toward these things, these things of the Second Coming of Christ. It creates a sense that what's about to come will be like a dramatic movie for entertainment purposes and people entertain themselves by reading blended truth with bad biblical interpretation and fiction and the author's imagination blended into it and say, "Well, this is sure entertaining. This is stimulating. I wonder what all of this will be like. I wonder about the mark of the beast and blah, blah, blah." Beloved, beloved, this is not, Scripture makes plain that this is not something for us to handle with carnal hands and unsanctified curiosity for the purpose of so-called Christian entertainment. That's deplorable. Look, beloved, at what it says in verse 7 as it speaks about the universal event that will be the Second Coming of Christ. It says, "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, every eye will see him," and now here's what we want to see next, "even those who pierced him and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him." They will wail. They will moan. They will grieve. They will be in fear and frightened about what they are seeing. Scripture says they will call for rocks to fall upon them to hide them from the great display and manifestation of the wrath of the Lamb. Now I ask you, is that something to take as light entertainment? I think to ask the question answers it.

In Zechariah 12:10, that we looked at last time, we see that the Jews will mourn in repentance as they look on the one whom they're, for lack of a better term, this isn't a good term, that their race, that they, that collectively as a people may be better stated,

they pierced him. Christ came to the Jews, he manifested himself to the Jews, and what did they do when they had him in their hands 2,000 years ago? They crucified him at the hands of the Roman authorities and they wanted the responsibility for it. If you remember reading in the gospel accounts, they said, "Crucify him! Crucify him! Crucify him!" It's one word in the original language, "let him be crucified." Pilate said, "Shall I crucify your king?" "We have no king but Caesar! His blood be on us and on our children!" They weren't talking about splatter his physical blood on our bodies, what they're saying is, "We accept, we embrace the responsibility of shedding his blood. We want him dead." And at the Second Coming of Christ, we read in Zechariah 12:10 that when God pours out his Spirit upon them, the Jewish people, the Jewish nation is going to realize, "We have committed the most horrific atrocity imaginable. We had the Son of God, our own Messiah in our hands, and we crucified him." And they will mourn in repentance as they finally turn to Christ by the power of God. It'll be universal in that sense.

But what about the non-Jews? What about those who are not Christians? What about them at the return of Christ? Look at it there, "all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him." Well, men of every tongue, language, and tribe, as we're going to see in a moment, that didn't happen in AD 70. What a ridiculous reduction of what Scripture says. All tribes of the earth will wail on account of this and what we see is that for them, for the unrepentant at the time of the return of Christ, the return of Christ seals them in eternal doom for their judgment. Look at Revelation chapter 9, for example, as we see the unfolding of this; you know, I said that this text we're considering this morning is a summary text and then Revelation expands like an accordion to play more notes about what is to come. Revelation chapter 9 verse 20 we read, "The rest of mankind," not simply the Jews, "The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts." They did not repent. Christ is coming to judge them for their sins and they harden their hearts even more.

Look at chapter 16 of Revelation. Revelation chapter 16 verse 9, you know, and what we're getting a sense for the wailing that will take place by the tribes, by humanity at the return of Christ, the sense of wailing and mourning, recognizing that no, this is not entertainment. This is not even repentance. This is deep, profound grief and horror in the midst of a hard heart against their coming judge. Revelation 16 verse 9, "They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory. The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds." The wailing is that of intense personal pain and anguish that is taking place. This is an aspect of the universal aspect of it. For believers in Christ, the return of Christ will be our glory, we'll see him face to face, we'll be made like him. For Jews, they'll repent at his coming but Scripture makes it plain that at the return of Christ, there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth as judgment draws near to those who love their sin, who never cared for the gospel. This is not entertainment. This is the most sad,

crushing thing to contemplate. And let me just state it as a question: what is going to happen to these people and how can we make that something to entertain us like it was some other one-hour dramatic show on television? Shame on Christians for trivializing it in that way.

Christ himself, if you'll turn to Matthew 24, Christ himself explained that the earth will mourn at his return in Matthew chapter 24, and as we see the supernatural aspect of it emphasized yet again, Matthew 24 verse 27, Jesus speaking to his disciples who asked, "What will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age," in Matthew 24 verse 3, he's explaining his answer there and he says in verse 27, "For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west," Christ alluding to the supernatural power and display of glory that will accompany his return, "as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man." He will come. It's a glorious coming. Christ himself prophesies of it. It's universal. Verse 28, "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather." Then in verse 29 we read, "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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, 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. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Look at it there in verse 30, all the tribes of the earth will mourn. every tribe, every language. Yeah, without any context, that could be a reference to just the tribes of Israel without any context, but the whole of the Bible, the whole of everything that is said around the Second Coming shows that it's a universal event. And we will see in months to come, we will see how even in the Psalms, Psalms speaks about God being the God of all of the nations. We'll see later in Revelation how universal all of this is and so the fullness of Scripture helps us understand that this will be a universal book and Revelation itself is a universal book, not one that targets Jews alone.

I want to show you that as well. Turn to Revelation chapter 5. We're just going to look at a small handful of passages here to make this point and we'll look at it quickly. Revelation chapter 5 verse 9, "they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.'" It's universal. Revelation is a universal book, not one targeted to a limited section of humanity.

Look at chapter 7, verse 9, "After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" It's universal. The point being the book of Revelation is universal.

Revelation chapter 11 verse 9, "For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb."

Chapter 13 verse 7, speaking of the beast says, "it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it." It's universal.

Finally chapter 14 verse 6, "Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people."

Beloved, the whole point of what I'm saying here, and we've gone to lengths to describe this because even if you're not familiar with the concept of preterism, many others are, and this universal aspect is deadly to their teaching so that one writer could say, one commentator could say this, and I quote, "All the families of the earth will mourn over Christ with remorse because of the severity of punishment inflicted upon them in conjunction with his return." The mourning is over the doom that they are about to receive when the one that they hate asserts his authority and sovereignty over their rebellious souls. This would be a wonderful time to examine your heart to see if there is rebellion or compliance toward Christ, love for Christ, or indifference to him in your heart, because all of us, if somehow I could stand and speak to everyone in the world, I wouldn't change what I'm about to say, all of us are going to be eyewitnesses to this, and it will either be blessing to those that have repented and believed in Christ, or it will be unspeakable doom to everyone else, because it's a universal event.

Now, so we've seen it's a prophetic event, it's a glorious event, it's a universal event, fourthly, it's a welcome event. A welcome event. Look at verse 7 with me, return to chapter 1, verse 7. The Second Coming will be staggering and even though it will be a matter of doom for many, true believers in Christ embrace it with all of their hearts, as shown by what John says at the end of verse 7. He's just said, "He's coming with the clouds, every eye will see him, all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him," and what is the apostolic response which models the way that believers in the apostolic testimony should respond to this? It is completely contrary to the flabby universalistic thinking that permeates the church today that wants everybody to be nice to everybody else and to not think that there are eternal consequences to anything. No, what the Apostle John says, he looks at that as a unit, this prophetic, glorious, universal event that includes woe and doom upon unbelievers, and what does he say? Even so in the sense that taking all of that into consideration, even though there will be many who wail at the coming, John says, "Amen. So be it. Let it happen." Despite the mourning and judgment, John identifies with it, takes the side of Christ, and affirms it no matter what the consequences may be to the rest of the world.

This is the response of faith to this prophetic, glorious, universal return of Christ. This is the only possible response of faith. Think about it with me, beloved. Who is Jesus Christ? He is the eternal Son of God. He is the Creator of heaven and earth. All authority has

been given to him. He is full of righteousness and justice. Whatever he does by definition is right and good and proper and fitting and so even if it brings judgment to the world, even if it brings judgment to some that we love, the believing response is to affirm that Christ has the right to do that, to identify our will with Christ. Christ has the authority, he has the right, he has every reason to return to the world that he created and to implement justice and to restore what he created, to establish a kingdom, to rule over his realm. Who could possibly object to that? And besides all of that, besides all of that, as believers, we love him. We adore him. We magnify his name. We never forget that he laid down his life to save our souls from our own sin. And so by right of creation, we affirm it, "Yes, Lord, even so, amen. You have the right to do that." And in personal faith response, "Lord, you're everything to me. However, imperfectly, you know my heart. You know I love you with all of my heart, soul, strength, and mind. Lord, you know all things. You know I love you," Peter said. And so, in love for Christ, "Christ, if this is your will, if this is what you want, amen, I submit, I embrace. Amen. Bring it to pass. Whatever the consequences may be," John says, "I welcome this event because Jesus Christ has complete authority, complete prerogative, complete wisdom to return to the world he created and do with it whatever he wishes." He is not subject to my review. He is not subject to human approval. He is independent, sovereign, and authoritative. And part of our believing faith is to know that, believe it, affirm it, and submit gladly. And so the Apostle John, modeling for believers of all time, identifies his will with the will of God for the end of history. It's remarkable to think about. This is what God's going to do, this is God's will, and for our response of faith to be to say, "I willingly embrace that as well. That's what I want. If that's what God wants, by definition, that's what I want. I embrace it," the true believer says.

So it's a prophetic event. It's a glorious event. It's a universal event. It's a welcome event by believers. Fifth and finally this morning, it is what we could say a certified event. A certified event. Having seen the summary preview in chapter 1, verse 7, God steps in now and speaks. Could be God the Father, probably is, it might be Christ speaking, but they're one in essence, this is the fullness of the Triune affirmation here. God steps in, in verse 8, and he guarantees everything that we just read. Look at it there in verse 8, "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'" John having spoken and said, "This is the summary of what's going to happen," now God speaks and lends his affirmation and attestation by the fullness of his divine character and divine essence and says, "Yes, this is what will be." His name, as it were, it's like God signing his signature to what we just read. Back in the old days when things were handwritten, you'd sign a letter, "This is my signature." You sign your name to a check and verify the funds for payment. You sign your name to a contract and pledge yourself to what the terms of the contract is. Well, beloved, understand in even a far greater way, we understand what it means to attach our name to a document, to attach our name to something and say, "I stand behind this." That is exactly what's happening here in verse 8 when God says, "I am signing my name to what you just read."

This can't not happen. He says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega." Alpha and Omega are the first and last verses in the Greek alphabet emphasizing completeness, the completeness of the knowledge of God, his omniscience. You know, we speak in the

same terms. You know, says, "That guy knows everything about baseball from A to Z." It's just a shorthand reference to say his knowledge is complete. God, in this great prophetic book that looks to events that have not yet happened, says, "I know it all and I certify that this will come to pass." These matters are eternally settled in the plan and mind of God and the only question is, is when does it begin to unfold in time because it is so certain as though it has already happened in the plan of God.

Read on there, verse 8, it says, "the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come,'" you know, past, present, and future. You know, you see a phrase referring to the eternality of God who dwells outside of time. "I'm outside of time. I can tell you these things will happen. I know all. I'm the Alpha and Omega. This will happen. I'm the eternal God who was, who is, who is to come. These things will happen. I certify it."

And he says, "the Almighty," the last word there, Almighty speaking to his omnipotence and sovereignty. God is saying, "I am certainly going to do what the Apostle John has just said and what you have just read."

So, a prophetic event, a glorious event, a universal event, a welcome event, a divinely certified event. Let's just summarize all of this as we close. I'll just state it very simply, my friends. Jesus Christ will intervene in world history, and he'll bring it to a close, and he'll reset the course of everything according to his will. The question today is, what is your response to that and what will be your response? What is your response? If you know Christ, your only response is, "Even so, amen." If you don't know Christ, you're on a path that leads to mourning, to wailing, at doom and judgment. If you had the sense of faith, the eyes of faith, you would realize that in another brief window of time, God is offering you mercy to repent and to come to Christ so that this can be a welcome event to you as well. May God help each one of you judge these things rightly and prepare for that inevitable time when we will all see Christ.

Let's pray together.

O Lord, you are coming with the clouds. It will be glorious. It will be universal. As believers, we welcome it and say, "Even so, amen." May you do your will as you see fit and may you gather up wandering lambs, wandering sheep to prepare them for that final day. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

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