

STUDIES IN THE BIBLE



The Second Coming of Christ

Lesson 29

Jesus is coming again! This is the great expectation of all Christians. Nothing is more clearly taught in the New Testament. However, the manner of Christ's return has long been controversial, largely because of speculation about prophetic passages. Since the purpose of this course is not speculation, we shall confine ourselves to those Scriptures which are plain statements of fact. Of these there are so many that it will not be hard to determine how Christ will return.

When Christ Will Return

In every age some have boldly predicted the exact time of our Lord's return. Always they have been mistaken. The Bible clearly teaches that no man knows when Jesus will come again. Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matt. 24:36.) Paul and Peter both declare that Christ's return will be as "a thief in the night." (1 Thess. 5:2, 3; 2 Peter 3:10.) Therefore none can possibly know when He will come.

Why Jesus Is Coming Again

1. To raise the dead – John 5:25, 28, 29
2. To judge all men – Jude 14, 15
3. To reward the righteous – Matthew 25:31-34
4. To punish the unrighteous – Matthew 25:31-33, 41
5. To destroy the world – 2 Peter 3:10
6. To deliver the kingdom to the Father – 1 Cor. 15:24

Paul declared that the second coming would be preceded by a falling away from the truth. "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. 2:3, 4.) Peter said that before Christ's return scoffers would ask, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Peter 3:4.) Many will be totally unprepared when He does return. Since we cannot know when He will come again, the important thing is that every person must be fully prepared.

How Christ Will Return

The second advent will be seen by all. Some teach that Jesus returned a few years ago but that many did not see Him. They ignore the Scripture, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." (Rev. 1:7.) Jesus said, "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." (Matt.24:27.)

Christ will be accompanied by His angels when He returns. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." (Matt. 16:27.) Jude adds that He will come back with ten thousand of His holy ones. (Jude 14.)

At the second coming the dead will arise from the grave. (1 Cor. 15:23.) Some teach that the unrighteous will never arise from the grave. Others say the righteous and unrighteous will be resurrected at different times. Jesus proves both ideas wrong when He states, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28, 29.) The righteous and unrighteous will be resurrected at the same time.

Perhaps the clearest explanation of the second coming is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. "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: 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." Notice the sequence of events: (1) Christ will descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. (2) The dead in Christ will arise from the grave. (3) After the dead have arisen the living will be caught up with them into the clouds. (4) They will meet the Lord in the air.

What will happen to the earth when Christ returns? Peter answers our question. "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. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 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?" (2 Peter 3:10-12.) No one will be left to live on this earthly sphere.

The premillennial theory, which asserts that Christ will reign on the earth in the flesh for a literal thousand years, is clearly erroneous. (1) No passage teaches that Jesus will set foot on earth again. Rather, the disciples of Christ will meet Him in the air. (2) The premillennial theory requires that the righteous and unrighteous arise at different times. As noticed, John 5:28, 29 contradicts this. (3) Since the earth will be destroyed when Christ returns, no thousand year reign will be possible.

The Judgment

The great judgment will follow the return of Christ. None shall be able to escape it. "And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27.) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10.) As they appear before Christ, the judge, the righteous will be set on the right

hand, the unrighteous on the left. The righteous will be rewarded with an everlasting home in heaven; the unrighteous will be consigned to the eternal punishment of hell. (Matt. 25:31-46.) The Scriptures do not teach that man will receive a second chance.

After the judgment Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God. Every enemy, including death, will have been overcome, and Jesus will deliver His authority to God, the Father, and will Himself be subject to Him. The righteous will dwell with God in the eternal home of unspeakable beauty. In the last lesson we will discuss the places of reward and punishment called heaven and hell. It is the hope of heaven that impels the Christian to cry out with John, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20.)

"Seek and Ye Shall Find"

Write true or false before each statement:

- 1. The Bible tells us exactly when Jesus is going to return.
- 2. He will come when everyone is expecting Him.
- 3. Paul said that Christ's coming would be preceded by a falling away.
- 4. When Christ returns only a few will see Him.
- 5. He will come alone when He returns.
- 6. The righteous will arise when Christ comes back, but the unrighteous will never arise from the grave.
- 7. Christ will meet the faithful in the air.
- 8. The earth will be burned up after Christ returns.
- 9. Only the righteous will be present at the judgment.
- 10. No one will receive a second chance.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 and fill in the blanks:

1. All shall be made alive in
2. After those in Christ arise at His coming, "Then cometh the"
3. Christ must reign until He has put all under His feet.
4. The last enemy to be destroyed is
5. After all things have been subdued, then the also Himself will be subjected to God.

These five statements are things which will happen when or after Jesus returns. Put them in the order in which they will occur by writing "first," "second," "third," "fourth," and "fifth" in the blanks:

- The dead and the living will be caught up in the clouds.
- Christ will judge the nations.
- Christ will descend.
- Those caught up will meet the Lord in the air.
- The dead in Christ will arise.

Read Matthew 25:31-46. Circle the letter representing the correct answer:

- a b c 1. When the Son of man sits on the throne of His Glory, before Him will be gathered: (a) all the righteous; (b) all nations; (c) all the bad people.
- a b c 2. He will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the: (a) goats; (b) cows; (c) horses.
- a b c 3. Those on His right hand will be rewarded with eternal life because they have fed, clothed, and visited: (a) nobody; (b) Christ's brethren; (c) those who helped them.
- a b c 4. Christ will tell those on the left hand to depart into: (a) eternal life; (b) annihilation; (c) everlasting fire.
- a b c 5. He will say that this place is prepared for: (a) the good people; (b) the atheists; (c) the devil and his angels.

Student may write here any comment, question, or request.

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