

November 1, 2019

“The Day of Jesus’ Return”
Matthew 24:29-31

FCF: Thinking we know. But needing to learn.

PROPOSITION: (anchor) Jesus is going to return.

(magnet) He wants us to know what that Day will be like.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

Sometimes we think we know a lot only to learn how much we have yet to learn. History is littered with individuals boldly but blindly setting forth only to be brought low. But we see it in our everyday lives as well. You think you know but you really don’t. After all, what was it like learning to tie a shoe, to drive a car, to go on a date, to get a job, or to do marriage and family? “How hard can it be?” you said. And then you found out there’s a lot to find out.

Which brings us to our topic this morning - the ultimate end, the day of Jesus’ return. We may think we know what that’s about. But, in truth, we have so much to learn. All of us.

SCRIPTURE READING: [Matthew 24:29-31](#)**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION****SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

“The end is near.” You read such stark messages printed on sandwich boards. It usually has a religious tone to it. But not always. It can have a secular tone as well. We’re told global warming will flood coastal cities, create vast deserts and food shortages. We’re told we will run low on oil supplies and hostile nations will seek control. We’re told rogue peoples and terrorists will gain access to WMD’s and create the ultimate suicide bomb. I’m not actually commenting on the merits of any of those scenarios. I’m simply stating that those messages are out there.

“The end is near.” Which brings us to our text. Jesus has foretold the destruction of the temple. The disciples follow up ([READ Matthew 24:3](#)). They meant this as one question but it’s really two. Jesus answers with two horizons in view. Within a generation, the temple would fall. And in the distant future would be His sure return. Our text this morning, vv.29-31, addresses the second of these horizons, the coming of the Son of Man. What Jesus said was true then and it’s true now. He is going to return. And He wants us to know what that Day will be like.

There are three vital things to be learned here about that Day. First, it will be turbulent. Second, it will be resplendent. Third, it will be triumphant. Those are vital to know of that Day.

I. A TURBULENT DAY

The Day of Jesus’ return will be turbulent - great disturbance ([READ Matthew 24:29](#)).

A) As Foreshadowed

1. Possibly literal language

This is something long foreshadowed. Now this could be language meant to be read literally.

2. Possibly figurative language

There would be precedent for that. But such language was also used by the ancient prophets as they pronounced judgment on the nations of the time. So the meaning could be more figurative.

B) As Fulfilled

1. Likely a mixture of the two

Likely, it's a mixture of the two, the literal and the figurative. What was foreshadowed will be fulfilled. Every shaking before was but a glimpse, a hint, a preview, of what is yet to come.

2. Not just a judgment day

This being not just *a* judgment day but *the* judgment day. All powers in creation will be laid low.

The Day of Jesus' return will be a turbulent day, a day of much disturbance and upheaval.

Application:

A word now to two groups of people. First, to those of great power and influence, the high and mighty of this age - don't get comfortable. Second, to those of little weight and pull, of no account in the jaded esteem of many - don't be envious. Great turbulent change is coming.

Jesus is going to return. And He wants us to know what that Day will be like.

II. A RESPLENDENT DAY

It will also be a resplendent day, meaning of glowing splendor (**READ Matthew 24:30**).

A) Revealed to All

1. Not as before

His coming will be revealed to all. It will not be as before when Jesus came in obscurity and had to be sought in order to be found. Not on that Day. He will appear for every tribe to see.

2. As said before

As was said before (**READ Matthew 24:28**). What does this mean? Just as people from far off can see vultures circling high in the sky, Jesus' return will be visible to all. With nothing hidden.

B) Revealing of All

1. Possibly repentance

It will be revealed to all. And it will bring a revealing of all. We read of mourning. That's possibly the mourning of repentance, true sorrow for sin and all past spurnings of the gospel.

2. Likely grief and anguish

Maybe. More likely it's the mourning of grief and anguish because it will be too late to repent. All is revealed, laid bare. There is nothing that can be hidden. We will be completely exposed.

The Day of Jesus' return will be both a turbulent and resplendent day.

Application:

There are two ways to hear this, two ways to respond if His words are being heard. The first is terror. You know your track record and it is a frightening thing to be left wide open not just to critique but to divine condemnation. So the first is terror. But the second is comfort. For you know God is not merely a god of justice but a god of grace. Jesus has absorbed the full blast of all we deserve. So we can rest. Either terror or comfort - there can be no third response.

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III. A TRIUMPHANT DAY

The Day of Jesus' return will be turbulent and resplendent. And yet also triumphant - a day of victory and conquest (**READ Matthew 24:31**). This triumph comes out in two ways.

A) *A Vast Escort*

1. A rapture

First, there will be a vast escort. Some of you may have heard of a "rapture" to come - that is, an event in which Christians will be removed from the earth for a period before Christ comes yet again. That's alluded to here but not as commonly taught. We will be taken, seized, caught up.

2. An entourage

Not in escape but as an entourage. We will be lifted up that we might meet Jesus as He comes down. It's very much like what you would see in the ancient world as emissaries of a city would go out to meet a dignitary and escort him on his way into the city. We will be doing just that.

B) *A Great Trumpet*

1. To gather God's people

So there is this vast escort. And a great trumpet. Again, in ancient times, such things were used to gather the people. Sometimes this would be for war or to warn of an impending battle.

2. For the accession of kings

Or it could be for the accession of kings, a coronation ceremony. This is especially true with the Old Testament imagery of the Messiah. The idea being the war is over. And it has been won.

This vast escort and great trumpet show that the day of Jesus' return will be triumphant.

Application:

How can this make a difference for us right now? What do you see in this world that needs to be made right? As part of our Inquirer Weekend, we were talking about how we are all living now on the Jericho Road. What that means is that, all around us, there is war, injustice, oppression, famine, natural disaster. There is family breakdown, disease, mental illness, physical disability. There is racism, crime, scarcity of resources, class struggle. The Christian perspective on the unfolding of history is that all this will be made right. We have this sure and certain hope.

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CONCLUSION:

How does all this land on you? Thinking beyond what you see on the Jericho Road, what do you see within your own heart? What about the fear, pride, bitterness, discontent, and lust? What about our people-pleasing, control-seizing, road-raging ways? Listen. The King is coming to fully establish His rule as far as the curse is found. Not just "out there" but deep in here.

A way to think about this is beautifully captured in C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, the first in the Chronicles of Narnia books. It's a great story with some allegorical

elements, especially the way Aslan the Lion pictures Jesus. Here's the scene. The children have arrived in Narnia. They meet Mr. and Mrs. Beaver. And they hear a prophecy ([READ quote](#)):

Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight,
At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more,
When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death,
And when he shakes his mane, we will have spring again.

How does that land on you? It's pointing to the very thing we read of here in Matthew 24.

Rightly understood, for the disciples of Jesus, news of His return should never be a source of dread but only gladness - great gladness, relief, wonder, expectancy, and deep longing.

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