

A Glorious Return: Biblical Occurrences and A Theological Exposition

The “Glorious” Coming of Christ: Biblical Occurrences

One of the most common ways the New Testament writers refers to Jesus’ return is that it will be “with great power and glory,” “glorious.” Consider the following texts of Scripture.

Matthew refers to Jesus’ coming in glory four times.

Matthew 16:27: For **the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory** with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

Matthew 19:28: Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, **when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne**, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Matthew 24:30: “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. **They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.**

Matthew 25:31: “**When the Son of Man comes in his glory**, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.

Mark also refers to Jesus coming in glory.

Mark 8:38: If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him **when he comes in his Father’s glory** with the holy angels.”

Luke also references Jesus’ return that will be with great power and glory.

Luke 9:26: If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him **when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father** and of the holy angels.

Luke 21:27: At that **time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.**

Paul writes of the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ three times.

Colossians 3:4: **When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.**

2 Thessalonians 1:10: **on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people** and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

Titus 2:13: **while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,**

Peter refers to the glory of Christ that is to be revealed four times.

1Peter 1:7: These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor **when Jesus Christ is revealed.**

1Peter 4:13: But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed **when his glory is revealed.**

1Peter 5:1: To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also **will share in the glory to be revealed:**

1Peter 5:4 And **when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory** that will never fade away.

In addition, there are other texts of Scripture that describe aspects of Jesus' glory

Mark 10:37: They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

2 Thessalonians 2:14: He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude 24: To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—



Jesus' "Glorious" Return: A Theological Exposition

Jesus will come gloriously: "We wait for this blessed hope: the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). Where once Jesus came in the humility of a baby in a manger, he will return in majesty and glory as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16). As the Risen Lord, Jesus has already entered into the glory of his heavenly Father (Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 1:21; Rev. 5:12). When he returns this exalted status will be made known to all (cf. 2 Thess. 1:6-10).

Herein lies the great mystery of the gospel. God's Messiah did not first come into this world as a powerful, conquering hero, at least, not as we conceive of such things. Even in his earthly life he was a king, but he chose to reign not from a royal throne but from a cross. He assumed the role of a suffering servant, described by the prophet Isaiah as one who "had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (53:2-3). Such a role did not match Jewish expectations, as evidenced so clearly in Peter's response to Jesus' declaration of his own death: "Never, Lord! . . . This shall never happen to you!" (Matt. 16:22). No wonder Paul's message of "Christ crucified" was a stumbling block (1 Cor. 1:23). But it was Jesus himself who helped his disciples to see—"Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" (Luke 24:26; cf. 1 Pet. 1:11).

For now, we proclaim Christ as Lord, but a Lord whose glory is known only by faith. We are in the awkward position of being called to be ambassadors of a disputed king, whose sovereignty is itself in question, leaving us vulnerable and without worldly legitimation. But Christ's promise is that he will return to vindicate himself and his people before the watching world: "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other" (Matt. 24:30-31). Until then, we are to be faithful, fearlessly confessing his name, for Jesus has warned, "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26).

In this world we may suffer (indeed, we should expect no less [cf. e.g., Phil 1:29]), but we can be assured that, as Paul writes, "we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Rom. 8:17). Thus such suffering ought not to be a cause for sorrow but for joy, as Peter urges: "But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed" (1 Pet. 4:13). "When Christ, who is your life, appears," Paul declares, "then you also will appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4; cf. Rom. 8:18; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2).

