



# *The King's Ransom*

Matthew 20:28

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Text

Matthew 24:26-51

Topic

Jesus proclaims that He will return  
"on the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory"

Title

*"Cloudy With a Certainty of Jesus"*

Introduction

Here is a *Family Feud* question for you: *Name something in the sky that makes people look up.*

**Survey says** - *Airplane.*

In the near future, the answer to that question, all over the planet, will be, *the Son of Man coming on the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory.*

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Matthew 22:26-51

*"Cloudy With a Certainty of Jesus"*

Jesus Christ rose from the dead in a glorified physical body. Forty days later, He ascended into Heaven.

As His followers looked to the heavens, two men appeared, and said to them, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into Heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into Heaven" (Acts 1:11).

Jesus doesn't get into it here in the Gospel of Matthew, but we know for a fact from other Bible passages that when Jesus returns, He won't be alone. You and I, and all the saints of the church age, will be coming back with Him.

I want to look at Jesus' Second Coming, and our coming back with Him, from the perspective of both the heavens surrounding the earth, and the earth itself.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 When You Return With Jesus At His Second Coming There Will Be Significant Signs In The Heavens, and #2 When You Return With Jesus At His Second Coming There Will Be Sighs And Shouts On The Earth.

### #1 When You Return With Jesus At His Second Coming There Will Be Significant Signs In The Heavens

(v26-31)

The church will have been resurrected and raptured to Heaven before any portion of the seven-year Tribulation.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ describes those who return at the end of those seven years, with Jesus. In Revelation 19:14 we read,

Rev 19:14 And the **armies** in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

The word "armies" is plural, meaning at least two. We know from other passages who populates these two armies:

1. One army is an angelic army. In Matthew 16:27 we read, "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father **with His angels.**"
2. The other army that will return with Jesus is the army of the church saints who had been raptured previously. In Jude we read, "Behold, the Lord comes **with ten thousands of His saints**" (v14).

The church is a huge part of the Second Coming, but we need to realize from the outset that the church is *not* spoken of by Jesus in Matthew twenty-four. The resurrection and rapture of the church is *not* a subject covered at all in these verses.

Jesus had not yet so much as hinted about the resurrection and rapture of the church. He would, the night before He was crucified, indicate to the believers that He was going to prepare a place for us, to return and take us there, and thereby keep us out of the terrible time of trouble coming upon the earth.

But the resurrection and rapture of the church would remain unknown until the apostle Paul revealed the mystery in his letters to the Thessalonians and the Corinthians.

When we last saw the Jews here in chapter twenty-four, the antichrist had set himself up in their Temple in Jerusalem and demanded to be worshipped.

They were instructed to flee into the wilderness where they would be supernaturally protected by God through the last years of the Great Tribulation.

Mat 24:26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.

The Jews should not fall for these false reports of a 'secret' return of Jesus. His Second Coming will be nothing short of spectacular.

Mat 24:27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Lightning is something everyone can see, as it illuminates the dark, stormy sky. When Jesus returns, it says in the Revelation, "every eye shall see Him" (1:7).

There may be actual lightning, but it doesn't say there will - only that at the Second Coming the atmosphere will be ablaze with the glory of the Lord.

More than one good commentator has suggested that this blaze of light is none other than the Shechinah glory of God.

Have you heard that term before? It doesn't appear in the Bible. The Jewish rabbis coined it in order to distinguish those Bible passages where they believed a physical light was present when the Hebrew word for "glory" was used.

It was the visible manifestation of the presence of God among His people, like the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that led the Jews in the Exodus; or like Jesus when He was on the Mount of Transfiguration with Moses and Elijah and His disciples saw His glory.

Mat 24:28 For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

Weird statement number one. "Eagles" is probably better translated "vultures." When an animal dies, the vultures gather to pick its bones. The Great Tribulation will end in carnage with the Battle of Armageddon. Here it is in the Revelation:

Rev 19:17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,

Rev 19:18 that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."

The slaughter will be so great that blood will flow up to a horses bridle there in the Valley of Megiddo.

Mat 24:29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Obviously, if the sun is "darkened," the moon will not reflect its light.

The falling "stars" are probably a massive amount of shooting stars; or a meteorite shower; or both.

The "powers of the heavens" refers to planets and stars. The glory of Jesus in His return is physically announced by all the stellar heavens - it's just that powerful.

Mat 24:30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, 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.

The "sign" will be the glory of the Lord filling the heavens against the backdrop of the darkened sun, no moon, falling stars, and the stellar heavens shaking.

How will "all the tribes of the earth" see this? The simplest answer is that it will occur over a period of time, like a day, and, as the earth rotates, everyone left alive on the earth will experience it.

Mat 24:31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

In the parallel passage in the Gospel of Mark, you learn that "the four winds" of the "heavens" is referring to those "elect" on the earth (13:27). This trumpet gathers the saints who survive the Great Tribulation.

Some people confuse the "trumpet" in this verse with the trumpet that sounds at the resurrection and rapture of the church.

There are lots of trumpets blown in the Bible, and they are all for different purposes. Context must decide, and the context here is the gathering of Tribulation survivors - *not* the church.

I've read, over the years, in multiple resources, that there are something like eight times as many references to the Second Coming of Jesus than there are to His first coming.

He will be fully revealed in all His heavenly glory - filling the atmosphere with blinding light.

Guess what? **We're going to be glorious, too, at His appearing.**

If you haven't highlighted it yet, go to Second Thessalonians 1:10 and do so immediately. Talking about our return with Jesus at His Second Coming, the apostle Paul said,

2Th 1:10 when He comes, in that Day, **to be glorified in His saints** and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

When we return with Jesus, He will be glorified when people and angels look upon us. Every one of us will be in the image of The Lord, having a body of glory like His, and every one will have His moral likeness. Jesus will be admired in all who have believed in Him through the Tribulation, when His features are borne by every one in that great company of His saints.

We read something similar in Romans 8:18, but with an assessment of our time on earth now, awaiting the rapture.

Rom 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory which shall be revealed in us.**

The "glory which shall be revealed in us" looks forward to our return with Jesus in our completed, glorified state.

Mean time, none of the "sufferings of this present time" can tarnish what is to come. William MacDonald, in *The Believers Bible Commentary*, writes,

The greatest shame we may endure for Christ here on earth will be a mere trifle... Even the excruciating pain of the martyrs will seem like pinpricks when the Savior graces their brows with the crown of life. Elsewhere Paul speaks of our present sufferings as light afflictions which are only for a moment, but he describes the glory as an exceeding and eternal weight (Second Corinthians 4:17). If we could only appreciate the glory that is to be ours, we could count the sufferings along the way as trivial.

Your afflictions may not seem light; your sufferings are certainly not trivial. The Lord saves your tears in His bottle, in Heaven, as He takes note of every one.

Still, it puts pain into perspective, does it not, when you understand that you will be returning with Jesus and people will see His glory revealed in you.

He Who has begun a work in you will be faithful to complete it.

Reveal some of it now, as you go about your life being filled with the Holy Spirit, to serve God - pain or no pain. You've already been changed; go around bringing change to others.



## #2 When You Return With Jesus At His Second Coming There Will Be Shouts And Sighs Upon The Earth

(v32-51)

In verse thirty it said many will "mourn" at the Second Coming. All Israel will be saved, and there will be Gentiles who turn to the Lord and survive the trouble and terror of those preceding years. But the vast majority of people left alive on planet earth will be nonbelievers at His return, and they will "mourn" when they realize they will be lost forever.

Mat 24:32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

Mat 24:33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near - at the doors!

Is Israel the fig tree? Let's read the parallel verse, in the Gospel of Luke.

Luk 21:29 Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, **and all the trees.**"

Israel is sometimes associated with the fig tree; but here, it would seem that Jesus was simply using the budding of all trees as an illustration.

Their budding is a sign of what inevitably comes next, and, in the same way, the events Jesus has been describing in Matthew twenty-four are a sign of what inevitably must come next.

If you are on the earth when the events of this chapter start going down, then you can be sure you are in the seven year Tribulation, and it is going to run its course exactly as Jesus and the prophets predicted, uninterrupted.

Mat 24:34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

Because some prophecy teachers insisted that Israel is the fig tree, they erroneously predicted that the Lord must come back a generation after Israel "budded," or became a modern nation, in 1948.

Since a biblical generation, they said, is forty years... Well, you do the math. Jesus 'should' have come back *before* 1988.

Didn't happen - but that's not a surprise, because that's not what Jesus was teaching.

He simply meant that the generation that experiences the Tribulation will be the one to witness His Second Coming.

Mat 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

People tend to think Bible prophecy is a "maybe," not a certainty. They think if we can just get it together, and "give peace a chance," the Tribulation need not occur.

International Peace Day is September 21. The John Lennon song, *Imagine*, has been offered to the United Nations as its theme. Commenting on it, Yoko Ono said the song explains what should be done to bring world peace.

You know the lyrics; "Imagine there's no Heaven..."

If we could only get it together... We could save ourselves. *Not!*

The things Jesus said were going to happen *will* happen just as He said they would. Once the Tribulation starts, it will follow its seven-year course without interruption.

Mat 24:36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

Jesus is the God-man, fully God, and fully human, in a way we cannot comprehend. As to His humanity, He was completely submitted to His Father in Heaven, and could honestly say He did not know the exact hour of the exact day of His Second Coming.

Ah, but can't it be calculated? Isn't it exactly three and one-half years after the antichrist reveals himself?

Yes, it is; but consider two things:

1. I remember a great line in an Arnold movie. He was called upon to fight the devil and stop the end of days. The devil was supposed to be returning to rule the world. Arnold's character says, "So the prince of darkness wants to conquer the earth. He has one hour to do it before midnight. ***Is this Eastern time?***" Even if folks who survive the Great Tribulation wanted to, it would be hard to know with certainty the exact moment of the Second Coming.
2. Secondly, if you read the Revelation, you see there are unprecedented events in the stellar heavens throughout the Tribulation that might make it impossible to calculate time with

any accuracy by its end. If ever there was a time when you might lose track of time, it's then.

The Lord compared His return to the flood during the days of Noah:

Mat 24:37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Mat 24:38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

Mat 24:39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Noah had announced judgment upon the earth, and impending doom. When the ark was finished and Noah and his family and the animals were in it, the people on the earth could anticipate that the flood would occur any day after the door was closed.

*But they could not know the exact day or hour.*

Mat 24:40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.

Mat 24:41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

This is **not** the rapture. Think flood thoughts. When the flood came, it "took away" *nonbelievers* to their eternal judgment. It "left" behind the *believers* - righteous Noah and his family - to repopulate the earth.

At the Second Coming, nonbelievers will be taken away to await eternal damnation, and the believers who've survived the Great Tribulation will be left behind on earth to repopulate the Kingdom of Heaven Jesus will establish.

*This is a situation in which people will want to be left behind!*

Mat 24:42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

Mat 24:43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

Mat 24:44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

In *Bambi* there is a scene in which three quail are hidden in the thick underbrush from the evil hunters. One of them is overcome by fear and tries to fly away.

***Blam!*** goes the shotgun and it falls dead to the ground.

(I think it was filmed here in the Valley!).

Remember, this section opened with Jesus warning the Jews to not be lured out of the place of His divine protection. Wait it out; watch for the glory of His return. Otherwise, ***Blam!*** the devil is gunning for them.

One thing Jesus hasn't referred to yet is His judgment when He returns with regard to giving out rewards for faithful service to Him during the Great Tribulation. He compares the Jews primarily, but all people, living during the Tribulation, to stewards who can be either faithful or evil.

Mat 24:45 "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?"

Mat 24:46 Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

Mat 24:47 Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

Mat 24:48 But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,'

Mat 24:49 and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards,

Mat 24:50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of,

Mat 24:51 and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Don't get lost in the details. The single, simple point Jesus made was that you should remain faithful to Him despite the awful tribulation of those years, and the very real likelihood of martyrdom.

He will reward faithfulness with positions of authority in the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth.

Those found "evil, i.e., unfaithful - nonbelievers - will, as we've seen previously, be taken away to await eternal damnation.

There will be both shouts of joy, and sighs of horror, from the inhabitants of the earth at the Second Coming of Jesus.

If you're not a believer, what is it, really, that is keeping you from receiving the forgiveness of your sins, and eternal life?

*What or who* could be so important to you that you risk being left behind if the rapture happened right now, and odds are end up being taken in judgment at the end of the Tribulation?

Jot it down as we, in a moment, give you time to think about it. Look at what you've written down. Is it worth it to risk an eternity separated from God?

Believer, **you** will reveal the glory of Jesus Christ at His coming. People and angels will marvel at the work Jesus Christ has completed in you. It will be the greatest 'before-and-after' comparison of all time.

Take this time we have reserved to revel in His love.