

Having begun a study of what's commonly called The Olivet Discourse, I've mentioned that our Savior speaks in the tradition of the OT prophets. That is, He speaks of two events, one near and one distant, as if they're one event.

These two events are the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, and the destruction of the world at His second coming. The first event foretold or shadowed the second event. Thus, all the way up through v35, our Savior primarily speaks of the first event, as a precursor to the second event.

As a result, those commentators who only see the destruction of Jerusalem in vv4-35 are partially blind, and those commentators who only see the second coming of Christ are also partially blind. Both events are intended (the first shadowy of the second).

Now, having said this (that both events are intended), this doesn't deny that some verses may be largely or even exclusively true of one event. For example, when our says in v34—"Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place," He obviously only refers to the destruction of Jerusalem.

And so too, I want to argue this morning, that when we come to verses 29-31, He largely, though not exclusively, refers to the destruction of the world at His second coming.

I. A Global Change (v29)

II. A Glorious Sight (v30)

III. A Great Salvation (v31)

I. A Global Change (v29)

1. Our Savior within v29, uses common OT language and imagery that describes great change or calamity.
2. Albert Barnes—"The images used here are not to be taken literally. They are often employed by the sacred writers to denote 'any great calamities.' As the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars, would be an inexpressible calamity, so any great catastrophe - any overturning of kingdoms or cities, or dethroning of kings and princes is represented by the darkening of the sun and moon, and by some terrible convulsion in the elements."
3. Thus, we find identical language in Isa.13:10 concerning the destruction of Babylon, Isa.24:23 the destruction of Tyre, and Ezek.32:7-8 the destruction of Egypt.
4. In these three cases, the kingdoms were greatly changed—they were proud nations that were destroyed.
5. God's judgment fell upon them to permanently alter them—they never again regained their former glory.
6. This also happened in AD 70, when the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel were permanently changed.
7. Never again did Jerusalem recover its former glory, and never again with the nation of Israel recover its former glory.
8. Thus, the idea of permanent and radical change is at the very heart of this imagery our Savior uses in v29.
9. But there's no event in the history of mankind, that will more permanently alter the world than our Savior's second coming.
10. For in that event, He will do more than merely change a city or nation, but He will change the entire world.

11. Thus, the OT often foretold the destruction of the world, at the second coming of Christ, with similar imagery.
12. Joel 3:14-16—"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness."
13. Zephaniah 1:14-16—"The great day of the LORD is near; it is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers."
14. Now, it's admitted that if you read these prophecies in their context, they have an immediate and local fulfillment.
15. Both Joel and Zephaniah were pre-exilic (they forewarned the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians).
16. Thus, they were both describing the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians as a picture of the description of the world at Christ's second coming.
17. Rev.6:12-17—"I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the ricks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb' For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"
18. The book of Revelation contains 7 cycles, wherein the time between Christ's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> comings are described.
19. Thus, we have a description of His second coming and judgment in chapter 6, but chapter 7 describes salvation.
20. In fact, it ends in 7:15-17 with a wonderful description of heaven (notice, they came out of the great tribulation, v14).
21. Thus, we have all of the same ingredients in Revelation 6-7, as we find back in Matthew 24 (because they foretell the same event).

## II. A Glorious Sight (v30)

1. Without doubt, the most difficult thing within this passage, is to identify what our Savior means by "the sign of the Son of Man."
2. What is meant by this sign, it's evident our Savior was answering the second part of the disciple's question, v3—"Tell us, when will these things be (the temple destroyed)? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"
3. That is—"What would the sign of Your coming? Or—"How will we know the end of the age has come?"
4. (a) Some have suggested the sign was the cross—that is, the crucifixion would be a sign that Jerusalem's destruction was near.
5. John Chrysostom—"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; that is, the cross being brighter than the sun, since the sun will be darkened."

6. This of course did happen, as we are told darkness fell upon the land when our Savior was on the cross (Matt.27:45 – 'Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land').
7. (b) Some have suggested the destruction of the elements—thus, they tie the phrase (the sign of the Son of Man) back to v29.
8. That is, by "the sign of the Son of Man" is meant, the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light, and the stars will fall from heaven.
9. Thus, they interpret v29 literally—you will know when the Son of Man comes because darkness will cover the land and the heavens will be altered.
10. Lk.21:25-26—"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring."
11. It seems that the "signs" and the sun, moon, and stars are the same thing—in other words, when the sun and moon turn to darkness, this is the sign that Christ's coming has arrived.
12. What do I say about this possibility? Well, personally I think it's possible—the sun and moon may turn dark and the stars may fall.
13. This all may literally happen at Christ's coming—we are told elsewhere that the elements will melt with fervent heat (2Pet.3:10).
14. Brethren, let me put it like this—if the sun and moon stop shining and the stars fall—the end has come.
15. (c) Some have suggested it refers to Christ Himself—that is, Christ's bodily return is in itself the sign.
16. Now, admittedly, this view may not seem to have much warrant, but as you read v30, it actually makes sense.
17. Here's the bottom line—regardless what this sign is, it comes in connection to the second coming of Christ.
18. The sign doesn't come weeks, months, or years before Christ comes—the sign comes when Christ comes.
19. It's the sign of Christ's coming—it's the sign that Christ has come—it's the sign that the end has come.
20. William Hendriksen—"The very appearance of the Son of man upon clouds of glory is itself the sign, the one, great, final sign from the point of view of the earth. Christ's brilliant self-manifestation will be a sign that He is about to descend in order to meet His people while they ascend to meet Him in the air."
21. Thus, here I want say a few things about Christ's second coming as found in v30—it will be personal, dreadful, and glorious).
22. (1) It will be personal—"and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven"—His return will be bodily and personal.
23. This one of several reasons I've suggested, that shows our Savior is ultimately thinking about His second coming.
24. Acts 1:9-11—"Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, '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.'"
25. He was taken up bodily and He will come down bodily—every eye will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds.
26. But someone might object—How can every person on earth behold Christ if His return is bodily or personal?

27. Well, if God can create the heavens and earth out of nothing, He can ensure every eye beholds Christ.
28. (2) It will be dreadful—"and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn"—they will lament their lost condition.
29. Zech.12:10—"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."
30. Now, this prophecy foretells two events: first, the Day of Pentecost, and second, the crucifixion of Christ.
31. Thus, our Savior quotes the latter half of this prophecy in Jn.19:37 and applies it to those present at His crucifixion ("And again another Scripture says, 'They shall look on Him whom they pierced'").
32. And yet, both our Savior in Matthew 24:30 and John in Revelation 1:7, apply the same prophecy to Christ's second coming.
33. Rev.1:7—"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so. Amen."
34. When Christ returns to this earth, "every eye will see Him"—and this includes the very people who pierced.
35. But notice—"And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him"—they will mourn because of their doom.
36. (3) It will be glorious—"they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."
37. This is in contrast to His first coming, when He came in humility and was crucified in shame and disgrace.
38. Dan.7:13-14—"I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."
39. That this is a prophecy of the Messiah is agreed upon by everyone, and that our Savior alludes to it in Matthew 24:30 is also agreed to by everyone.
40. The only main difference among commentators concerns the timing of the event—does it refer to Christ's ascension or second coming?
41. The prophecy concerns four beasts (7:3), that are later identified as four kings or kingdoms (7:17)—these are the kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.
42. Thus, it's very possible that these four kingdoms merely represent all of the kingdoms of man (throughout all of history).
43. And Christ's kingdom (that was promised Him from eternity and given to Him in His ascension), is now taken possession of.
44. Dan.7:27—"Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

### III. A Great Salvation (v31)

1. I believe v31 is one of the most beautiful verses in the whole Bible—there are three things within it (a trumpet, angels, and the elect).
2. (1) A trumpet—"He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet"—Scripture speaks of a trumpet at Christ coming in two other places.

3. 1Cor.15:51-52—"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."
4. 1Thess.4:16—"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."
5. Whatever is meant by the trumpet, I suggest these three verses, Matt.24:31, 1Cor.15:51, and 1Thess.4:16, are all referring to the same event.
6. They all describe the second coming of Christ, which gives way to the universal resurrection and judgment.
7. Thus, the blowing of a trumpet likely harkens back to the Day of Jubilee, which happened every 50<sup>th</sup> year.
8. Lev.25:9-10—"Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you."
9. It was on this day that all slaves were liberated from their debts and servitude and allowed to return to their family.
10. It was a day of joy and celebration, and it was also time of restoration between friends and loved ones.
11. I think this is the primary purpose of this trumpet—to underscore the festive nature of Christ's return.
12. Lk.21:27-28—"Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near (your Day of Jubilee has come)."
13. (2) Angels—"And He will send His angels"—the Greek word rendered "angels" literally means "messenger."
14. Angels are messengers of God—they are created beings, who exist for the purpose and pleasure of God.
15. The Scriptures teaches, that when Christ returns, He will bring with Him a mighty host of holy angels.
16. Matt.25:31—"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory."
17. His holy angels will serve as helpers on that day, and will assist Him in gathering His people to Himself.
18. We learn from Matt.13:49-50—"The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire."
19. Thus, the angels will be directly involved in separating the sheep from the goats, the wicked from the righteous.
20. (3) The elect—"and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."
21. The elect will be "gathered together"—that is, they will be taken from every nation to form a single nation.
22. 1Thess.4:16-17—"For the Lord Himself descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."
23. Christ will not only return with the angels but those who've died in Him (the perfected souls of every believer).

24. The dead in Christ will rise first—this means, their bodies will be raised glorious and united to their souls.
25. Then we who are alive and remain shall be changed—this means our souls will be perfected and our bodies glorified.
26. Then Christ's entire Bride (made up ever all His elect – OT and NT) shall be caught up together with Christ in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.
27. This simply mean, Christ has come to destroy His enemies and turn the old heavens and earth into new ones.
28. But He does this with His Bride at His side—He comes down to this earth with His Bride at His side.
29. Thus, according to our Savior's teaching, I suggest His second coming must be viewed from their perspectives (fearfully, soberly, and gladly).
30. (a) Fearfully—by this I mean, those who are not Christian this morning need to view that day fearfully.
31. 2Thess.1:9—"For in that day Jesus Christ will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire."
32. And yet, within v30, there's hope provided for you—for notice such people mourn when they see Christ.
33. But, as I've said earlier, it is too late—the day of salvation has passed and the day of judgment has come.
34. But today is still the day of salvation—remember, our Savior is speaking prophetically of what happens in the future.
35. And why would He do that, but to warn you—to warn you, that you need to mourn now and not then.
36. Lk.7:21-25—"Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep...Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh."
37. As I've said, the trumpet in v31 signifies the Day of Jubilee, and has specific reference to the saints (and their future salvation).
38. And yet, there is another sense in which the trumpet is blown, every time the gospel of Christ is preached (do you hear that trumpet—it means a ransom has been paid and redemption secured).
39. (b) Soberly—by this I mean, Scripture portrays the day of judgment as a sober event for all true Christians.
40. Rom.14:10-12—"But why do you judge your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."
41. Yes, we given an account as forgiven and accepted—we give an account to God as our Father, or Christ as our Husband—but we all give an account.
42. This is why our Savior repeatedly exhorted His people to be mindful of His coming; to be found faithful.
43. Thus, the second coming of Christ is a sober event, as all Christians will give an account to Christ for their deeds.
44. (c) Gladly—this is without doubt the emphases of v31—we are to anticipate our Savior's return with joy.
45. For when He returns, the trumpet will sound, and all Christians of all times, will be glorified and united together as one church.
46. It's very easy to grow weary and tired in this wicked and evil age—there are so many reasons to be discouraged.
47. But hold your head up, dear Christian, for you shall hear that trumpet soon—our beloved Savior is coming—the Day of Jubilee is drawing near—our redemption is closer to us now, then when we first believed.