

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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The Gospel of Matthew

Christ's Second Coming

April 26, 2020

Sermon Text: Matthew 24:29-31

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4

We are living in the great tribulation, and have been ever since Christ came into this world and inaugurated His kingdom. His kingdom is secret, it is not open and visible to the world, but we who have been born again have eyes to see it and ears to hear Him. His kingdom is spreading like leaven, and our enemy knows it. The world and the god of this world, Satan, are doing all they can to destroy Christ's people and to thwart His purposes, and yet they know full well that they have been defeated at the cross. So they rage.

We see this raging increasing throughout the world. This intense and senseless hatred of Christ and His

church. Satan and his minions know that judgment day is coming, and the Holy Spirit reminds them of this constantly:

John 16:7-11 ESV Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (8) And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: (9) concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; (10) concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; (11) concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

And so the enemy rages.

John 5:25-29 ESV “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. (26) For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. (27) And he has given him authority to execute

judgment, because he is the Son of Man. (28) Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice (29) and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

The world and all its citizens, all who belong to it, know that the day of judgment is drawing nearer. This is a chief reason they hate Christ and His people, even though they know Christ is without guilt:

Matthew 27:22-23 ESV Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” (23) And he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

John 15:18-27 ESV “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. (19) If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (20) Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they

kept my word, they will also keep yours.

(21) But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. (22) If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

(23) Whoever hates me hates my Father also. (24) If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. (25) But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: **‘They hated me without a cause.’** (26) “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. (27) And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

We have heard Christ describe this era in which we live. It is messed up! Wars. Fear of wars. Famines, earthquakes, false christs, people claiming to be Christians and then betraying Christ and His people, antichrists spreading their damning false gospels, and culminating in the appearance of the

Antichrist, the man of lawlessness, setting himself up as god, demanding to be worshipped as God.

True Christians know Christ's voice. They know His truth. They are able to recognize the counterfeit, and when He comes we will see Him. We will know Him. Listen now as He describes His return:

Matthew 24:29-31 ESV "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.

(30) 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.

(31) 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.

A Shaking of the Heavens

What event comes to your mind when you read *the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light*? Has such a thing ever happened before?

Exodus 10:21-23 ESV Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt." (22) So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. (23) They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived.

The darkness was a judgment upon Pharaoh and Egypt, and so it will be again upon this entire world. It is a sign not only of God's judgment, but of His impending final *exodus* of His people out of this world. The event is announced numbers of times in the Old Testament:

Isaiah 13:9-11 ESV Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. (10) For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will

not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light. (11) I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.

And there is an even more fundamental message in this cosmic darkness event:

Jeremiah 4:22-24 ESV “For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are ‘wise’—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not.” (23) **I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light.** (24) I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro.

See it? *Without form and void.* The world desires to have *no God*. And so, in His judgment, the Lord gives it. *Without form and void* is the exact phrase used in Genesis 1 for the condition of the world before God said, let there be light. God removes light. He judges the wicked by withdrawing Himself who is Light. And He prepares

to *withdraw* His people in a final Exodus.

Ezekiel 32:7-8 ESV When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. (8) All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over you, and put darkness on your land, declares the Lord GOD.

Joel 2:10-11 ESV The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. (11) The LORD utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can endure it?

All of this of course is denied in willful blindness by the world:

2 Peter 3:3-10 ESV knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. (4) They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” (5) For they deliberately overlook this fact, that

the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, (6) and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. (7) But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

(8) But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (9) The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (10) But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Look at verse 30-

Matthew 24:30 ESV 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.

We know that Jesus is alluding here to Zechariah's words:

Zechariah 12:10 ESV "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

All will know that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, and all will know that they have crucified Him.

Now, what is the *sign of the Son of Man* that Jesus says is going to appear in the heavens? I would not doubt that there have been many explanations – some of which claim that this is going to be a celestial cross visible to all. But I think that Jesus Himself is the sign. All will see Him "coming on the clouds," which is just as the angels described it to the disciples on the day of His ascension:

Acts 1:9-11 ESV And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. (10) And while they were gazing into heaven as he

went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, (11) and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Revelation 1:7 ESV 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.

I don't think this mourning and wailing is necessarily repentance. I think it is more like the gnashing of teeth as the wicked realize Jesus is the Lord, that all He said is true, and that the time of their judgment has come and there is no escape.

We notice that the Bible repeatedly describes and emphasizes Jesus coming back “with the clouds.” And I think it is worth considering another Old Testament image:

Exodus 24:15-18 ESV Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. (16) The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on

the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. (17) Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. (18) Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

It is a declaration that Jesus is God. All will know. All will see Him. All will see their guilt and wail on account of Him.

The great harvest:

Matthew 24:31 ESV 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.

Jesus spoke of this event, and specifically of His angels' role in it:

Matthew 13:24-30 ESV He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, (25) but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. (26) So when the plants came

up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. (27) And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ (28) He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘**Then do you want us to go and gather them?**’ (29) **But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. (30) Let both grow together until the harvest,** and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”

Matthew 13:36-43 ESV Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” (37) He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. (38) The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, (39) and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. **The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.** (40) Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. (41) **The Son of Man will send his angels,** and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-

breakers, (42) and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (43) Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Notice that the angels effect a two-fold harvest. In Matthew 24:31 Jesus speaks of them gathering His elect from all corners of the earth, but we see more detail here back in Matthew 13, and it is important:

“and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace.”

It is also, you see, a harvest of evil. A great separation and threshing. Weeds into the furnace, wheat into the barn.

Psalms 1:3-6 ESV He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. (4) The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. (5) Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; (6) for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the

wicked will perish.

Let's close with this one final note:

and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Christ knows His own. He knows those who are His. Every single one. That is the emphasis. Not one will perish or be forgotten.

Isaiah 43:1-7 ESV But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. (2) When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. (3) For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. (4) Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. (5) Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. (6) I will say to

the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, (7) everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

2 Timothy 2:19 ESV But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

He is coming. He is coming to judge the earth. And He is coming for us.