



GRANDEUR

The astonishing grandeur of the Second Coming of Christ

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I would like to talk about three words and connect them to the reality of Jesus' Second Coming: **Grandeur, Love, and brevity.**

When I say the words *The Second Coming of Jesus*, I feel they roll off the tongue all too easily. I feel that even the mention of those words should command the sounding of 10 thousand trumpets, two dozen symphony orchestras, a myriad of angels loudly singing, and all the stars above, and all creation below, halted, stunned into stillness as the astonishing grandeur of Jesus Coming is proclaimed.

I fear, though, that we are not sufficiently captivated and awe-struck by the astonishing grandeur of His Second Coming. Our hearts and minds are captivated by the smaller things of the day (as important as they are), and we do not see the bigger picture of God's plan. The small, clouds our view of the big, and of the great. (*The security guard and the box in the wheelbarrow*).

"Men occasionally stumble over truth, but most pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing happened" Winston Churchill. I feel this in my own life as I am confronted by it.

But, throughout history there have been attempts to capture and portray the grandeur of God and of Christ. Architects and the great cathedrals; Artists and the amazing frescos; Musicians. I.e., Fredrich Handel and His 'Messiah' (*'I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at the last upon the earth' Job 19:25*).

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed- ⁵²in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Cor. 15:55)

Yet, amid the astonishing display and spectacle of God's glory that all will finally see, there is the grandest of all – **JESUS!** The one who walked the Sea of Galilee, whom no one recognised as God in the flesh, will again step foot upon the earth as King. And all will see!

LOVE

We might well marvel at His Second Coming and rightly so, but there is a greater and grander vision. **The Cross.** The Second Coming is only possible because of His first and the gracious, merciful, and loving gift of Himself upon that awful Cross.

Imagine being separated from love? Pause and think about the import of such a terrible thing. There is no life without love (think of children who are deprived of all love – an horrific kind of hell for them). **God is love!** And when we sin, we reject Him and His love, just as the first two did. And whilst in this Age God's Common loving grace provides the basic needs of all humans, we are all still fatally separated from God's person because of our sin. Death and judgment await us. **Except,** not for those who fully trust in God's saving work through Christ which He accomplished on the Cross! For them, resurrection awaits, and a rich welcome into His loving embrace. On the Cross Jesus offered up himself a loving sacrifice to make it possible for us to be restored to that full loving relationship with God lost to us in the Garden of Eden.

BREVITY

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. ¹¹Since everything will be destroyed in this way, **what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹²as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming** (2 Peter 3: 8-12 NIV).

It may well be two thousand years since His first coming but rest assured, He is coming. But whether He comes in our life time or not, you and I will see Him face to face at the end of our brief lives. *If only we knew the power of your anger! Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due. Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom (NIV). Return, O LORD! How long? Have pity on your servants! (NLT).*