

Coming To Know Him

Christ's Glorious Appearing

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We humans put a great deal of stock in our eyesight. We use various phrases in our common vocabulary, various idioms and such, which emphasize the fact that we rely on our sight quite a bit. For instance we say things like, "Seeing is believing." Something that another person tells us may not strike us as plausible, so we say, "Well, I've got to see that first before I can believe it. You're pulling my leg, aren't you?" "No, I really saw that." "Well, I'd have to see it for myself."

And so, we confirm other's doubts about a thing by saying, "But I saw it with my own eyes! You can believe my eyewitness testimony. I saw it happen. They were little green men. Really!"

But, if we see it with our own eyes, it seems to put a stamp of confirmation on things.

We talk about buying something "sight unseen," which means that we go at whatever this purchase is without having laid eyes on the thing. It suggests that we took a considerable risk in purchasing this thing, even though we did not see it.

There is also, for instance, the technological acronym, "wysiwyg," that is used in such things as describing computer interfaces, and such. And this simply stands for, "what you see is what you get." So, if somebody says, "that is a wysiwyg interface," that means it is going to give something pretty true to life. If you see it on the screen that is the way it is. I believe that it was Apple that was the first one to come out with a true wysiwyg interface.

So we can see that people like to see things to believe them. They like to lay their eyes on things. And, that helps calm their doubts about a thing.

This reliance on what we see, and we can include in this not just what we see, but what we hear, smell, taste, or feel—all five senses—makes it very difficult for us to deal with things that we cannot see. There are a lot of things that we cannot see that actually do exist.

To illustrate this, all we need to do is to consider how long it took mankind to understand some of these 'unseen' things. For instance, we have only been aware for a few hundred years that the air we breathe, that is all around us and is so important to so

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many natural functions, is made up of minute invisible particles that occur naturally as gases that float around. Things such as a fire burning, which does not take place in the absence of oxygen; the transmission of sound, which has to have something to move on, to flow through, and it uses the gases in the air; also decomposition which has to take place in an environment of air so that things will break down.

We cannot see these particles because they are so, so tiny. We did not really see them at all until we could get the electron microscope to even verify that they are there. But we had to have the scientific knowledge to figure it out; we had to be able to see those little particles before we *believed* that they could do all these things, that they were necessary for all these things.

Another invisible thing that we use every day, it is actually working right now in this room, is electricity. It is powering our sound system, the lights, the air conditioning system that is keeping us all comfortable today. But, we cannot see electricity.

If anyone time-traveling on H. G. Wells time machine into our time right now would think that our lights and our appliances, and our computers and our fans, and even our electric cars we have now, are run by magic. All you do is turn a key. All you do is flip a switch. All you do is slide a bar, and things happen. And you can see those things happening, but you cannot see *how* those things happen. It looks like somebody has a magic wand, and they are making things happen.

Even if we were to show our historic guest all the wires in the walls, and explain the intricate details of electricity and how it works, he would still not see how it works because electricity is invisible. Electricity is merely a flow of charged ions along a copper wire, or some other conductor.

Now if we had him touch an exposed “hot” wire, he might “see” what we are talking about. But, he actually could not see what was going on unless maybe it arced, and he could see the movement of the electric spark jump from the wire to his finger. So he could certainly feel the shock, but he could have just as easily attribute that to magic, as to science, or such a thing we call electricity. To him it is invisible and mysterious, and really to most of us without an electrical engineering degree, it is still a bit mysterious too.

But it works. Every time we flip a switch on the wall we see that electricity is there, and it works.

Now, how about natural laws? Gravity—have you ever seen gravity? I have not. The

laws and these forces are invisible. You cannot see them. We can see their effects on us, and other things, as they interact, but in terms of understanding the mechanisms of these laws we really have a hard time grasping them. We are very limited. We can memorize a law, such as Newton's third law, which says, "To every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." We can all understand that. If you do something, there is another force that will come back against that. But, to understand Newton's third law and its ramifications, requires a lot more learning than most of us care to pursue. Here is where the physicists come in. They understand these laws, and they can figure out how they work, and ways to put them to use.

We can easily see examples of opposing forces acting upon one another. But, I will just quote Newton himself from his *Principia* where he published his laws.

"If you press a stone with your finger, the finger is also pressed by the stone. If a horse draws a stone tied to a rope, the horse (if I may say so) will be equally be drawn back toward the stone. For the distended rope by the same endeavor to relax, or unbend itself, will draw the horse as much towards the stone, as it does the stone towards the horse, and will obstruct the progress of the one as much as it advances the other."

So, in his 17th century way of looking at things, he used these natural things. I guess people pressed stones more than we do today. . . . We do not draw stones with horses much these days, we use trucks and things. But, we can get the idea. If you do one thing, if you move in one direction while attached to something else, it is going to try and pull you back just as much as you are trying to pull it away.

But, even seeing all of this, we cannot see the forces that make the law work. We cannot see gravity, friction, momentum, force, inertia, or any of the other forces that work on our lives every day. We have learned how to spot them, in terms of knowing that they are there, and working. We have learned how to measure them and predict them and work with them. But, beyond this kind of practical understanding, they are still an amazing and mystifying to most of us. We are glad that they work, and glad that they are there. I have always been glad for friction, because I hate slipping and sliding away. Just knowing they are there is enough, but we really cannot see them. We cannot say seeing is believing, except in terms of their effects.

Now, this principle that I have been working on here of human reliance on sight, comes into play with terrible consequences when the subject is the invisible God of heaven and earth. We know that II Corinthians 5:7 says that we are to live by faith, not by sight. But, most of the world lives by sight, and not by faith. And so, not seeing God they tend not to believe Him. Not seeing God, they tend not to think that He works in this world, and

with them.

None of us, though, have ever seen God. And that makes it difficult to believe that He exists, and it makes it difficult to conceptualize Him as a Person, it makes it difficult to consider Him to be active and working in our lives, and world events.

Paul tells us in Romans 1 that nature provides plenty of evidence that He exists. And we can certainly point that out. We can see that He is a great designer; we can see that things work in tandem that by chance would never have occurred together. And if one of them had by chance occurred, certainly the other would not have. It is just too much of a gamble to think that those things would have happened.

History is full of proofs that He has manipulated events so that they would conform to His plan, so that He can move things along to the ends that He has decreed.

But, we never saw them take place. We were not there. The best we can do is have somebody who we feel is rather reliable report them to us down through history. But, that person is merely a man or woman. They cannot always be entirely objective.

If we were honest, and I hope that most of us are, we would admit that He has directed our lives to this point, or at least we have seen Him step in at some critical juncture in our lives, and changed things for us. And, maybe we can say, "Aha! There was God at work!" But, even for us, every one of us here would have to admit that He never appeared to them, and said, "This is the way. Walk in it." None of us have ever seen Him. He has not stepped into our lives in that visual manner.

Now, today is the Feast of Trumpets as you all know. And as we understand it, this day commemorates the return of Jesus Christ in power and glory to this earth as King of kings, and Lord of lords. It looks forward to a day in which He will reveal Himself to all mankind. They will see Him. It is the day of His appearing, as it is called in the New Testament. The last trumpet will sound, and all eyes will see Him. And, everyone will know at that moment, everyone on earth will realize that our God is the Great Almighty Creator and Ruler of mankind.

And, finally, in terms of God, seeing will be believing!

We are going to start as we often do on these holy days back in the book of Leviticus. Please turn to chapter 23 and the two-versed description of this Feast of Trumpets.

Leviticus 23:24-25 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh

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month, on the first day of the month [today, Tishri 1], you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LOORD."

So, as we know today is that day on the Hebrew calendar, which is the beginning of the civil year. The Jews call it their new year—Rosh Hashanah. The sacred year begins in the springtime in the month of Abib, or Nisan, and is found in Exodus 12. The Israelites functioned for many years with these dual years.

I do not know how many of you are aware of this, I may have mentioned this in the past, but Tishri 1 in ancient Israel and Judah was also the beginning of the Regnal year of kings. This means that their reigns were counted year by year from the first day of Tishri—from the Feast of Trumpets. So, this is the beginning of two of those new years—their civil year, and the king's regnal year.

The regnal year is important for us because of the fact that Jesus Christ is going to return to this earth on the Feast of Trumpets and that will be the beginning of His reign, just like the ancient kings of Israel and Judah began theirs on the Feast of Trumpets. He will continue that pattern by beginning His regnal year on the Day of Trumpets.

Obviously, as we have come to learn over the years, the most significant and distinctive point in this command to keep the Feast of Trumpets is the fact that it is a memorial of blowing of trumpets. That is how our English versions translate it. But, it could also be called The Remembrance of the Shout of the Shofar.

This feast, and the other six, are Sabbaths, and they are holy convocations (meaning we all come together) for a service, so that we can appear before God. We know that work is not to be done on them—customary work means our normal everyday labor. And, offerings are to be made. This is one of those days on which we give an offering to the Lord for those things He has blessed us with throughout the year.

But only on this day does trumpet-blowing take center stage. Trumpet-blowing is important. Obviously it is, because this is the Day of Trumpets. And so, Trumpets is big. In fact, the whole day revolves around this phrase, "A memorial of blowing of trumpets." Or, "A remembrance of shouting." I have had sermons in the past where I have gone through the various uses of trumpets. I have gone through the various times when there was a great deal of shouting, particularly with the fall of Jericho. And there are times like the giving of the law on Mount Sinai where there was great noises, and thunderings,

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and trumpet blasts that the people heard. And so, we are not exactly sure what the remembrance of the blowing of the shofar is, but we can make some guesses about it, whether in this case, speaking to the Israelites very early in their trek, and it could have been Mount Sinai, since this was before Jericho.

But, it is a memorial. Usually a memorial looks back on something. But we have seen that God has the ability to make something in the future to be memorialized. We can remember something that has not happened yet because God Himself exists in time unlike us. We only go from back to front—forward—but He inhabits eternity. And so way back in 1450 BC He can memorialize something that will happen yet thousands of years in the future.

So, perhaps He was saying here that this day is going to memorialize the return of His Son. I think that we will see that this is probably the case.

But, I want us to think about trumpets for just a moment.

What is the main thing, the central fact, of the blowing of a trumpet? What is the trumpet blast in its most basic meaning? It is noise. It is sound. The trumpet blast is nothing but a blare of sound. And do you know what it does? It gets people's attention. (Everybody here looked up.) That is the same thing with the trumpet or the shofar. It gets people to react to it, so that they could be informed of something. They could be told or shown something that they could then be commanded to do something in order. If we go back through the uses of a trumpet, it is a call to war; it is to move the camp; it is to announce the holy day; it is for these various things, and others. So they blew the trumpet and everybody who was in range of the sound would know that a certain thing needed to be done. And so, the attention was drawn by the blast of the trumpet.

Keep this in mind as we go through the rest of the sermon this morning—the trumpet, and this Day of Trumpets is all about getting our attention. And not just us, but the attention of every one around the world.

Turn to Psalm 2. Now we are going to get into the main gist of the sermon, because now that we have explained the trumpet, and the getting of attention, we will be putting this together with the Return of Jesus Christ. We are going to read the whole of Psalm 2 because this Psalm sets up the end-time scenario for us in the context of my sermon.

Psalm 2:1-12 Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break their

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bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion." I will declare the decree: The LOORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'" Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LOORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

This sets up the end-time scenario. Jesus Christ is the same one in Hebrew who is the Messiah, the Anointed One, as He is called here, and is the Son of God. He came and He lived among us, and He was crucified. But in so doing, He took upon Himself the penalty for our sins, and became our Savior. And then, though dead He was raised to life again, and ascended to heaven where He now sits upon His Father's throne. He is already King. He has already qualified for that position. He has just not come back down to earth to take up His Kingdom yet.

As this psalm says, mankind should be serving Him, should be worshipping Him, should be bowing down before Him for what He has done. He is their Creator. And not only that, He is their Savior. And He is their king.

But, this world's leaders plot and plan without reference to God at all. They want to take power to themselves, and to subjugate the people for their own gain. And they think that they are getting away with it. They think that they can do things in a smoke-filled backroom, and God will not see. They think that they can go to a bunker somewhere, or some hotel someplace, or some resort somewhere, or some other place in this world where no one else can see them, and they can plot and plan and make everything work together for their own good.

But God just laughs!

He is rolling on the floor in heaven (as it were) in derision over them. It is like Comedy Central to Him. They think like little kids—"If I just close my eyes no one can see me!" This is not the case. God sees everything. He knows what they are doing. He knows their thoughts. He is a hundred steps ahead of them in the game, as it were.

And so, He laughs at them, at their simplicity, that they think they have any power at all. And He says in this psalm that the day is quickly approaching when He will come Himself and deal with these miscreants. He is going to deal with them in terrifying and awesome wrath. They will be utterly broken and dashed into tiny pieces like clay pots under a mace. And that will be all she wrote.

Let us look at this from the New Testament. Please turn to I Thessalonians 4. We have got things set up. The kings and the judges of the earth are making their plans. They are thinking that they are getting away with a great deal. But God says, "Not on your life," and it *will* be their lives. Things are going to come to a head, and He will react.

I Thessalonians 4:13-18 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. [And the focus, here is this:] 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. 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

So, there is comfort for us in Christ's second coming. Whether we are alive or dead, we will rise—the dead first, then the living—to meet Jesus Christ in the air, in the clouds! And then we will always be with Him. We will be a part of His body. We are in a spiritual sense, and at that time we will be in glory with Him—changed into very Sons of God.

But notice what it says here.

It says, "The Lord descends from heaven with a shout!" I would be on pretty firm ground to think that this is the shout of the shofar that we are memorializing today. And accompanying that shout is also the voice of an archangel. How loud can an archangel cry or shout, or scream? Then, on top of that, a trumpet that blasts and blares out. Are you beginning to see and to hear the second coming of Jesus Christ?

There is a shout of the shofar! There is the voice of an archangel! There is the blast of a trumpet!

None of these things are done quietly. They will be like claxons. Is it not annoying when someone's alarm goes off in their car? Does not everyone turn around in the parking lot and think, "Who's the fool who let that happen?" Okay now, we have the return of Jesus Christ. It is not going to be annoying to us; it is going to be wonderful and joyous for us. But, for the rest of the world, the *shout* of the shofar, the *voice* of an archangel, and the *blast* of the trumpet of God are going to get their attention. And, they are going to be annoyed—majorly annoyed. "Who is this who comes against us?" they say in their pride.

God has a reason for all of this noise. No one on earth—not one living person—will be able to ignore the return of Jesus Christ. This is going to be so loud; it will be almost ear-shattering loud. Jesus Christ is coming, and He is not going to let anybody ignore Him, because His time has come. This is not going to happen in some remote corner of the world, like Borneo. No, this is going to take place right in the middle of everything, and everyone will see it.

Please turn to Matthew 24. The return of Jesus Christ is a very loud and noisy event. And, we can add a few things from this passage.

Matthew 24:29-31 "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. 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. 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.

We begin to add some things regarding the return of Jesus Christ. We see in Matthew 24 that there will not just be those loud noises, but there will also be great sights in the heavens—the heavenly signs will appear—the sun being darkened, the moon not giving its light, stars falling, and the powers of the heavens shaken.

Then, we see the sign of the Son of Man (whatever that is, but it will be absolutely stupendous) to be seen apart from these other things. Who knows? Is it a great shining light? I do not know. It is just the sign of the Son of Man. I am sure that the Protestants and Catholics would say that it is a big cross in the sky. But, I do not think that is what it is going to be. It is going to be something magnificent, something radiant, something that will grab our attention.

All the tribes of the earth will mourn, and then “they”—that same “all”—will see Jesus coming down out of heaven.

What I am getting at, here, is that we have added sights to the sounds. The second coming of Jesus Christ will be a sensory overload of sounds and sights. It is going to be almost too much for the human mind to take in. And it probably will be. There will be noises going on. There will be sights and signs, stars and sun, and the moon—all these things happening at once, and we are *all* going to be able to see them. These are global phenomena happening. We may even feel an electricity in the air. Perhaps we will feel a stillness as all the earth holds its breath. Or perhaps there will be a thrill running through mankind, an uncontrolled response to the Creator.

I do not know. But, with all the things that are told us in the Bible about His second coming with all the sights and sounds, and all these other things taking place, we know that you will feel something. Who knows? Maybe the air will even smell better—sweeter, newer, refreshed. Maybe there will be ozone in the air. Who knows? I do not.

But, if we are experiencing all these sights and sounds, I think our other senses are going to be overloaded as well. The bottom line, here, is that no one on earth will be able to ignore it. The return of Christ will be the most significant, momentous, wonderful, and stunning event in human history. Maybe the only thing that will top it in all of human history will be the coming of the Father 1,000 years or more still in the future from that. But, up until that time, this is the one that people will say, “Where were you when . . . ” Everyone will know. And the feelings will come flooding back.

We “ooh” and “aah” at things like the aurora borealis (the northern lights) if we have ever seen them. We might go outside and see the Perseid meteor shower. Or, we will go down to Florida and watch the space shuttle, or some other rocket take off. We might see a beautiful sunset, and marvel at what God has created. Maybe there was a fireworks display that stopped our heart it was so great, and bright and noisy.

But, nothing will compare to the appearing of Jesus Christ to put down all rule and to take up His rule over His Kingdom. It is something to really look forward to.

Turn to Revelation 11. We are not done. I have only begun to scratch the surface. I really want you to see the sensory overload of the second coming of Jesus Christ, because this is an event that is going to take place that will engage our entire being. And then we will know. There will be no doubts. And not just us, because I am sure that we do not doubt like people in the world do. The kings of the earth will surely know, but there are truly billions in this world who do not know the true God, and they will know by

this event.

Here in Revelation 11 the seventh trumpet is blown.

Revelation 11:15-19 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices [more loudness!] in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the [spiritually] dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth." Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

This is the seventh trumpet. We know that the seven last plagues come after this. I am not worried about timing right here, right now. I want you to see the build-up of the things that are happening.

We see that there are things added to this sensory overload. The seventh trumpet sounds, and the seventh angel proclaims Christ's return as King over all the kingdoms of the world. We see the temple of God visible in the heavens. Do the heavens part and everyone sees this? Does everyone have a view they can see? I do not know. Can they see the ark in the temple in heaven? That is what John saw. Is it something that we will be able to see? I do not know.

But, it also says that along with that there is lightning and thunder that we will not be able to miss. There are other noises, whatever they happen to be; great crashes and crescendos; I do not know. And an earthquake—that will certainly shake us up. We will feel that to our very bones with fear and uncertainty because of it.

And then, we will be pummeled on the head with great hail. God says, "Wake up! I'm coming at you from all directions—from below your feet; from above your head." All around you are noises and sounds and lightnings and thunders; trumpet blasts; voices! Is there anyone who will not be able to know what is going on? The deaf will see it. The

blind will *hear* it. The deaf and blind? They will feel it too. They will know.

No one will be able to say, "I was in the bathroom. I just didn't notice." Everyone is going to know that the God of the Universe has come. The earth itself reacts and quakes; nature responds; even the atmosphere responds with hail, lightning, and thunder. The angelic kingdom rejoices and worships God. And, everything all around the world appears in tumult.

And then we have chapter 19.

Here we seem to pick up the idea left off in chapter 11.

Revelation 19:1-6 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, [more layering to this cacophony] saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! "For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!

More sound. More noise. More worship and praise up to God! It is building to a crescendo, here.

Revelation 19:11-16 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name

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written: KING OF KINGS AND LOORD OF LOORDS.

So, we have angelic voices raised in song. We have angelic voices raised in praise. We have the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. “Hallelujahs” ringing from one end of heaven to the other. And then Jesus Christ Himself appears, garbed in a blood-red robe riding out of heaven on a white horse with an army of thousands (quite possibly millions) at His back. This will be no silent charge! This is a great host, a great army charging into battle. They will be in full throat.

Have you ever seen depictions of an army charging in the movies? They are shouting for all they are worth as they run toward the enemy lines. Do you think that the armies of heaven are just going to glide like a feather through the atmosphere? No, I think that this is going to be a full-throated shout of triumph of all these angels, and all the saints (as we have speculated in the past), riding behind Jesus Christ. (It says that in Zechariah 14.) It will be all that emotion of hundreds and thousands of years waiting for this day all coming out because the God Omnipotent Almighty One has returned. He has taken up rule, and He is going to put Satan in his place. He is going to put down all these stupid kings who think that they can get away with defying Almighty God, and He is going to set things straight, and we are going to be happy to be with Him.

This is not going to be a “Silent Fall.” This is going to be a noisy, cacophonous event. Everyone on earth will know what is going on. They will know that the other shoe has dropped. And they are going to get theirs. They are in trouble now.

Remember, we are talking about all the attention-getting, all the sounds, all the sights, all the other stuff happening—sensory overload—that seems to be the theme, here. And, we are going to see more.

Zechariah 14:1-9 Behold, the day of the LOORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LOORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake

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in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LOORD my God will come, and all the saints with Him. It shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light; the lights will diminish. It shall be one day which is known to the LOORD—neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light. And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LOORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—"The LOORD is one," and His name one.

So, when we left Revelation 19 we saw Christ descending with His army from heaven. They are riding to the sound of trumpets, lightning and thunder all about them, earthquakes, heavenly signs, and hail falling. Then He lands on the Mount of Olives to command the battle. And with His coming, the mountain splits in two, from east to west, and it provides a way of escape for His people who are trapped.

Zechariah 14:12-15 And this shall be the plague with which the LOORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths. It shall come to pass in that day that a great panic from the LOORD will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, and raise his hand against his neighbor's hand; Judah also will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be gathered together: Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance. Such also shall be the plague on the horse and the mule, on the camel and the donkey, and on all the cattle that will be in those camps. So shall this plague be.

So when Jesus Christ comes, and all of this is happening around Him, He finally comes and settles accounts, sending a great plague, and He utterly defeats the enemy by melting them like wax with this great plague that He sends out.

And then, He will rule mankind with a rod of iron.

As we have seen, my point has been that His glorious appearing at the end time is a visual and auditory crescendo. It is a slam-bang-smash-mouth-in your face-revelation of the Creator, Savior, and Lord of Hosts. The Almighty God reigns and He is not going to take any guff. The sin that is being done against Him will be punished sternly because

He has had it up to here. His patience will have finally run out.

So, when the Good Book says that He will come again with clouds, do not think anymore that He comes back sitting on a fluffy white cotton ball cloud strumming a harp. This is not what it means.

When the angel tells the disciples that He is going to come again as He left, He means with great glory. Yes, He will come again with clouds—but He is going to come back with a two-edged sword out of dark, angry, thunderheads. People have imagined the wrong kind of clouds. He is coming back with storm clouds and war. He is coming back in anger. His full fury will be let out. No one will stand before His wrath. He is not coming for tea, but rather to strike His enemies into the dust. It will be glorious. It will be loud. It will be very exciting, and it will be terrifying—absolutely, knee-knocking terrifying—especially to those who finally figure it out that the penalty has finally arrived.

Go back to II Thessalonians and bring us into this a little bit more.

II Thessalonians 1:6-10 Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 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.

So, what Paul describes here is a divine assault; the armies flying out of heaven to attack the enemies of God. It is a battle of vengeance. Paul does use that word. It is a fire-fight. It is a drive to punish His and His people's enemies.

And notice that Paul says in verse 9, that He punishes them with everlasting destruction. He smashes them. He annihilates them. He obliterates them. Like I said, He is holding all of this in right now.

He has a great desire to avenge His people. He does not like what is going on. He does not like to see His people taken off to prison. He does not like to see them persecuted, and tortured, and killed. He will not stand for it. He lets it go for the time being, but He has a different understanding of time, and He has power over death. But, He does not

like the fact that it has happened. And He is storing all of this.

And at a certain point when His Father gives Him the go ahead, it is going to all come out. And He is going to say, "Saddle up! We're goin'!" And the whole army of heaven is going to thunder down upon the sinners of this earth, and all those who plot against Him. And He will take vengeance.

Those who thought that they were so powerful, and so smart; who had it all together; who had everything all worked out; who thought that they could ignore God; who thought that there would be no punishment, no penalty, no downside for their disbelieving God; for being agnostic; for being atheistic; for believing that He did not create; for believing that He did not have anything to do with this earth and the people in it; for believing that He does not care; those people who despise, and persecute, and kill God's chosen ones, they—all of them, every single one of them—will come to know the reality of the true God in one instant.

Then they will know that He is the Lord. It will be too late for them. His patience will have finally run out, and they will feel the full fury of the Lord God Almighty. And then, fade to black.

Next we will go to Ezekiel 38. Here, again, I am not too concerned with the timing of things. There have been many speculations on when the attack of Gog will come. I am not concerned about that today. Some of have thought before Christ returns, while others have said it to be not long after Christ returns. There have been those who have said it is not until the end of the Millennium. I do not care. I want you to concentrate on the description, here. I want you to feel not only what the people of Gog will feel, but also what God is feeling; also what God's people will feel at that time.

I am most concerned with the scenario, and God's reaction in particular.

Ezekiel 38:18-23 "And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "that My fury will show in My face. For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.' I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains," says the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword will be against his brother. And I will bring him to

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judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the LOORD."

Do you think He is all peace and pity at this point? That just seems to me overflowing wrath and fury; bottled up anger at sin; at foolish people who think that they can snub Him at every turn. And He says, "No more! I'm going to give them My full attention!" And He does. You do not want God's full attention.

And then they shall know that He is the Lord.

It is interesting that what we read here in this passage parallels almost exactly what we read in other accounts of His return to this earth. God comes Himself in great wrath, and He is coming against those who attacked His people. We have seen the earthquake again, the mountains being thrown down, all men quail at His presence. He attacks with plague, as well as brother against brother. God sends down hail, fire, brimstone, and flooding rain. And Gog is completely annihilated.

Then, they shall know that He is the Lord. Only when something of this magnitude happens do they finally get it! It takes something that big and intense to get through the thick skull of mankind who it is that they are dealing with. But, they do get it.

Across the page is a culmination of all of this. It does go on, but I think these are significant verses:

Ezekiel 39:7a (God says,) "So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel . . .

This is a great revelation for Israel, too, because so many of them have gone against Him. It is not just the Gentiles; it is not just the stupid kings of the earth, and their judges, who think that they can get away with these things. It is Israel too. The ones who have been sitting in peace and safety in their unwallled villages. And, they have gone lax. He says,

Ezekiel 39:7-8 . . . and I will not let them profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am the LOORD, the Holy One in Israel.

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Surely it is coming, and it shall be done," says the Lord Good. "This is the day of which I have spoken."

So when Jesus Christ returns to this earth, everyone will know it. No one will be able to claim ignorance. And when it is all done, there is not going to be any doubt as to who is Boss. Every person will know that God does indeed exist. They will have firsthand knowledge of it. They will know that He has awesome power. And that He must be feared, He must be obeyed, He must be worshipped. There is no other. And on that day, those who remain faithful and endure to the end will finally be vindicate and glorified as sons and daughters of God with Him. And then they will also take up rule with Him throughout the Millennium teaching the nations God's way of life so that everyone will know God.

I want to finish in Psalm 97. I believe this wraps things up nicely. This is a psalm about His second coming. It is one of the "Lord Reigns" psalms.

Psalm 97:1-12 The LOORD reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad! Clouds and darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about. His lightnings light the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LOORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples see His glory. Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, who boast of idols. Worship Him, all you gods. Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice because of Your judgments, O LOORD. For You, LOORD, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods. You who love the LOORD, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the LOORD, you righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.

Surely it is coming. And, it shall be done!