

The Arrival of the King

Matthew 24:39-31

INTRODUCTION: Jerusalem was filled with the standard hustle and bustle of any first century capital city. Business was booming in the Temple complex.

Enterprising entrepreneurs had set up shop in the court of the Gentiles providing the required sacrifice to the foreign sojourners who had come to learn of the gracious God of Israel, at a price.

The required temple tax had caused money changers to set up tables in alignment along the Temple walls with various signs indicating that day's rate of exchange. One shouted over another, urging the passing worshipper into their particular booth. What had begun as a convenience had devolved into a carnival.

The Father's House that had once been a house of prayer for the nations, now sounded more like the opening bell of Wall Street.

But this day Christ has come...He had been touring his homeland of Galilee to the North where he had heard rumors and seen evidence of the sacred Temple being overrun by irreligious opportunists.

As he enters the Temple courts, he pauses, he listens, he gazes around... then suddenly, compulsively he runs over to grab a bundle of cords which had been used to lead the sacrifices into the Temple. He fashions the cords into a weapon, a whip and begins thrashing the money changers with one hand and flipping tables over with the other.

Consumed with zeal, he shouts repeatedly, "my Father's house is to be a house of prayer for the nations, but look what you have done to it!" Despite being well armed, the temple guards were the first to flee. Followed quickly by the businessmen, some angry, others confused, all afraid.

When the dust settled that day, the bustling sounds of the market place could no longer be heard, just the faint whispers of prayer amidst the bleating of sheep that one by one were offered in sacrifice. The King had come home... and things were made right.

The Bible tells us that there is another day when King Jesus will come home and cleanse another temple. Not the manmade temple of first century Jerusalem, but the temple of this entire planet. His whips will not be the cords of the market, but rather the tails of comets, bolts of lightning, and the thunder of judgement.

Theologians have discovered several ironic correlations between the scriptural record of the building of the Temple (Exodus) and the scriptural record of the creation of planet Earth. Notice the similarities...

Creation Compared to Temple:

1. Three Sections -

- As God created the universe He divided into three sections; the visible Earth, the visible heavens, and the invisible heavens.
- He also divided the Tabernacle into three parts; the outer court, the priestly court, and the Holy of Holies, where God would be.

2. Seven Days - When God created the universe, it took Him six days. On the seventh day He rested. Now compare that to the seven times in Exodus where it says. "The Lord said to Moses" (Exodus 25:1, 30:11, 30:17, 30:22, 30:34, 31:1, and 31:12). This equates with the seven times that God said "let there be" in Genesis.

The seventh time God said. "Let there be", the Scripture said. "He rested". The seventh time" God said to Moses", it was, don't do any work on the Sabbath. Rest. (Exodus 31:12 and 13).

3. The Workers -

- The main job for the inhabitants of Eden, was to work the land and care for it.
- The main job for the priest was to take care of all the furnishings and do the work in God's new home. (Numbers 3:7-8).

4. The Entrance -

- The entrance to the Garden of Eden was on the east. The entrance to the Tabernacle was also in the East. See Genesis 3:24 and (Exodus 26 process of deduction).
- The entrance to the Garden of Eden was guarded by cherubim (Genesis 3:24). The entrance to the Tabernacle and the holy of holies were guarded by cherubim woven into the fabric. (Exodus 26:31-33).

5. The Trees -

God placed a tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9). God had the Israelites craftsmen build the lamp stand or menorah, He had them build it to resemble and represent the tree of life, with buds, blossoms, branches, and fruit. (Exodus 25:31- 39).

6. The Stones - In Ezekiel 28:13, it lists the precious stones that were present in the Garden of Eden. These are the same stones that are worn by the priest in the Tabernacle (Exodus 28:17- 20),

So the World was created as God's Dwelling place - but as Adam Earth's King rebelled. Then as redemption history progressed, God led Moses to develop a temple where His "will would be done on Earth as it was in Heaven".

IN THE BEGINNING - the Entire planet was meant to be a Temple of God amidst a Universe that He oversaw.

The natural earth is supposed to be filled with the Skakina Glory of our God.

THAT IS WHY: You can feel so close to God in nature... walk on the beach... watch sunrise over the mountains. You remember that this world is God's temple.

AND THAT IS WHY - from time to time God steps into creation and His original temple responds accordingly.

- **Nature Responded to her Makers first coming**

- There was a new star in the heavens

- **Nature Responded at the Cross**

Matthew 27:45-46

45. Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour.

Matthew 27:51

51. ... and the earth shook and the rocks were split.

So one would only expect that there would be some reaction from the planet as her Creator draws near to set all things right and take His place in His original Temple.

TEXT: Matthew 24:29–31 (ESV)

²⁹ "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.

Imagine for a moment, the darkness that covers the earth. No light from the sun, none from the moon or the stars... The only light provided is that of meteors blazing through the night sky. Asteroids flying far too close to Earth's orbit. Comets turning in an ever widening spiral.

Each time a comet approaches earth, religious pandemonium ensues... Do you remember the Hale Bopp comet in the 90's produced the mass suicide of the Heaven's Gate Cult? Imagine a day when the darkened sky is filled with comets, asteroids, and meteors.

Matthew 24:30–31 (ESV)

³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man,

That is, the sign that IS the Son of Man. Some have suggested that a cross would appear like the one seen by Constantine the Great... but the language here is emphatic... this sign IS the Son of Man... this is Jesus.

30b. 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.

That language sums up the point of the second coming. It moves rapidly and encapsulates all that Christ will do when He arrives. In other passages we get a play by play:

- The setting up of a Throne
- The Millennial Reign
- The Final Judgments
- The Beama Seat of Rewards
- The New Heaven and New Earth

But here in Matthew Jesus sums all of those things up with the pinnacle event of his Coming - **the eternal state of all mankind**. He elaborates more fully in chapter 25....

Matthew 25:31–33 (ESV)

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

Jesus says here that the GATHERING will be international, but the JUDGEMENT will be personal.

It was not uncommon in Bible days for sheep and goats to be herded together.

Sheep - Sheep a beautiful picture of simplicity. A picture of the people of God.

Goats- Goats on the other hand are a picture of destruction. They are quarrelsome in nature. They are ill tempered. By the way, it's interesting that goats are used many times in devil worship and in witchcraft.

And so the sheep are pictures of people of God. The goats are pictures of the unregenerate.

Matthew 25:34 (ESV)

34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'

That is one of the greatest invitations in the Bible when Jesus says, "Come on in"

- It reminds you of when God said to Noah, "Come in to the Ark"
- It is the great words of gospel invitation.
- The Lord's word to every lost person in this building this morning is "Come - come to Jesus and be saved."

Well, you see friends, if you will respond positively to the "**come**" of **salvation** that means one of these days you're going to get into the "**come of celebration**"

All of the rewards, all of the Joy, all of the pleasure that Jesus has carefully prepared for his church for the last 2000 years - on this day they are open and you are invited to partake.

ILLUSTRATION: An old missionary couple had been working in Africa for years, and they were returning to New York City to retire. They had no pension; their health was broken; they were defeated, discouraged, and afraid. They discovered they were booked on the same ship as **President Teddy Roosevelt**, who was returning from one of his big-game hunting expeditions.

No one paid much attention to them. They watched the fanfare that accompanied the President's entourage, with passengers trying to catch a glimpse of the great man.

As the ship moved across the ocean, the old missionary said to his wife, "Something is wrong. Why should we have given our lives in faithful service for God in Africa all these many years and have no one care a thing about us? Here this man comes back from a hunting trip and everybody makes much over him, but nobody gives two hoots about us."

"Dear, you shouldn't feel that way," his wife said. "I can't help it; it doesn't seem right." When the ship docked in New York, a band was waiting to greet the President. The mayor and other dignitaries were there. The papers were full of the President's arrival, but no one noticed this missionary couple. They slipped off the ship and found a cheap flat on the East side, hoping the next day to see what they could do to make a living in the city.

That night, the man's spirit broke. He said to his wife, "I can't take this; God is not treating us fairly." His wife replied, "Why don't you go into the bedroom and tell that to the Lord?"

A short time later he came out from the bedroom, but now his face was completely different. His wife asked, "Dear, what happened?" "The Lord settled it with me," he said. "I told him how bitter I was that the President should receive this tremendous homecoming, when no one met us as we returned home. **And when I finished, it**

seemed as though the Lord put his hand on my shoulder and simply said, ‘**BUT YOU’RE NOT HOME YET!**’”

Then Jesus gives an *enigmatic* passage to describe the Sheep how he will recognize the sheep... **Matthew 25:35–46 (ESV)**

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these **my brothers**, you did it to me.’

Please notice - this isn’t just random acts of kindness, this is specific and intentional kindness toward those who are suffering because of their allegiance to Jesus.

ILLUSTRATION: Remember when Jesus met Paul on the Damascus Road he said, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me???” Saul said, “Who are you? I’ve never met you!” The the Lord said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting!”

Saul was struck with the realization that Jesus Christ *so associated himself* with His people that for a man to persecute a follower of Christ, he was persecuting Christ himself.

THEY ARE HIS Church, His ecclesia... One of the chief evidences that you belong to the shepherd is that you love and care for the sheep.

⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into **eternal punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Notice those two words, eternal punishment.

Some judgement is corrective, but not Hell... it is simply Punitive.

Hell at first can seem radical, extreme, unbecoming punishment for the crime. But my dear friend, the issue is NOT what crime was committed to WHO the crime was against.

The gravity of the offense is always in direct proportion to the dignity of the offended.

ILLUSTRATION: If we see a small child pulling a worm to pieces we would say don't do that... it's cruel. But we wouldn't be appealed by it... you evil wicked little boy... we wouldn't lose sleep. If the child was torturing a cat would that not be worse? yes, In our scale of understanding a cat is a more noble animal. what if he was torturing a sibling?

The gravity of the offense is always in direct proportion to the dignity of the offended.

You haven't offended me... that's not big thing at all if you had... you have offended your Maker.

ILLUSTRATION: The issue is not WHAT sin you committed, but WHO you sinned against. Example:

- If I lie to my dog, that's bad and he may get frustrated.
- If I lie to my wife it's I may be sleeping in the dog house.
- If I lie to a Policeman I may get a ticket
- If I lie to a Judge I may go to jail
- If I lie to a Supreme Court Justice under oath – the penalty could be very, very severe.

Why? It's not about WHAT sin you commit, it's about WHO you sin against.

Jesus says here, "When you hurt my people, when you gossiped and slandered my people, when you conspired against my people, when you excluded my people... what soever you did to the least of these MY BROTHERS... you did also unto me... I am the most offended party.

That is why David could say after the horrible sin with Bathsheba to God, "Against you and you alone have I sinned". Eh, what about his wife? What about Bathsheba's husband, what about Uriah, what about the country... right.. but above all of those God was the most offended party.

We have a serious problem my friend - and there is only one solution... REMEMBER Jesus said, "When you see all these things happen, know that I'm right at the door". He's once again entering his ultimate temple... and it will not be a pretty day when he does... be ready.