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Sermon Notes

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The Second Coming of Christ, Part II

Matthew 24:26-31

What is the most beautiful sight you have ever seen? When has light streamed into your eyes with such an effect on your mind that you were taken in with the BEAUTY of the vision? Was it something in nature? Perhaps the beauty of a fully-formed rose with some water drops on the petals... perhaps it was a scene of serenity, like a flock of geese flying south for the winter over a forest radiant with autumn colors... shining reds and oranges and yellows—birch, maple, oak... and the v-formation of the geese flying with power and determination for warmer climes

Maybe the most beautiful sight that's ever entered your eyes was the sight of your wife on your wedding day—in her white dress coming down the aisle looking right at you with a loving smile, anticipating the years of joy you would have together; or maybe it was a few years later when the two of you looked down into the sleeping face of your firstborn child

What is BEAUTY? Philosophers have debated that question forever... but you have your own sense of beauty, and I tell you, dear Christian friend, you have NOT YET SEEN the most beautiful sight you will ever see...

What about MAJESTY? What is the most awe-inspiring majestic sight you've ever seen?

For me, I think it was the Karakoram Mountains as I rode on top of the luggage rack from China back into Pakistan in the summer of 1987. The mountains there are all well over 20,000 feet high, snow-capped year round, and majestic beyond description. The view was unimpeded by windows, and because I was risking my life to ride precariously on top of the luggage on this van, the threat of instant death was a constant factor. I was looking down some of the deepest mountain ravines I'd ever seen—falling away from the Karakoram Highway some 2-3000 feet at least. It was absolutely breathtaking—a mingling of astonishing beauty, majesty, and grandeur... producing in me a combination of awe, wonder, and fear.

Maybe that's what it'll be like to see Jesus Christ return to the earth in His glory, surrounded by the armies of heaven. At the instant when I shall see Him, I will be transformed instantly and become like Him. And so will all the elect from every nation on earth and every era of human history...

Beauty and Majesty... the Second Coming of Christ... it was what my eyes were created to see

As we come to this passage, we come at last to the deepest desire of my soul... to see Christ return in glory to judge the living and the dead, and to establish His eternal Kingdom in glory

This is a most significant doctrine... the Second Coming of Christ

Christ will return to the earth... and event rich with significance

Four times in this chapter, the Greek word "parousia" is used

Matthew 24:3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Matthew 24:27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Matthew 24:37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Matthew 24:39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

In addition, verse 30 teaches the Second Coming plainly as well:

Matthew 24:30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

I. The Second Coming Will Be Obvious to All

Matthew 24:26 "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.

- A. No Secret Second Coming
- B. Lightning Visible from One End of the Heavens to the Other

Matthew 24:27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

- C. No Need for Faith
- D. No Opportunity for Salvation
- E. No Secret Rapture

II. The Second Coming Will Purify the World of Evil

Matthew 24:28 Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

- A. The Spiritual Interpretation: A Carcass is the Focus of Spiritual Infection
- B. The Physical Interpretation: Dead Bodies Everywhere

III. The Second Coming Will Affect the Cosmos

Matthew 24:29 "Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

- A. Copernicus's Revolution: The Earth is Not the Physical Center of the Universe
 1. 16th century Polish astronomer, physicist, and mathematician Nicolus Copernicus studied the movement of the heavenly bodies and wrote in a secret notebook his findings... that the SUN not the EARTH was actually the physical center of the solar system
 2. The earth revolves around the sun, not the other way around
 3. He was afraid of being declared a heretic by the Catholic church and his findings were not published until his death
 4. Unbelievers use his experience as proof that science trumps Biblical theology every time, and that true believers usually try to squelch true science to maintain their pathetic little superstitions
- B. The Second Coming's Restoration: The Earth is the Spiritual Center of the Universe
 1. We learned this already in Genesis 1: from the beginning of time, we learn that the heavenly bodies have an EARTHLY purpose

Genesis 1:16-17 God made two great lights-- the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth

Genesis 1:14 let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years

2. So also at the END of time, we learn that the heavenly bodies have an earthly purpose... when history on earth comes to an end, the heavenly bodies will fall to the earth... to make way for the New Heaven and New Earth
3. The sun and the moon will be darkened... and the stars will fall from the sky

- a. Revelation likens the falling of the stars to the tumbling of ripe figs from a tree
 - b. How this will be, I do not know... I just think it shows God's absolute power over the universe
4. The sun's light will fail... but Christ's splendor and glory will be shining radiantly

C. The Powers of the Heavens Shaken

1. NIV "The heavenly bodies"... Greek word is "dunamis"... the POWERS of the heavens will be shaken
2. This could very well refer to Satan's kingdom... the spiritual forces or powers of demons and arch-demons, or rulers and powers and principalities
3. Satan and His forces will have been dominating the entire earth openly for seven years by the power of the Antichrist
4. The time will come to defeat forever Satan and his demonic heavenly powers
5. The word "shaken" shows the immense power of the Second Coming... both in the physical AND the spiritual world... like an immense earthquake

Hebrews 12:26-27 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." 27 The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken-- that is, created things-- so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

The coming Kingdom of Christ CANNOT be shaken... everything else WILL BE shaken

The stage is now set for the glorious Second Coming of Christ: the heavenly bodies will bow and get out of the way... their light will be extinguished like tiny candles blown out... the vast, immense powers of heaven and earth will be shaken... everything is ready for the glorious Second Coming

IV. The Second Coming Will Be Powerful and Glorious

Matthew 24:30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

A. The Sign of the Son of Man

1. The word "sign" usually refers to miracles, supernatural displays of Christ's power over disease or demons or the weather

2. Remember that the Antichrist and other false spiritual messengers have been doing great signs and wonders on the earth
3. Also remember that, in the days of Moses and the plagues on Egypt, the magicians of Pharaoh's court were able to do some of the same signs... but there came a point at which Moses did a sign they could not imitate... at that point the false wonder-workers were forced to confess with awe

Exodus 8:19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God."

4. How much more when the "sign of the Son of Man" appears in the sky!!
5. The whole world will be forced to admit, "this is the Son of God!"
6. What IS the "sign of the Son of Man"?

they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

A direct reference to Daniel 7

Daniel 7:13-14 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him.

A precursor to what Christ will say to get Himself condemned by the Jewish leaders

Matthew 26:64 In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

B. Will Appear in the Sky

1. Everyone will stop what they are doing and look up
2. The coming of the Son of Man will be in the middle of their lives... people will be marrying and giving in marriage, shopping, working, laughing, playing... and suddenly the Son of Man will appear in the sky
3. The CLOUDS and GLORY are mentioned in so many different passages
 - a. Imagine the most awesome display of clouds you've ever seen
 - b. Cumulus nimbus... or a tower of thunder clouds... piled as high as the eye can see, lit by electrical flashes and the glows of the setting sun
 - c. That will be as nothing compared to the cloud displayed at the Second Coming

d. Power and GREAT GLORY is mentioned... Christ's blinding radiant brightness will fill the sky

e. Behind Him will be the armies of heaven

C. Sights and Sounds

1. The voice of the archangel... the trumpet call of God

2. The appearance of glory

3. The majesty of the clouds

4. The sight of the armies of heaven

D. All Nations will See It

1. This will unite a fractured world

2. Every single nation or tribe or people group or language on the face of the earth is descended from one man, Adam... we all share a common origin

3. So also every nation on earth will share a common ending... the Second Coming of Christ

4. The events of all nations will come to a sudden close

a. The buying and selling will end

b. The scheming of organized criminals will end

c. The plans of military personnel will end

d. The hopes of bride and bridegroom will end

e. The plowing and reaping will end

f. ALL OVER THE WORLD

V. The Second Coming Will Result in Judgment on Sinners

Matthew 24:30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

A. Why Will they all MOURN?

Revelation 1:7 Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.

B. This Can Only Be the Mourning of Terror at the Glory of God

1. The light makes the cockroaches run and hide
2. The glory of the pure light of Christ means instant judgment for the sinners of the earth
3. It is light that makes everything visible... the glory of this supernatural event strikes terror in the hearts of sinners
4. They will mourn
 - a. because judgment is coming on them forever and ever
 - b. because their fleshly pleasures are ended
 - c. because the bible-thumpers were right after all
 - d. because they will spend eternity in torment
 - e. because they will spend eternity in regret that they refused to trust Christ

C. The Second Coming of Christ Will Result in Final Judgment on Sinners

VI. The Second Coming Will Result in the Gathering of the Elect

Matthew 24:31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

A. This, Dear Friends, is the Rapture!!

1. The word “rapture” is not found in the English Bible
2. However, it comes from the passage on the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

3. The “rapture” is Latin for “caught up” ... the “catching up” of the church

B. The Lord’s Deep Desire: To Be With Us Forever

C. The Elect Under Great Distress are Rescued

D. An Angelic Ride Ending in a Glorious Meeting

VII. Applications

A. Come to Christ

1. We have already made this point most plainly... however I want to say it again
2. Jesus Christ is coming again to judge the living and the dead
3. Now is the day of salvation... trust in Christ today!!

B. Be Not Dismayed at the Apparent Triumph of Christ's Enemies

1. Secularism is taught in almost every classroom of every public school in America
2. It is an official stance that Jesus Christ is IRRELEVANT to everything in life... to geometry, to English Literature, to American History... God should be kept in a box, out of the public forum... Jesus is not the only way to God and it is arrogance to say He is
3. Dear friends, the Second Coming of Christ will end all that unbelieving blasphemy forever...
4. Do not be discouraged! Christ will OPENLY TRIUMPH over His enemies

C. Live Every Moment in Light of the Second Coming of Christ

1. Christ will come
2. Christ will reward every act of obedience and every moment of faith
3. Be rich toward the coming King and He will reward you
4. Let the concept of the Second Coming of Christ enrich every area of your life
 - a. As you rise in the morning, think "We are one day closer to seeing Christ return in glory!"
 - b. As you sit at the breakfast table with your family, see them in the light of the coming King... get your children ready to serve the coming King... fix your marriage because Christ will soon return... at the workplace, think "Everything I do in service to this company, the Coming King will reward if I do it by faith for His glory"

5. The Second Coming of Christ will end history... so see history in light of the Second Coming

D. Never Look at the Sky and the Clouds the Same Again

1. Christ is coming with the clouds

Matthew 24:30 They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

Matthew 26:64 In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

2. Whenever you look up, and see the sunlight streaming through the clouds, understand that that light

E. As You Struggle With Sin, Do it in Light of Your Future Transformation at the Second Coming of Christ

1 John 3:2-3 we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

F. Long for that Day!!!!

2 Timothy 4:8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

G. Lord's Supper

1 Corinthians 11:26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Matthew 26:29 I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."