

Introduction:

- *"After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!" (Acts 1:9-11, NLT)*
- A major event at the end of the age will be the Return of the King, and I am not talking Hobits and rings! A major doctrine found in the Bible that is common with all in the Christian faith is the Return of Jesus Christ at the end of the age. Some people refer to this as the second coming, the return of Christ and the day of the Lord.
- All things are now moving towards the Coming Day of Jesus Christ the Lord. And with His return everything reaches its final destination. History is summed up and concludes and we will forever live with Christ. This is a truth that Jesus himself taught and we are to embrace. So I want us to look at this truth in the last of our Series: Jesus Is... Three things this morning:
 - 1) What is the second coming?
 - 2) What should my response to this truth be?
 - 3) How does it inspire hope?

I. The Return of Christ

- A. What does this mean? There are over 318 references in the NT that speak of the return of Christ. Very simply, it means that Jesus is coming back again. The return of the Christ is the beginning of the end for evil. God is bringing all things to a close.
 1. In Acts 1:11 the angels say to the disciples, *"Just as you have seen Him taken from you into heaven, someday he will return from heaven."* A common theme in the NT is the Second Coming of Christ, or the return of Christ.
 2. His first coming we relate to in the Gospels as His birth. His mission at the time was to live holy, become the Lamb of God that takes away sin, rise, pour out the Spirit and return a second time.
 3. The first coming was as a lamb the second coming will be as a lion. Loud, like lightening with power!
- B. There are a number of terms used in the NT to communicate Christ's return. I want to share these with you and a few of the scriptures where they are found.
 1. The **parousia**, "the arrival", "the presence!" This is one of the major words used in the NT when speaking of the Second Coming of Christ. The english word most often associated with parousia is 'coming'. But the Greek carries the implications of arrival and presence. It is both becoming present and being present. Ie. Foreign invader at the border or a returning king. Unbelievers will see him as an invader. Believers will see Him as their king.

- a) In the Gospels the word is only used in Mt 24. And in each of the four times it is used in conjunction with the returning of Christ.
 - b) *"Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will signal your return and the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3, NLT)*
 - c) *"For as the lightning flashes in the east and shines to the west, so it will be when the Son of Man comes." (Matthew 24:27, NLT)*
 - d) *"When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day." (Mt 24:37, NLT)*
 - e) Paul uses it 12 time in his letters. 2 This 2:8; 1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 3:13; James 5:8;
2. **Phanerosis** - the manifestation.
 - a) *"When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:4, NKJV) Dead and living.*
 - b) *"and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away." (1 Peter 5:4, NKJV)*
 - c) *"...abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." (1 John 2:28, NKJV)*
 3. **Epiphaneia** - appearance, or appearing on the scene. It also means brightness, brilliance, shining. This has to do with the gloriousness of His appearing when he comes. It carries with it the tone of suddenness. 1 Thess 4:16, Trumpet, shout, voice, dead raised, transformed.
 - a) *"...the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming." (2 Thes 2:8, NKJV)*
 - b) Titus 2:13-14 speaks of His glorious appearing.
 4. **Apokalypis** - revelation, the uncovering of what is hidden. In the passover a piece matzo is hidden for the children to find. It literally means the unmoving of something. It is the revealing of Christ for the second time, in all of His glory. Lk 17:30; 1 Cor 1:7-8; 2 Thess 1:6-10; 1Peter 1:7.
 - a) The word conveys 'suddenness' and unexpectedness. It is the day when at last all things will be fully revealed.
 5. **Hemera** - "Day" not meaning 24 hours but a period of time. The last 'day', the day of the Lord, the day of Jesus Christ, there are to many scripture to begin to list these.
 - a) *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only." (Matthew 24:36, NKJV)*
 - b) It is both the day of the believers future blessedness and the wicked fearful day of judgement. Both taking place simultaneously on the Day of the Lord.

6. **Erchomai** - the coming.
 - a) *"He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon!" Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!"* (Revelation 22:20, NLT)
 - b) *"For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will judge all people according to their deeds."* (Matthew 16:27, NLT)

II. My Response To His Return

- A. Eager waiting and standing in faith.
 1. *"But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior."* (Philippians 3:20, NLT) We are already citizens of heaven now. But we eagerly long to see him face to face.
 2. *"Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1 Corinthians 1:7, NLT)
 3. *"...But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?"* (Luke 18:8, NLT)
- B. Loving Christ's Appearing
 1. *"Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."* (2 Timothy 4:8, NKJV) (agape)
 2. To love His appearing is to be in eager waiting. I.e. When a loved one has been gone for a while. You eagerly await their return. Upon returning you greet them with joy and happiness because you love their appearing.
- C. Wait patiently
 1. *"Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen."* (James 5:7, NLT)
 2. Our patience is to be out of His desire to reach more with His love.
- D. Purify yourself, personal holiness
 1. *"Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure."* (1 John 3:2-3, NLT)
 2. He who lives with hope of Christ's return excels at being ready. Paul said, those who get drunk get drunk at night...not knowing that if Christ returns that will be caught off guard. 1 Thess 5:7
- E. Be watchful
 1. This is the strongest NT exhortation in response to knowing that Christ is coming again...Be watchful. Jesus himself stresses this point.
 2. Mark 13:32 watch for you do not know when the time will come. Watch, vs 35-37

3. Mt 24: after urging the people to watch. He then gives parable to reinforce this command to watch.
 - a) homeowner and thief 24:42
 - b) parable of foolish virgins 25
 - c) parable of unfaithful steward 25
 - d) The stress is to watch. To the degree we are actually watching, really reflects how much we really believe in His return.
 - e) Jesus says repeatedly, I come as a thief. Rev 16:15; 1 Thess 5:1-2;
 - f) To be watchful is to be alert to ones surroundings, looking for signs not recognized by others.
- F. Continual service. Mt 25. Faithful steward.
 1. The key is not to know when He is returning so you can act properly but the key is how will you conduct yourself as you begin to see that He might be delayed.
 2. "Real readiness is motivated by the fact of His return, not its timing." David Pawson, *When Jesus Returns*.
- G. Preach the Gospel
 1. The time is short, therefore preach. He is coming back. The Great commission! Mt 28:18
 2. *"I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom: Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching."* (2 Timothy 4:1-2, NLT)
 3. We are not to remain gazing into the clouds but to be about the mission!

III. The Goal of Message of His Return, HOPE!

- A. What is hope? To hope is to expect with confidence. The word is used 52 x in the NT. And you will always find it connected to God in some way. God is the author of our hope. *"I pray that **God, the source of hope**, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will **overflow with confident hope** through the power of the Holy Spirit."* (Romans 15:13, NLT)
 1. Hope is the expectation of good. It is linked with trust and yearning, and differentiated from fear. *So long as there is life there is hope* (Eccl. 9:4).
 2. To hope is to trust. It is demanded even in good times. It is not our own projection but confidence in what God will do. Hope looks to the One whom no one can control.
 3. Salvation is connected to Christ alone! Therefore all future hope/blessedness is connected to and rests upon and in Him. He is, therefore, our hope! Come Lord Jesus!

4. Wayne Grudem - *"To some extent, then, the degree to which we actually long for Christ's return is a measure of the spiritual condition of our won lives at the moment."*
- B. Scriptures:
1. *"We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, ¹³ while we **look forward with hope** to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed."* NLT (Tt 2:12-13)
 2. *"For we through the Spirit eagerly **wait for the hope** of righteousness by faith."* (Galatians 5:5, NKJV)
 3. *"Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."* (2 Timothy 4:8, NKJV) Hope of reward.
 4. 1 Peter 1:3-9 living hope...
- C. So over and over again we see that our hope is connected with our relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.