

## The Second Coming

### Matthew 24: 23-31

Jesus has revealed much about the events leading up to His return and the difficulties associated with the Tribulation. Our text today focuses on the time when the Tribulation will be coming to an end and the Lord makes His glorious return to earth. His second coming will be a literal return to earth, as He establishes His kingdom to rule and reign for a thousand years.

We must bear in mind that Jesus is speaking of literal events that will happen upon the earth just as He revealed. Many deny and reject the second coming, but there is an appointed time when our Lord will come again. [Rev.19:11-16](#) – [And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.](#) <sup>[12]</sup> [His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.](#) <sup>[13]</sup> [And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.](#) <sup>[14]</sup> [And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.](#) <sup>[15]</sup> [And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.](#) <sup>[16]</sup> [And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.](#)

As we continue our study of the Olivet Discourse, I want to discuss the [certainties](#) Jesus revealed as we consider: [The Second Coming](#).

**I. The Prevalence of Deception** ([23-27](#)) – Jesus again warns of the deception that will mark the Tribulation, leading up to His return. Consider:

**A. The Abundance** ([23, 25](#)) – [Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.](#) <sup>[25]</sup> [Behold, I have told you before.](#) Clearly deception will abound in the Tribulation and will continue until the Lord returns in power and glory. He warned of such deception in [Vvs.5 and 11](#). As we have discussed, such deception abounds today, but it will increase during the end times.

**B. The Ability** ([24](#)) – [For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.](#) The false prophets and those empowered by anti-Christ will have unusual power to perform great signs and wonders. This will be much of the appeal that leads many to follow anti-Christ. Jesus declared these will be so convincing, that if it were possible, they would deceive those who had received salvation. We cannot imagine or comprehend the power that Satan and those who follow him will possess and

reveal during that time. Those who are not saved by grace and settled in the faith will be taken in by the deception of these false prophets.

**C. The Appeal (26)** – Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.* The deception will be rampant in that day. Claims will abound from those professing to be Christ. Many will be deceived and try to convince others of their beliefs. These claims will be prevalent in that day. Supposed appearances of Christ will be reported in various regions. Some will claim He is in desert areas and others will claim He is located in hidden places within the cities and towns. Such lies and deception must be rejected by those who truly believe. Jesus wanted to confirm that there will be no question about His return. He will address that in a moment. Sadly, many will be pulled in by this deception, being convinced that the anti-Christ and his associates are in fact the Christ.

**D. The Assurance (27)** – For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. While many will be deceived prior to His return, when Christ actually comes back to earth there will be no doubt. His return will be quick, visible, and glorious. He will appear on the scene just as quickly and noticeable as the lighting flashing in the east and shining in the west. (This is the basis for Jesus breaking the eastern sky when He returns. People are buried in cemeteries facing the east, so as to be looking toward His coming.)

**II. The Perils of Tribulation (28-29)** – Jesus goes on to describe the horrific terror and devastation that will come upon the earth at the end of the age. Consider:

**A. The Death (28)** – For whosoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. As difficult as this is to imagine, it will become reality in that day. Jesus warns of the enormous amount of death and suffering to come. The death toll will exceed anything the world has ever experienced. As the anti-Christ unleashes his relentless campaign of slaughter against those who deny him, and the judgment of God is poured out as the seals are opened, the world will experience an unprecedented season of death and misery. The vultures and scavengers will gather to feast on the bodies of the countless dead. This reminds us of the warning revealed in Revelation regarding the Battle of Armageddon. *Rev.19:17-18 – And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; <sup>[18]</sup> That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.*

**B. The Despair (29a)** – Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. Immediately following the conclusion of the Tribulation, the world will experience an ominous sign. The sun will become dark and the moon will refuse to shine. [Joel 2:31](#) – The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. Can you imagine the horror that will grip humanity as these events begin upon the earth? For as long as men have lived upon the earth, the sun has shown forth her light. Without fail, each morning the sun has risen, bringing light and hope to the world. In that day the sun will be darkened, and mankind will be left to ponder the reason for such calamity.

**C. The Devastation (29b)** – Immediately after the tribulation of those days...the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. The sun becoming dark will not be the only sign of the Lord's imminent return. Following the darkness of the sun and moon, the stars will begin to fall from the heavens. In His omnipotent power, the Lord will shake the heavens and the stars will fall from their places. No doubt some of them will impact the earth, creating devastation throughout the world. For many it will be too late, but the sovereign of the ages will display His power before sinful men. The Lord created the universe and upholds it today by the word of His power. In that day He will cause the heavenly bodies to fall from the sky, revealing His power to the earth. We cannot imagine the horror and dismay this will bring upon the earth. [Luke 21:25-26](#) – And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; <sup>[26]</sup> Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

**III. The Promise of Revelation (30-31)** – Following all of this, Christ Himself will be revealed for the world to see. Consider:

**A. The Return (30a)** – And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. Jesus speaks of His literal return to the earth. The disciples had asked for a sign of His coming. There will be many events that will point to His soon coming, but the sign that reveals it will literally be the moment Jesus Christ appears in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. At the culmination of the Tribulation Jesus will return. He will be the supreme and ultimate sign of His coming. When He appears, the world will know He has returned!

**B. The Realization (30b)** – and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. This will be a glorious sight for those who have believed in Christ by faith, but it will strike horror in the hearts of those who have denied and rejected His grace. The nations of the earth will mourn as they see Him coming in the clouds.

Again, there will be no doubt as to His identity. Every eye will see Him and immediately recognize who He is! [Rev.1:7 – Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they \*also\* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.](#) [Phil.2:10-11 – That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of \*things\* in heaven, and \*things\* in earth, and \*things\* under the earth;](#) <sup>[11]</sup> [And \*that\* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ \*is\* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.](#) He is the gracious Savior and Redeemer, but He is also the righteous Judge.

**C. The Regathering (31)** – [And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.](#) Those who have believed in Christ during the Tribulation will have been relentlessly persecuted and scattered throughout the world. As Jesus comes again, He will send forth the angels to gather every believer from every corner of the earth, bringing them to Jerusalem in preparation for the Millennial Reign. Their season of despair and suffering will be over as the righteous King establishes His kingdom here upon the earth. Their faithfulness will be rewarded as they are ushered into the presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords. The horrors of the Tribulation will have ended as Christ comes, bringing peace to the earth.

**Conclusion:** I will admit that these verses are difficult to fully comprehend. No one has the ability to fully grasp the enormity they reveal. It is undeniable that the world is destined for a time of suffering and devastation unmatched by previous events. The Tribulation will usher in the time of anti-Christ and culminate with the return of Christ in power and glory.

The passages we have considered in recent weeks reveal literal events that will come to pass according to God's sovereign plan. Christ came to earth the first time as the sacrificial Lamb, atoning for our sin and providing salvation for all who come to Him by faith. He will come the second time as the Lion of Judah, judging Satan and those who have rejected Him. While I do not fully understand every aspect of His second coming, I do not live in fear of that day. I have placed my faith and trust in Him, being placed in the body of Christ. I am promised eternity with Christ. What about you? Where do you stand today? Are you prepared to meet the Lord when He comes? Now is the time to make preparation for that meeting. Come to Him in repentance and faith if you are yet unsaved!