

Audio Transcript of Sermon
April 2, 2022
The Return of Jesus Christ

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Christians are naturally interested in the return of Jesus Christ because we know when this happens, it will usher in a permanent time of peace and incredible happiness. Every trouble that we see in the world today, will become extinct. With some of the troubles we face today, we are also reminded of prophecies concerning the return of Jesus, and knowing what the Bible says about the return of Jesus is important because it is possible for us to get this wrong and jeopardize our opportunity for eternal life.

During a time of conflict and hardship, people look to faith as a source of comfort, and because some have not exercised their faith during times of calm and plenty, they use their faith in a manner that is untested and unsure. These people have a type of faith and by their demonstrated actions lack the confidence to consistently live through their faith. It is these people who have shadows of doubt within their faith that are the easiest for Satan to pick off. Much like a lion chasing prey in the wild, only the most confident and sure survive the pursuit, and when hesitation or weakness sets in, death quickly follows.

Towards the end of his earthly ministry when asked about His return to earth, Jesus made it very clear that His return will be as clear to see as the sunrise or vultures circling over a dead animal. The return of Jesus will not be cloaked in mystery, and yet many will try to deceive the faithful, and their techniques will be so convincing that it's almost hard to believe that anyone could withstand their trickery, but God's people, the elect, will. Jesus will not return in any secret place or isolated part of the wilderness. We are warned ahead of time. Matthew twenty-four verse twenty-three.

Matthew 24:23-51

23. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25. Behold, I have told you before.

26. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

27. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

28. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

We know before Jesus returns there will be some type of solar and lunar event with both the sun being darkened and the moon not giving her light. From these verses we can't tell if some type of solar eclipse is being described or if what happens is a miracle. We can't tell if a lunar eclipse is being predicted or a new moon is indicated. The stars falling from heaven could be a metaphorical description of the fall of Satan and the demons, a meteor shower, or another miracle. We do know at the conjunction of these events at the time God determines, the sign of Jesus will appear in heaven, and instead of being happy about this, people throughout all nations will be sad because these people realize they put themselves on the wrong side of history.

It is at this time that Jesus sends His angels with the sound of a trumpet to gather the elect from around the world. Even though this prophecy and warning was given thousands of years ago, at the time of these prophesied events, these will surely happen within a generation. Verse twenty-nine.

29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

33. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

34. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Having this information does not give us any clue to when this will happen. Each generation looks to the current events of their time to consider how these might apply to the words of Jesus, and since the time of Jesus, each generation has passed away. Jesus tells us that everyday life will be happening at His return, and because some in the faith will be consumed by everyday life, they will not be taken. The vision of everyday life given to us, eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, can happen in any situation, including war zones, and it tends to happen in the grandest scale during times of peace and prosperity. In whatever situations of life we find ourselves we need to be doing what is expected of us. There is never an excuse to take a vacation from being a Christian. Verse thirty-five.

- 35. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.**
- 36. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.**
- 37. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**
- 38. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,**
- 39. And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**
- 40. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.**
- 41. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.**
- 42. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.**
- 43. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.**
- 44. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.**
- 45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?**
- 46. Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.**
- 47. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.**
- 48. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;**
- 49. And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;**

50. The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

51. And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Knowing that the return of Jesus is a visible event is important for the faithful to remember because the lie will be so believable and convincing. In the final book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, we are again reminded of how Jesus will return, with clouds so that every eye will see him, and again this event is foreshadowed as being a terrifying event for the people on earth. Revelation one verse four.

Revelation 1:4-8

4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5. And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

As the disciples were considering what life would be like after the death and resurrection of Jesus, they were instructed to remain in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit, reminded again that it is not our place to know when Jesus will return, just that God the Father will make this happen. They were also assured that Jesus will return as He ascended. Acts one verse one.

Acts 1:1-11

1. The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

- 2. Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:**
- 3. To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:**
- 4. And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.**
- 5. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.**
- 6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?**
- 7. And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.**
- 8. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**
- 9. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.**
- 10. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;**
- 11. Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.**

In Luke we are reminded of signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and of the fear that will come upon people. We are also introduced to stormy oceans. It is then that Jesus is seen by all people returning in a cloud. Luke twenty-one verse twenty-five.

Luke 21:25-28

- 25. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;**
- 26. Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.**

27. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

28. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Mark gives us very similar information, adding the return of Jesus comes after a time of trouble, and shows again, Jesus returns in the clouds with power and great glory. Mark thirteen verse twenty-four.

Mark 13:24-27

24. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,

25. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

26. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

27. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

In Matthew twenty-five we are given the parable of the ten virgins of whom half are foolish and half are wise. In the parable the foolish virgins try to get oil for their lamps from the wise virgins, and are rebuffed by them knowing sharing their oil could imperil their own ability to get to meet the groom. We are then told that we need to watch because we do not know when Jesus will return. Matthew twenty-five verse one.

Matthew 25:1-13

1. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

3. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

9. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

11. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Luke tells us that we need to be prepared at all times for the return of Jesus, by doing what we are expected to do. By always being ready, we will be ready whenever Jesus returns. Luke twelve verse thirty-five.

Luke 12:35-40

35. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

36. And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

39. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

We know many ignore God and Jesus because they see no value in faith. They see God and Jesus as dead and uncaring. Through their hurt and pain, they ridicule God and Jesus and all who believe, fulfilling their own desires, instead of doing what God and Jesus would expect, rejecting all ideas about the return of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God. We know in faith these exist according to God's plan. We look forward to the new heaven and new earth so beautifully described

for us in Revelation, and we know there is a timing sequence for this. It is only after Jesus returns that the new heaven and new earth are established, and from other verses in the Bible we know this would not happen immediately upon His return. Second Peter three verse one.

2 Peter 3:1-13

- 1. This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:**
- 2. That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:**
- 3. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,**
- 4. And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.**
- 5. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:**
- 6. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:**
- 7. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.**
- 8. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.**
- 9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**
- 10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.**
- 11. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,**
- 12. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?**
- 13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.**

So, some of the details we know about the return of Jesus Christ include that we do not know when Jesus will return, but it will be preceded by some type of solar and lunar event when light is not given and a time of trouble, stars will fall from heaven, the oceans will be storming, and people will be fearful of the return of Jesus as He openly descends through the clouds for all to see, because these people have rejected Jesus and God the Father in having any relevance in their lives.

From this we know what cannot happen. Jesus will not return when there are not corresponding solar and lunar events where light is not given, where nothing is happening with the stars, when there is not a time of trouble before. Jesus will not return if the solar and lunar event is a display of light. A dancing and pulsating sun is inconsistent with the return of Jesus when looking at Bible verses. We also know that Jesus will not return in any type of secret event, or return in an area of isolation where His return is not easily seen by all. Jesus will also not return and be welcomed by all.

In our minds through faith, we need to remember the Bible description of how Jesus returns, so that we are not fooled and deceived, and with all of the descriptions given to us, there is one crucial and obvious proof remaining for us, and we will look at that proof toward the end of the study.

Between now and the return of Jesus Christ, we know we need to be doing what is expected of us, and among many things this also includes having lots of patience. We cannot be impatient for the return of Jesus, nor can we use our present journey to pick on each other, as if we were bored children in the backseat of a long road trip. We have to patiently wait with each other together and live our lives so that our lives become a reflection of the faith we have, for our salvation, and so that we can be used by Jesus to lead others to salvation. James five verse seven.

James 5:7-20

7. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

9. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

10. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

12. But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

13. Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

14. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

18. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

19. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

20. Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

For the righteous, the return of Jesus will be a welcome event and we know from verses that most of the world will be fearful of His return because they are not righteous. When Jesus returns it will be a time of triumph for the faithful, and will be openly seen by the unfaithful and all who live on earth. When Jesus returns, He will bring mercy to His people, the elect, as He returns to judge the people of the earth. Psalm ninety-eight verse one.

Psalm 98:1-9

1. O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

- 2. The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.**
- 3. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.**
- 4. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.**
- 5. Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.**
- 6. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King.**
- 7. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.**
- 8. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together**
- 9. Before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.**

In writing to the Thessalonians, Paul reminded them of the return of Jesus, explaining once again that Jesus will come at a time when we least expect him. We know we do not know when Jesus will return. We do know there are certain events which Bible verses show will happen prior to His return. In Thessalonians, we are shown that the return of Jesus happens at a time when people are hopeful for peace, not knowing that their hope for peace will result in sudden destruction.

Unlike this world which does not know God and Jesus, God's people do not live in darkness, unaware of what will happen. We might not know when Jesus will return and through faith we do know that Jesus will return according to how His return is described in the Bible. With this knowledge, now is the day of our salvation and we must be now doing what is expected of us. Our focus, what we do today, is not rooted in anger or wrath. Our focus is to obtain salvation, and if we need to obtain salvation, this logically means, we have not yet been given salvation. If we do what is expected of us, we expect salvation, but between now and the return of Jesus is always the possibility we can abandon our calling, to not do what is expected of us. Paul concluded this thought by encouraging the Thessalonians to comfort and encourage each other. As we encourage each other, through our actions we are demonstrating the phrase, "Be strong and of good courage." First Thessalonians five verse one.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

- 1. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.**
- 2. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.**
- 3. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.**
- 4. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.**
- 5. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.**
- 6. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.**
- 7. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.**
- 8. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.**
- 9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,**
- 10. Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.**
- 11. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.**

There remains a final proof regarding the return of Christ that I think we all know about, but we often overlook. There is one thing that when it happens will easily confirm that Jesus has indeed returned. We have talked about how the sun will be darkened and moon will not give light. We have read about falling stars, a time of trouble, raging oceans, and even people who will falsely claim to be Jesus.

We have read how Jesus will return openly, for all to see, and how the many will be so fearful at His return. Jesus will return as He ascended to heaven, in the clouds, and in a passage we save when we consider friends and family who have recently died and during certain Holy Days of the year, the final proof regarding the return of Jesus is given to us.

In another passage from first Thessalonians, Paul reminded the Thessalonians of what happens to people who die in the faith, and in his explanation gives this final

proof regarding the return of Jesus Christ. With the return of Jesus Christ, something happens to the dead in Christ and to all the faithful who are alive at that time. You see, at the return of Jesus, the dead in Christ are risen from the dead, and those who are alive are gathered together with Jesus in the clouds. As Paul writes, this is a great comfort to us and also serves as a final proof of the return of Jesus. First Thessalonians four verse thirteen.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

It's important for us to know what the Bible says about the return of Jesus because there will be very convincing attempts to deceive the people of God, the elect. If we do not know how the return of Jesus is described in the Bible, we are much more likely to be deceived. Without this understanding, we could find ourselves believing that Jesus has returned to Siberia or the Sahara, or that Jesus has returned through a dancing and pulsating sun. We could look at masses of happy people and join their bandwagon when understanding tells us the masses will be fearful of His return.

Through understanding we know that no person knows when Jesus will return. Only God knows this information, not even the angels know this information, so be wary of any claim that an angel has revealed this information. We know before Jesus returns there will be a time of trouble followed by a hope for peace. Because history has shown us many periods of trouble followed by a hope for

peace, we must consider that there will be many future periods of trouble followed by a hope for peace that will come before Jesus returns.

If, when all of the conditions specified in the Bible are met and at what looks like the return of Jesus we find our bodies changed to spirit as we float upwards and notice others in the faith for whom the same has happened, and notice some who have died in the faith for whom the same has happened, we can be assured we are on the right side of history, and if we find ourselves in our physical body looking up at others for whom this has happened but not for us, we can be assured we allowed ourselves to be aligned to the wrong side of history. In either case we will be witnessing the return of Jesus.

Why does this all matter? We know the Bible speaks of the Beast and False Prophet who are on the wrong side of history and the two witnesses who are on the right side of history. We know the return of Jesus will be used to deceive many and bring them to the wrong side of history. We who are called are to seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, we seek the new heaven and the new earth, the New Jerusalem, and we must remain on the right side of history.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.