He Will Come Again in Glory (New Testament Figures)

The great Rescuer returns, and how children of the day get ready

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, August 21, 2022
PASSAGES	Acts 1:6-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Revelation 19:11-16; Matthew 24:29-31; Zechariah 12:10; Mark 13:24-27; Psalm 37:1-13; Psalm 68:1-3; Isaiah 11:4
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:03:12 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

The Christ who ascended in glory will return in glory, "to judge the living and the dead." His coming will be no quiet landing but the great Rescuer arriving: gathering his people, granting relief to the afflicted, and defeating evil in a way we will marvel at. We are not told when. We get ready not by reading the news but by living now as children of the day – and by longing for the one justice that will finally be done right.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- We do not know when Jesus will return, and Scripture says we are not meant to – claims of a private prophetic timeline included.
- He will come back as he left, but not quietly: with power, glory and a final gathering of his people, a last exodus.
- His coming will be met with joy, with anger and gnashing of teeth, and with mourning – the good mourning of a spirit of grace.
- The day of the Lord is an encouragement: relief for the afflicted and a victory we will marvel at.
- "Caught up… to meet the Lord in the air" pictures us joining his entourage as he comes, not sitting on clouds with harps.

- We avoid being surprised by living as children of the day – sober, with faith, love and the hope of salvation – not by tracking headlines.
- A returning Lord of glory distinguishes the faith from the "cult of kindness," and he alone will set things right.

▶ 1:03:12

The service had opened with Jesus restoring Peter – "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" (John 21:15–17) – and Lucy Shaw's poem "Judas, Peter." Before preaching, Matt called board members and elders forward to bless Binyam as he begins leading the new Taizé service, and welcomed newcomers to lunch. Then the Old and New Testament figures series, begun a year ago with Adam, reached one of its last events.

He will come again

▶ 1:09:07

Last week Matt read from the Nicene Creed, "an authoritative faith summary… a boundary around the way we read the Bible." Of Jesus it says that "he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead." The second coming has always been tied to just judgment.

▶ 1:10:54

> "'Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority…' 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… '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.'"
>
> ACTS 1:6–11 ↗

▶ 1:12:16

Matt has never read *Left Behind*, but he knows the habit of matching the Bible to the newspaper. Jesus not only said he did not know the day; here he says it is not for us to know. So when someone says, "God tells the prophets before he does anything, and I'm a prophet, so he told me" – "okay, but he also said it's the thing that we're not even supposed to know." He also loves the angels' question, almost teasing: why are you looking up there? He will come back the same way.

Not a quiet landing

▶ 1:14:14

"So he's just going to kind of plop down? No. True to form… he's going to make an absolute scene."

> "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds."
>
> MARK 13:24–27 ↗

▶ 1:15:37

He comes in the midst of difficulty, and with a regathering – a final exodus. There was the exodus under Moses, the entry under Joshua, the return from Babylon, and Jesus the greater Moses leading us out of sin's power; at his second coming he will "truly restore and redeem and ransom and rescue his people" ("I didn't mean for those all to be R's"). However literally we take the darkened sun and falling stars, there will be power and glory, and even the powers in the heavens shaken – a heavenly struggle, with the saints struggling too.

God the great Rescuer, and three responses

▶ 1:17:29

This plays on a long Old Testament theme of God riding to the rescue. "God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered… as wax melts before fire, so the wicked shall perish before God! But the righteous shall be glad" (Psalm 68:1–3). Not everyone will greet God's just judgments with joy. Part of his rescue is from powers of darkness that grip many of us so tightly that hopelessness feels normal.

▶ 1:18:51

"Fret not yourself because of evildoers… In just a little while, the wicked will be no more… But the meek shall inherit the land… The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes his teeth at him, but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees that his day is coming" (Psalm 37:1–13). Here are sources for Jesus' words: the meek inheriting the earth, and gnashing of teeth – which, Matt noted, is an expression of anger and defiance, like a snarling wolf, more than of pain (Psalm 112:10).

▶ 1:20:43

Prophets and saints have long asked, as we do, when God will set things right, while the wicked prosper, holiness is mocked, and the faithful suffer, are robbed, ridiculed, sometimes killed. The

psalm's answer: the Lord laughs, because his day is coming. And Isaiah: "with righteousness he shall judge the poor... and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked" (Isaiah 11:4).

Relief for the afflicted

▶ 1:22:40

> "God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God... They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord... when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed."
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> 2 THESSALONIANS 1:6–10 ↗

▶ 1:23:39

To any guests: "I didn't know it was going to be this heavy metal... It's like when you're watching a movie and your grandma walks in at just the part you didn't want her to." But Paul means this as encouragement. Seeing it will be more gratifying than any game won at the wire or any film where the hero finally fights back: "we will just marvel at it."

▶ 1:24:49

A translation note: "away from the presence of the Lord" adds a word of distance (the NIV says "shut out from"). The Greek simply says "from the face of the Lord" – the same phrase Peter uses for "times of refreshing... from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19–20). It is directional, not distance. Rather than C. S. Lewis's picture of a self-chosen quarantine, the destruction comes *from* his face, echoing the long Old Testament motif of fire going out from the Lord's presence against his enemies (Leviticus 10:2; Isaiah 66:15–16) and, in the next chapter, the Lord slaying the lawless one "with the breath of his mouth" (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Faithful and True

▶ 1:27:38

> "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire… He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God… From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords."
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> REVELATION 19:11–16 ↗

▶ 1:28:50

Revelation is the New Testament book most dense with Old Testament references, though they are oblique: the rod of his mouth from Isaiah, the warrior coming with garments stained red (Isaiah 63:1–3), the winepress from Joel and Isaiah. Paul and John agree: at his return there will be just judgment, relief and gathering for his people, and a battle in which God finally dominates evil – "not passive aggression. It's intense, but it's right, because whatever he does is right."

Joining his entourage

▶ 1:30:38

> "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words."
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> 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16–18 ↗

▶ 1:31:45

He does not come back to stay in the clouds; he comes to judge and rule. So being caught up is not "the part where we get a harp and we sit in a cloud." Whether or not Paul pictured a city going out to welcome a visiting emperor, those alive will join his entourage on the way – like the Palm Sunday crowd with branches and blankets shouting hosanna – and never be parted from him.

The mourning that is grace

▶ 1:32:47

There is one more response. When the sign of the Son of Man appears, "all the tribes of the earth will mourn" (Matthew 24:29–31); "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him" (Revelation 1:7). Why is that good? Follow it back:

▶ 1:34:21

> "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."
>
> ZECHARIAH 12:10 ↗

▶ 1:35:31

A spirit of grace and pleas for mercy: people will see and understand and weep. Notice the pronouns – God says "they look on *me*," then "on *him* whom they have pierced… they shall mourn for *him*." "It's like Trinitarian stuff." And where Zechariah speaks of Jerusalem, Jesus says all the tribes of the earth: this grace is global.

Children of the day

▶ 1:36:57

How does this affect daily life? "It doesn't have to for it to be important – but it still does."

> "For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night… But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day… So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober… having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."
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> 1 THESSALONIANS 5:1–11 ↗

▶ 1:39:23

Some traditions say he could come any moment; others list what must happen first. Both can be true – because, like the experts in the law who missed what was in front of them, "we also could be missing clear and obvious stuff right in front of our face. I'm not better than they are." So tracking the checklist in the news may be a moot point. "The removal of the element of surprise is not in knowing when, but

in living as children of the day" – not "I saw that happen on Twitter, so it's next," but sober living, faith, love and the hope of salvation.

▶ 1:42:48

The second coming mattered to Christ, so it should matter to us – and it guards against "the niceness cult." If Christianity boils down to being nice, nobody needs to come back for that. Early-twentieth-century Presbyterians asked ordination candidates about the virgin birth to tell a real Jesus from a "Christ concept"; today the returning Lord of glory does similar work, because a faith reduced to not being judgmental and niceing people into the kingdom has no room for him.

▶ 1:44:14

> *"No human institution or movement has ever satisfied justice the right way. We always say we will, and they don't... But there is someone who will. It's going to be flawless – something to marvel at and talk about over and over again."*

▶ 1:45:27

Not just politics – families, friends, social trends: power corrupts us and we never execute justice the way Jeremiah and we long for. Picture remembering it later: "Do you remember when he came? We were all like, he's never going to come..." No movie could do it justice. So our preparedness is not reading tea leaves but walking with Christ, longing for his return, eyes on him, unsurprised because we were awake. His kingdom will have no end – "whatever country you most identify with, there's a kingdom we all can really say is home." He will cross every t and dot every i of true justice. Matt prayed that God would teach us to long for his return, fill us with hope at his coming in glory, and help us walk as children of the day.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

- John 21:15–17
- Acts 1:6–11
- Mark 13:24–27
- Psalm 68:1–3
- Psalm 37:1–13
- Psalm 112:10
- Isaiah 11:4
- 2 Thessalonians 1:6–10
- Acts 3:19–20
- Leviticus 10:2
- Isaiah 66:15–16
- 2 Thessalonians 2:8
- Revelation 19:11–16
- Isaiah 63:1–3
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18
- Matthew 24:29–31
- Revelation 1:7
- Zechariah 12:10
- 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. What have you been taught about the second coming, and how does Acts 1's "it is not for you to know" sit with that?
2. Matt described joy, anger and mourning as responses to Christ's return. Why is the mourning of Zechariah 12 actually a gift?
3. How does Paul's description of relief for the afflicted in 2 Thessalonians 1 change the way you feel about the day of the Lord?
4. Where do you most long for justice that no human institution has delivered, and how does Christ's return speak to that?
5. What would living as a "child of the day" – sober, with faith, love and hope – look like in one specific part of your week?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Mw_V2vnleU&t=3792s

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.