

**What Will Happen
When The Lord
Jesus Returns?**

Rev. Dr. Botros Botrosdief

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May God be praised and His name highly exalted for all good things that come from Him and to Him and for Him!

Introduction

The Bible centres on the coming of Christ (*The Messiah*) and can be summed up in three short sentences. He is coming. He is here. He is coming again. He is coming. This was the theme of the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi. He is here. This was the theme of Four Gospels of the New Testament. He is coming again. This is the object of hope presented in the New Testament from Acts to Revelation.

The second coming of Christ to this earth is the greatest event that can take place in it. The New Testament speaks with great emphasis about the certainty of the return of Christ. At least 318 verses refer to His second coming. Although differing over details, the return of Christ is a doctrine that all true Christians hold in common.

In his second letter, Apostle Peter admonitions the Christians everywhere to look forward to the Second Coming of Christ and speed its coming. That Day will be greater than the first. Why?

Our Lord once came as a *servant* — to fulfil the promises of Redemption of mankind; He suffered and died for our sins. But He will come a second time, as the *sovereign Lord* with great glory and power to take his people to Himself to enjoy the glory of the eternal Home.

His humiliation, laid the foundation of his glorification; his first coming, was introductory to his second.

In the following table the summary of the seven plain teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles regarding his Second Coming; which will be the themes of first part of this book.

	Topic	Biblical References
1	The Assurance of His Coming	John 14:1-3, Rev 22:12
2	The Purpose of His Coming	John 14:1-3, Rev 22:12
3	The Manner of His Coming	Matt 16:27; Matt 24:30
4	The Signs of His Coming	Mark 13 ; Matt 24
5	The Time of His Coming	Matt 24: 44 ; John 6:54
6	The Results of His Coming	Matt 25: 31; Rev 20:10
7	Attitude toward His coming	Matt 24: 44 ; Mark 13:33

The second part of this book will deal with the various views of the second coming and seven important questions people ask.

Jesus the Christ is the Sovereign Lord, man's Creator, Preserver, and Saviour. He came in flesh, and tabernacled among men. He brought grace and truth into our world. He came as *man*, and yet was in the highest sense of the word, *God*. Thus he was the great mystery of godliness God manifest in the flesh. He became *man*, that he may come under the law, and so meet and discharge all its demands and meet and endure all its penalty.

He will come again, not as a servant but a Mighty King; with strong hand, having the day of vengeance in his heart, his arm will rule for him, bringing to pass all the purposes of his will; his reward his beloved church from all generations, will be with him; and his work to create a New Heaven and a New earth, to more than paradisiacal beauty and glory, before him. Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus!

CHAPTER I

THE ASSURANCE OF HIS COMING

Prophecy on His Second Coming is the subject of some 318 verses of the New Testament. His first coming was prophesied and those prophecies came to pass literally.

This gives us great confidence that the prophecies of the Second Coming will also be fulfilled literally and not in a figurative or spiritual sense. **The assurance of His Second Coming is based on Five Major Testimonials;**

1. It was foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament.
2. It was foretold by Jesus Himself.
3. It was foretold by angels.
4. It was foretold by the Apostles of the Lord.
5. It was the teaching of all great creeds of the Church.

The Testimony of the Old Testament Prophets

When we look at the Old Testament promises of the coming of Christ, we must draw a distinction between those which speak of His coming as Saviour, and those which speak of His coming to earth in glory and power as Sovereign.

Many of these can be identified by the occurrence of the phrase "***The Day of the Lord***". But we must draw a distinction between those which speak of "***a day of the Lord***" and "***The Day of the Lord***". A day of the Lord, in general terms, refers to any day of judgement or any visitation from God, such as His judgment on Israel throughout its history which is limited to a local event (eg Joel 1:15, 2:1, Amos 5:18, 20).

On the other hand, many times, the Old Testament prophets talk about ***“The Day of the Lord”*** in such graphic and universal terms, that it cannot be limited to a local event. That Day refers to the consummation of the age which will mark the end of history and will bring the final judgment.

In the book of Daniel chapter 7:13, Daniel speaks of the Coming Day of the Lord in glory *“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven.”* (Isaiah 4:5, 11:10, 13:9-22, 65:17, Joel 3:14). Perhaps the most outstanding is the last chapter in the book of Isaiah;

“See, the LORD is coming with fire, and his chariots are like a whirlwind ... For with fire and with his sword. The LORD will execute judgment on all people, and many will be those slain by the LORD ... And I ... am about to come and gather the people of all nations and languages, and they will come and see my glory ... the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,” declares the LORD (66:15-17).

When we read the New Testament, we discover that the same phrase ***“The Day of the Lord”*** is used of the second coming of our Lord (eg see Phil 2:16; 1Thess 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). So we can safely assume that the Old Testament prophets were talking of the same event.

The Promises of the Lord Himself

Why Christ will come again? Because He said so, He said He would come again, and He is a God who cannot lie. It is impossible to read the Gospels honestly and objectively, without believing that He promised to come to this earth again. He made it very clear

“I will come again” (John 14:3)

He went on to make repeated references to His coming about 18 times in the four gospels and five times in the book of Revelation.

“Yes, I am coming soon” He said (Rev 22: 20).

See also (Matt 24:30, 36, 42, 44; 25:13; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; Rev 3:11; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20).

We will see most of these references when we deal with the teaching of Christ regarding the purpose of His coming; the time of His coming; the manner of His coming; the signs of His coming; and our need to be ready for it.

The Sayings of the Angels

In Acts 1:10-11, Christ’s second coming was confirmed in a very dramatic way within moments of His ascension to heaven. It was an exciting, puzzling, sad day when Christ left this earth. His disciples had only recently recovered from the shock of His death but were now revived in spirit when He was raised from the dead. Now, all of a sudden He returns to Heaven in a miraculous way.

The disciples were puzzled and amazed as they stood looking steadfastly toward Heaven as he went up. Their mental questions were answered. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two angels in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, *"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."*

The Testimony of the Apostles

Jesus will return. It was the hope of the early apostles; it gave them dynamic and direction.

The apostle Paul has much to say on the Second Coming of the Lord.

To the Romans, he writes: *“The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light (Romans 13:11-12).*

To the Corinthians: he used phrases like *“when He comes”* and *“He must reign”* and *“the dead will be raised”* (15: 23, 25, 52).

To the Philippians: he told them how eagerly he was waiting for the saviour to return from heaven: *“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body”* (3:20-21).

To the Thessalonians: we note Paul’s greatest emphasis on the Second Coming is in his two letters to them. He writes:

“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who

have fallen asleep. For **the Lord himself will come down from heaven**, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words” (1 Thess 4: 13-18)

In plain terms, Paul says, “God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power **on the day he comes** to be glorified in his holy people and to be marvelled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you” (2 Thess 1:6-10; See also 1 Thess 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 5:2)

To Timothy: Paul writes about all those who long for Christ’s appearing (2 Timothy 4:8).

To Titus: he writes about the “the blessed hope” that we have in the return of our Lord (Titus 2:13)

To the Hebrews: he writes: “So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him” (Heb 9:28)

Similarly, James exhorts his readers to be patient “until the Lord’s coming” (James 5:7-9).

Apostle Peter, too, firmly encourages the believer to stand firm until the time when the Lord be revealed (1 Peter 1:7). He writes;

*“But **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. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and **speed its coming**. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells”* (2 Peter 3:10-13)

Jude, also in plain terms says; *“The Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones”* (Jude 14).

Finally, John the apostle warns us to abide in Christ least we be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2:28). He writes;

“Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced him and all peoples on earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen” (Revelation 1:7).

The Teaching of Christians Creeds

Christ will come in power and glory. It was foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament. It was foretold by Jesus Himself. It was foretold by angels. It was foretold by the Apostles of the Lord.

Also it is the teaching of all great creeds of the Church. It was the hope of the early Christians; it gave them dynamic and direction. In the Apostles Creed we read: *“**he shall come to judge the quick and***

the dead". In the Nicene Creed we read: "***He shall come again with glory***".

There can be no doubt that the Bible abounds in promise of the Second coming of our Lord. This is the great hope of Christians.

Martin Luther said; "***I live as though Jesus Christ died yesterday, rose again today and were coming tomorrow.***"

Tyndale's motive for ministry was "***Christ and His apostles warned us to look for Christ's coming every hour***".

Bishop Ridley, burned at an Oxford stake for his witness, cried as he died: '***Come Lord Jesus!***'

Charles Wesley appealed to Christ's return as the greatest goal of all Christian service, including the theme in thousands of his hymns.

The second Coming of Christ inspired founders of many early mission societies like William Cary, Henry Martin and Alexander Duff, and later William Patton and David Livingstone: they believed a pre-condition of Christ's return was that: "***This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come***" (Matthew 24:14.)

CHAPTER II

THE PURPOSE OF HIS COMING

Christ will return to introduce the eternal state of things, and will do this by two mighty events: the resurrection and the final judgment. In the following table 7 reasons that sum up the purpose of Christ's Coming;

	<i>The Purpose of Christ's Coming</i>	<i>Biblical References</i>
1	To complete our salvation	Heb 9:28 ; Rom13:11
2	To be glorified in His people	2 Thess 1:10
3	To bring to light the hidden things	1 Cor 4:5
4	To receive us to be with Himself	John 14:3
5	To Judge and to Reward	2 Tim 4:1; John 6:40
6	To destroy death	1 Cor 15: 25-26
7	To reign forever	Revelation 11:15

First of all, Christ is coming again to complete our salvatio. Paul says to the Roman Christians;

*“And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, **because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.** The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.”* (Romans 13:11)

Similarly, he writes to the Hebrew Christians; *“Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and **he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him** “* (Hebrews 9:27-29).

According to God's Word, there are actually three stages of salvation. Firstly, we need to be saved in regard to our past. Secondly, we need to be saved in regard to the present. And, thirdly, we need to be saved in regard to the future. Salvation begins in

Justification, proceeds through Sanctification and ends in Glorification. We can say that we are saved, we are being saved and we will be saved.

Let's firstly look at salvation past or Justification. The Bible says in Romans 5:1 that we have been justified through faith, and because of this, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word "Justification" is a legal term, and means to declare not guilty. The meaning of this word can best be described by an illustration:

Suppose that a man has been charged with murder and tried and found guilty and sentenced to die. Before the hour of execution a man appears at the prison and asks to see the warden, to whom he hands an official letter. When the warden reads the letter, he sees that the president of the country has granted the condemned man a pardon. Thus the man is released from prison at once and walks out a free man. This man is not a justified man, because the guilt of the crime still remains on him. He is simply a pardoned criminal.

But, let us suppose that the man was really innocent and mistakenly found guilty and wrongly condemned to death. Now, before the date of execution the real criminal surrenders himself to the judge and produces evidence that he is the real criminal. What must the judge do? He cannot hold the first man for he is innocent and therefore the judge sets him free. The condemned man walks out of the prison a justified man because he is innocent of the crime. This is the legal meaning and the scriptural meaning of the word "Justified."

Here is the "Mystery of Salvation". Our Lord Jesus Christ takes the punishment and the guilt of every one of us so that we are totally innocent, as if we had never committed sin. Our past is totally wiped out as if it had never happened. Our Lord Jesus says, "I did it, punish Me." Therefore, the moment we as sinners receive the Lord Jesus

Christ as our personal Saviour by faith, we are justified! And the result of this is that we have peace with God (Romans 5:1).

Let's secondly look at salvation present or sanctification. Philippians 2:12-13 reads "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." This does not mean that our good works saves us. It means that having received salvation through faith we are now to work it out. The sin of the past has been removed and we have been justified. However, the present is still here. We are still living and we face a world full of temptations and sin every day.

As we walk with the Lord our understanding of sin becomes bigger and better. Things that we did not recognize as sin formerly, all of a sudden become sin to us. This can best be described by an illustration:

When you wake up in the morning and the twilight of the early morning sun shines in through the window, you can see a few pieces of furniture in the bedroom, but the rest remains a blur. You see the outline of the cupboard and the dressing table. As time continues and more light comes in, more things become visible. When the sun is fully up, you can see your hairbrush and pins on your dressing table.

When we come to Christ we are conscious of a few sinful habits. We gladly give these up. But as we grow in grace and more light of Jesus comes into our lives we are aware of other wrong things. It is a process of sanctification or holiness. This is working out our salvation with fear and trembling. Salvation present or sanctification is a process as we are walking with the Lord, allowing Him to work in us for His good purpose.

Lastly we'll briefly look at salvation future or glorification. In Philippians 3:20-21 we read "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His

glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

Our Lord Jesus died on the cross to save our souls from eternal death and granting us eternal life. He is coming back to complete our salvation by changing our bodies into immortal glorified bodies to live with Him in the new, forever. Then our salvation is complete.

So we see that our salvation is a threefold process. It begins in justification and deals with the past forever. It continues through sanctification as we deal with the present, as we walk daily with the Lord and allow Him to work in us. It ends in glorification, that future day of our final salvation that we eagerly await.

Secondly, Christ is coming again to be glorified in His people. Paul writes to the Thessalonians Christians;

In 1 Thess 1:5-10 we read; “God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might 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”.

In these verses, Paul is speaking about the day when our Lord will be revealed and how *“He will be glorified in his people and we will be marvelled at Him”.*

We will have in that day indescribable joy. In that day we will see Christ’s glory, we will be glorified in Christ and Christ will be glorified in us. Let us see how that will be!

I. We Will See Christ's Glory

None of us has seen Christ. We believe in Him and we are walking by faith. But it will not always be so. One day we will see Him. Faith will be turned to sight, and you will see Christ face to face!

Try to imagine the whole church marvelling at Christ, Christians from all around the world, and across every culture—Christians who've loved Christ, served Christ, worshipped Christ, and suffered for Christ.

Today, we live in a "What's next?" We're excited about watching a certain event, but when the event is over, the TV goes off and then we say, "What's next?" Nothing holds us for long in this world. Always we need more. But, no one will be saying, "What's next?" when the glory of Lord Jesus is revealed. We will *marvel* at Him and that marvelling will continue for all eternity.

During our life time, as Christians, who believed in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, we begun to marvel at the Son of God, who took our flesh, lived our life, bore our sins, died our death, rose for our justification, lives for our sanctification and will come again for our glorification.

But that's only the beginning. We will marvel at Him forever when we see Him.

II. We Will Be Glorified in Christ

Not only will we see Christ's glory, we will *share* Christ's glory. When we see Him we will be like Him! (1 John 3:2). You will be in glory, and glory will be in you.

1. We will have a glorified body like Christ

That means you will have no pain, no sickness, no disability and no weariness. You will have a body that is suited to eternal life, the gift of God for you. This glory will be internal as well as external.

2. We will have a soul like Christ

Today, we feel our lack of zeal, and we feel guilty of dishonouring the name of our Lord. The battle that goes on in every believer will be done. Happy, happy, happy day when this will no more be possible, when we shall be rid of every inclination to sin, and will never dishonour Christ again. What a day that's going to be! We will fill with an inexpressible and glorious joy. Will that not be marvellous? You will share Christ's joy and you will contribute to the joy of heaven.

3. You will see the likeness of Christ in yourself

You will be so like Christ, so full of glory, so without sin, that you will find it difficult to believe that it is really you. You will fully reflect the likeness of Christ. You will be saying, "Is this really me?" Everyone will be a wonder to himself, I thought my bliss would be great but not like this. How glorious is my Lord, who has shaped this miracle on me?

4. We will see the likeness of Christ in each other

The believers will also admire Christ in one another. You will be free from all envy there, and you will rejoice in all the beauty of your fellow Christians. You will see the Lord in all

your brethren, and this will make you praise and adore the Lord without end with an amazement and delight.

III. Christ Will Be Glorified in You

The Bible says “when Christ comes He will *be glorified in His holy people... This includes you, because you believed*” .

Not only will see Christ’s glory, not only we will be glorified in Christ, but also Christ will be glorified in us.

What does that mean? How is it possible for Jesus Christ to be glorified in us?

a. ***Christ will be glorified by the vast number of the redeemed.***

Apostle John was given a marvellous vision and he says; “I looked and there before the throne a great multitude that no one could count from every nation, tribe, people and language.” Revelation 7:9

This will be larger than any gathering you have ever seen or imagined in your life. Christ has redeemed people from every corner of the planet. They have been drawn from every generation of history. John is given a glimpse of the day of their gathering and he says nobody could possibly count them!

This brings great glory to Christ. Isaiah speaks about how, on the last day, Christ will see the fruit that came from all His suffering on the cross and he will be *satisfied* (Isaiah 53:11).

b. ***Christ will be glorified by the unique difficulties His people have endured***

“These people have come out of great tribulation.” Revelation 7:14. Christ is glorified by the unique trouble that His people have endured. The Bible says in Romans 3:18 “that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed *in us.*”

There they stand in the presence of the Lord Jesus, and every tear has been wiped from their eye.

Each of these people has faced unique difficulties in life. Some have endured a lifelong struggle that arose from their temperament or from their background, persecution, and many kinds of troubles and sufferings, but in every case Christ has brought them through. That’s what we’re to think about when we’re in the middle of any troubles for the sake of Christ our Lord.

c. Christ will be glorified by the complete transformation of the greatest sinners

Our sins are not a small thing. It is *long established, deep rooted or habitual*. By nature we’re inveterate sinners.

But when the Lord comes, the believers will dress in white, there is no more sins, because; “God have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb” (Rev 7:14). That’s why we will be there, not because we have lived some perfect life, but because we have been washed by Christ.

There will dress in the white robes of His righteousness; we will be holy as God is holy. We will be in His presence, without fault and we will have great joy. The complete transformation of us brings glory to Jesus because He is the

one He could accomplish such an amazing transformation in our life.

Yes our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in all the saved sinners. If our sins are many, we have every reason to come to Christ today. Our salvation will bring great glory to Christ. Put your trust in Christ and He will be glorified in you, forever. This is your future. This will help us to stay the course when we are tired of the battle. Lift up your mind and see what is yours in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Friends, look at the glorious future that lies ahead of you! Look at the eternal sufferings of people without Christ. Put these two things together. Let us live in the light of that!

God invites us to take the initiative, to reach out other people who do not know him yet. We have the good news of God's Love for all people. Visit or call someone to encourage him or her. Let us do something for the glory of God! Our Lord is coming soon and we will see His glory, we will be glorified in Him and He will be glorified in us and we will marvel at Him forever.

Anticipate our glorious future in Jesus Christ is the greatest of all the promises in the Bible. When you are tired of different kinds of suffering, look up and refresh your soul by anticipating your glorious future in Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, Christ is coming to bring to light the hidden things of darkness. Paul writes to the Corinthian Christians;

"This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God” (1 Corinthians 4: 1-5)

Fourthly, Christ is coming to receive us to be with Himself. Our Lord Jesus Christ promises us and says; *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am”* (John 14: 1-3). **Christ’s promise was confirmed by Paul who writes to the Thessalonian Christians;**

*“Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. **And so we will be with the Lord forever.** Therefore encourage one another with these words”* (1 Thess 4: 13-18).

Fifthly, Christ is coming to judge those who have rejected Him and to reward His people.

Paul writes to the Thessalonians Christians; *“God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who*

are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might^{on} the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marvelled at among all those who have believed” (2 Thess 1: 6-10).

Paul also writes: *“...Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim 4: 1-2).*

In Mathew 13: 40-50; Jesus said: *“The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.” (see also John 5:29).*

In Revelation 22: 12 He says *“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done”.*

Sixthly, Christ is coming to destroy death. Paul writes to the Corinthians: *“For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Cor 15: 22-26).*

Finally, Christ is coming to reign forever. When the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, the Bible says *“There were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever.” (Revelation 11: 15)*

CHAPTER III

THE MANNER OF HIS COMING

There are enough plain statements in Scripture for us to see clearly the teaching of our Lord Himself on the manner of His coming. This is also confirmed by the apostles, in particular, Peter and Paul. It can be summed up in the following table;

	How The Lord Will Come Again	References
1	The Lord will come personally	Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16,17
2	The Lord will come publicly	Luke 21:27; Rev 1:7
3	The Lord will come powerfully	Matt 24:30; Mark 8:38
4	In Glory accompanied by angles	Matt 25:31; Jude 14
5	The Lord will come suddenly	Luke 17: 26; 1 Thess 5:2

The Lord Will Come Personally

The Person of Christ will return. He has already come in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, but He will return in the body, so that He can be seen. According to the testimony of the two angles in (Acts 1: 11), Our Lord Jesus will come again **personally** as He went back to heaven. They said to the apostles; *"This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."*

This testimony was confirmed In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, where Paul writes *"For **the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and***

remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."

The Lord Will Come Publicly

Let us make no mistake. When our Lord comes again, there will be no secret about it. The Lord Himself made this crystal clear. He is coming in visible form. He said; *"Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, 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. .. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away"* (Matthew 24: 30-35).

This was confirmed in Revelation 1:7 ***"Behold, He is Coming with the Clouds, and Every Eye Will See Him, even those who pierced Him; and All the Tribes of the Earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen"***. When He comes, all nations of the earth will know about it and will see Him coming. Language could hardly be plainer

Similarly, in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, Paul describes the Lord as returning *"For **the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."***

This description leaves no room for the Rapture teachers who interpret this event as silent and secret coming, yet doesn't it seem rather loud and visible? There is a shout, a voice, a trumpet. The truth is, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 in one of the noisiest verses in the Bible! This event will be highly visible.

The Lord Will Come Powerfully With Great Glory

He is coming with power and great glory **accompanied By Angels**. In Matthew 24:30 we read; *“then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man Coming on the Clouds of the sky **with Power and Great Glory.**”* This is why all the nations will mourn when they see Him. They will realise the fragility of human resources when they are confronted by the power of the Almighty. This was confirmed by Paul’s statement in 2 Thessalonians 1:18 *“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Yes, Christ our Lord and Saviour will be present in Great Power.

Our Lord will be accompanied by “thousands upon thousands’ of angels”. Jude says: *“See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones”* (Jude 14). In fact, all the angles of heaven will be involved and it will be display of His divine glory and the glory of His Father. Our Lord made that crystal clear. He said; *“**When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left,** “**For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels**”* (Matt 24:31-33; 16:27, see also 1 Thess 4:16 & 2 Thess 1:7).

The Lord Will Come Suddenly

Our Lord will come without warning. Just as a thief comes when he is not expected, and usually when people are asleep, so will the Lord catch the unbelievers unawares when He comes. (See Matt 24:37-44; 25:1-12; 1 Thess. 5:2; Rev. 3:3).

“Yes, I am coming soon” Jesus said. The simple question people ask is: how soon is ‘soon’?

At first sight, the word leaves an impression that it could be ‘any moment now’. The problem is even more acute for us, after fifty or more generations have come and gone. We may be much nearer the event, but such a long delay makes us wonder if we are anywhere near it. Does ‘soon’ make any sense to us today? Dare we use it confidently in our preaching? How do we cope with it?

In fact, the same chapter in which the ‘scoffing jibe about his delay “Where is this coming he promised?” (2 Peter 3:4), is mentioned there is a two- fold answer to it. “*With the Lord a day is a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day*”. So we could take ‘soon’ with God’s sense of time rather than ours.

The second coming of Christ is the very next big event on his calendar, even if it isn’t on ours. He will come soon, just a day or two more, or perhaps even just a few ‘hours’ from heaven’s point of view. He will return personally, publicly, powerfully, with great glory accompanied by His angels and he will come suddenly. Yet His day will be a great and glorious (See Matt. 24:30; I Thess. 3:13; 4:16; II Thess. 1:7-10). Louis Berkhof put it this way;

“It will be glorious and triumphant coming. The clouds of heaven will be His chariot, the angels His bodyguard, the archangels His heralds, and the saints of God His glorious retinue.”

CHAPTER IV

THE TIME OF HIS COMING

This is a secret that only the Lord knows. Contrary to what many people believe or claim, the Bible does not say when Jesus Christ will return. On the contrary nobody can say with any degree of certainty when the Lord is coming again, even Jesus when He was on earth as the Son of man did not know that day as He said clearly *“that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”* But Jesus as the Son of God is omniscient and certainly knows the exact moment when it will occur.

Our Lord goes to say; *“Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!”* (Matthew 24:36, 44; 25:13).

In Acts 1:6-7 we read, *“The disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority’”*.

All the above passages tell us that we are not to know the exact time of the return of Christ and yet we should always watch and expect His coming.

Some people say this is paradoxically! They ask; Is Christ’s Coming imminent, that is may it now occur at any time, totally unexpected? Or will we have any warning of his approach?

To this, the Bible appears to say; Yes and No!

To the unbelievers Jesus 'arrival will be a total surprise, a dreadful shock. The New Testament is picturing His coming as a 'thief in the night' unexpected and unnoticed without any warning.

(Matt 24:37-43; 1 Thess 5:2-3; Rev 16:15)

On the other hand, others passages speak of some great events and signs that must precede His coming. Signs such as - wars and rumours of wars, widespread famine, disease, earthquakes and increase of lawlessness - these signs are the clues that His coming is approaching (Matthew 24). The apostle Paul said, "*That day will not come unless the falling away (apostasy) comes first, and the man of sin is revealed*" (II Thessalonians 2:3-4).

To the believers Jesus' arrival will not be surprised. They will have kept their eyes open, seen the signs and will be expecting him (1 Thess 5: 1-9).

So what are the signs of His coming? What are we 'watching' for? In the next chapter we will see more details about the signs of His coming. But for now, let us sum up the teaching of our Lord about the time of His coming.

- 1. No one knows, the day or the hour of His coming.**
- 2. He will come suddenly, like a thief in the night and during the normal activities of the daily living.**
- 3. He commands us to be ready for his coming.**

This is a major theme of the parables that He used when talking of His coming again. Just as a thief comes when he is not expected, and usually when people are asleep, so will the Lord catch many people unawares when He comes.

In the days of Noah, people were carrying on life as usual, eating, drinking, and marrying, and so on. When the flood came and swept them away, they were taken completely by surprise. “They knew nothing”, said the Lord (Matthew 24:36-41).

Paul and Peter use the same analogy “For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.” (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). In 2 Peter 3:10; Peter says “***But 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***”.

Our Lord uses the illustration of two men at work. One will be found unready and will be taken in judgement. Also, Two women will be toiling together and one will be caught out and ‘taken’, because she is not prepared (Matthew 24:40).

Then our Lord spoke of a servant who has been entrusted with the management of a household in his master’s absence. If the man does his job faithfully, he will be rewarded when his master returns- but if he takes advantage of the situation for his own ends, he will be taken by surprise and severely punished (Matthew 24:45-51).

Finally, Jesus tells the story of the bridegroom who has gone to bring his bride from her home to his, for the wedding celebration. There are ten bridesmaids waiting for him, lamps in hand. The bridegroom is delayed and their oil supply runs low. Five have spare jars of oil; five do not. Only those lamps that are still burning are admitted to the wedding festivities. The conclusion is simple: “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour”. (Matt 25).

CHAPTER V

THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING

According to Matt 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, the disciples came to Jesus and asked two questions:

1. When would Jesus 'prediction about the destruction of the Temple come true? and;
2. What will be the sign of His coming and the end of the age?"

It is appears they thought these two events would be at the same time. Our Lord answered both questions together, so that the events of the destruction of the Temple are blended with the signs of His coming.

It is obvious that these two events have quite a lot in common, the first foreshadowing the second.

The judgment upon Jerusalem (its fall in the year A.D.70) foreshadows the final judgment at the end of the world's history.

Outlines of Christ's Discourse	Matt 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
Occasion	vv.1-3	vv.1-4	vv.5-7
Disasters in the Earth	vv.4-8	vv.5-8	vv.8-11
Persecution and Help	vv.9-14	vv.9-13	vv.12-19
Destruction of Jerusalem	vv.15-28	vv.14-23	vv. 20-24
The Second Coming of Christ	vv. 29-31	vv. 24-27	vv. 25-28
Watching the Signs of the destruction of Jerusalem	vv. 32-35	vv. 28-31	vv. 29-33
Watching the signs of the second coming of Christ	vv. 36-51	vv. 32-37	vv.34-36

So What Does The Future Hold?

There are four important events repeatedly happening from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in the first century until the end of the world and the second coming of Christ.

These events are;

- 1. Disasters in the Earth (Mark 13:7-8)**
- 2. Persecution of the Church (Mark 13: 5-6; 21-22)**
- 3. Religious Deception and Apostasy (Matt 24:10-11)**
- 4. Gospel preached everywhere (Matt 24:14)**

According to the Scripture several events must precede the return of Christ. Matthew 24:5-7, 12-38 list about 7 signs. Paul lists several signs in 2 Timothy 3:1-7; 4:3-4; Romans 11:25 and 2 Thess 2:3-8.

All these signs can be summed up in sevenfold framework as it shown in the following table;

	Events preceding the Second Coming	Biblical References
1	Calling of the Gentiles	Matt 24:14; Rom 11:25
2	Conversion of Israel	Rom 11:25-29; 2 Cor 3:15
3	Apostasy in the World	Matt 24:12-28; 2 Thess 2:3
4	Coming of the Anti-Christ	2 Thess 2:3-4; 1 John 4:3
5	Persecution of the Church	Matt 24:9-14; Rev 6:9-10
6	Disasters in the Earth	Matt 24:4-8
7	Signs in the Sky	Matt 24: 29-31

(1) The Calling of the Gentiles

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and **then the end will come**” (Matt 24:14).

This Great Commission to preach the Gospel to all nations was instructed by the Lord Himself to the Church, *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation ... Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”* (Mark 16:15; Matt 28:19-20).

Founders of many mission societies like William Carey, Henry Martyn, and Alexander Duff, and later William Patton and David Livingstone and many other evangelicals believed a pre-condition of Christ’s return was *“this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; then shall the end come”*.

When the elect number from the nations believe and constitute the “fullness of the Gentiles” then will be the completion of the task of the world evangelization. Only then can history be wound up, mission completed. The Lord will come. Amen! Lord “Your Kingdom Come”.

(2) The Conversion of Israel.

*“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way **all Israel will be saved**. As it is written “The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins”* (Romans 11: 25-29).

Although Israel's conversion is not mentioned on the signs indicating the approaching of the second coming of the Lord in Matthew 24, what Paul said in Romans 11:25-29 seems to connect this with the end of time. Also it is obvious that Jesus' great commission of preaching the Gospel to all nations includes Israel.

Israel as a nation will not turn to the Lord. Only the full number of the elect out of the Israelites will be saved. Again Romans 11:25-29 does seem to imply that in the end large numbers of Israel will turn to the Lord when the completion of the Church is done. Then our great Saviour will come. Amen! Come Lord Jesus "*Your Kingdom Come*".

Through preaching the Gospel to all nations, the full number of the elect from Gentiles and the full number of the elect from the Jews will be the completion of the Church, and then Christ will come to take the Church to His eternal glory to be with Him forever.

The first key condition awaiting fulfilment before the coming of our Lord is **the completion of the Church**. (The Church is the saved people from Jews and the Gentiles)

(3) Apostasy in the World.

"Many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other (Matt 24:10).

The Bible teaches repeatedly that toward the end of time there will be a great falling away and the anti- Christ will appear before the Second Coming of True Christ. Wickedness will increase, and the love of many will grow cold (Matt 24:12).

Paul writes to Timothy saying; *“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons”* (1 Tim 4:1) Again He lists 23 signs in **his second letter** to Timothy 3:1-7 ;

“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people. They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth”.

Also He writes to the Thessalonians;

“Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him ... Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction” (2 Thess 2:1-3)

Such pressures quickly reveal the difference between genuine and nominal Christians. Mere churchgoers give up. Their love cools as a result of moral compromise with an increasingly wicked world. They will turn away from faith, betraying Christ and Christians.

(4) The Coming of the Antichrist.

“Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many ... At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false

messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you ahead of time. “So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the wilderness,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather (Matt 24: 4-5; 23-25)

“For that day (Day of Christ) will not come, unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction” (2 Thess 2:1-3)

Religious deception is one of the important keys that mark the last days, and it will increase before the day of Christ’s return.

According to Paul, another the key condition awaiting fulfilment before the coming of our Lord and our gathering together to Him”, is “the falling away comes first and the man of sin must be revealed”.

Therefore, contrary to the popular opinion, it’s antichrist first, and then the Church is “caught up,” not the other way around.

Q: Who Is the Antichrist or the man of sin? What does the Bible really teach about this mysterious subject?

The word “antichrist,” or “antichrists,” is introduced five times only in New Testament by the Apostle John in his first two letters (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3 and 2 John 7).

The word **antichrist** has two meanings, the first is one who stands and works “against” Christ. And the second is one also who seeks to be a substitute for Christ or in place of Christ.

Some conclude that antichrist is a specific person by identifying him with “the man of sin” mentioned by Apostle Paul”

But did Paul ever use this expression, “the man,” in any of his other writings in such a way that it does not refer to one individual? Yes Indeed. Paul wrote:

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That **the man of God** may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim 3:16-17)*

Dose the phrase, “the man of God” refer to only one godly human who might have a specific name? No. Instead, it refers to a succession of godly men throughout history who obey the Word of God. Look also to Romans 13:4

*“For he is **the minister of God** to you for good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beared not the sword in vain: for he is **the minister of God**, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Rom 13:4).*

In the above text, Paul also used the phrase, “*the minister of God*”, to refer to all civil officers throughout history whom God uses to restrain evil. Therefore, if we let Paul’s own writings interpret themselves, his phrase, “*the man of sin*” (2 Thess 2:3), need not apply to one supremely wicked personage.

What might it apply to? In the illuminating light of 2 Tim 3:17 and Romans 13:4, “**the man of sin,**” can properly apply to a historical succession of other men who stand and work “against” Christ and His Word.

Paul does not call “the man of sin,” “the antichrist,” but does describe his activity in terms of being both against Christ and a substitute for Christ. Paul says of the man of sin “*He will oppose*

and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God." (2 Thess 2:4).

We can conclude that the term "antichrist" or "antichrists" is a description of both ***the system of apostasy and individual apostates***. A system of unbelief such as (***the heresy that denied the reality of the incarnation, particularly in the manner of early Gnosticism, Judaism, Mohammadism... etc***), the apostate individuals (***like the first century heresiarch Cerinthus and of the third century Arius ... etc***). It was the fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy that a time of great apostasy would come, when "Many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and mislead many" (Matt 24:10-11).

Let's look carefully to (1 John 2:18; 4:1-4);

"Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us... Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son.²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.... Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus

Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world”.

It is crystal clear, that the spirit of antichrist was already in evidence in the apostolic age, and many antichrists had made their appearance. There have been elements of antichrist and antichristian power during the first century and during the middle ages, but these elements will eventually increase and be fulfilled before the coming of the Lord.

The central meaning of the antichrist, according to John is the great lie, the denial that Jesus is the Christ. The antichrist is anyone who denies the Christian Faith. He is a liar. He is pseudo-Christian. He denies that Jesus was the God in flesh. He denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:19-23).

This is a picture of a person who may outwardly seem to be a very religious but who is actually deeply and fervently opposed to God and the Christian faith.

The greatest dangers of the 20th Century (and it will continue to the coming of the Lord) would be religion without the Holy Spirit, Heaven without Hell, faith without repentance, salvation without Lordship, and Christianity without Christ (William Booth 1878-1912).

(5) Persecution of the Church.

There are approximately two hundred and fifty nations in the world today. Christians are under pressure in all but about thirty, and the number shrinks annually. Christians everywhere need to be ready for such opposition. The book of Revelation provide a curriculum for such indeed, the whole book is designed a 'manual for encouragement' in the time of suffering trial and persecution. It covers every crisis likely to be encountered by the faithful.

(6) Disasters in the Earth

Three are specifically mentioned: wars, earthquakes and famines. Our Lord says; *"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains"* (Matt 24:4-8)

This sign is clearly visible. How long these disasters will continue or how much worse it can get, we cannot guess. But make no mistake it is not a major sign of his coming. Our Lord made that clear *"but the end is still to come ... All these are the beginning of birth pains"*.

Apostasy, persecution of the Christians and great tribulation, these events had a partial fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem and during the history of the Christian Church but will also have a future fulfilment. Tribulation is experienced in this present age and the Church continues to face opposition until the Day of the coming of her Lord.

(7) Signs in the Sky

“Immediately after the distress of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. “Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, 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 24:29-31)

This is the final sign before Christ’s coming. It will be unmistakable. All natural sources of light will be extinguished, leaving the whole sky as ink. The sky has already reflected key events in the life of Our Lord. The brilliant star at his birth and the eclipsed sun at his death foreshadow the cosmic welcome to his return.

The nations will see the *‘lightning coming from the east and flashing to the west’* and they see our Lord riding on the clouds. Just how this will happen is not explained, but it will be, because our Lord Jesus said so.

Unbelievers will be overcome with grief. How wrong they have been. Now they will be the ones to experience unprecedented distress. Not so the believers who have waited so long for this day to arrive.

Angels will escort believers from all four corners of the earth; to be forever with their Lord. Unbelievers will be left behind for condemnation and their eternal suffering in the lake of fire.

CHAPTER VI

THE RESULTS OF HIS COMING

For over 2000 years Christians have been searching both the Heavens and the Scriptures looking for the return of the Son of God.

In this chapter we are searching the Scriptures for its inspired teachings on what will happen when that God-appointed time comes. The result of the second coming of the Lord can be summed up in the following table;

	With Regard to	The Result is	Scripture
1	God	His glory shall be revealed	Matt 25:31
2	Believers	They will be with the Lord forever	1Thess 4:18
3	Unbelievers	They will be cast into the lake of fire forever	2 Thee 1:7
4	Satan & his angels	They will be cast into the lake of fire forever	Rev 20:10
5	Physical Universe	There will be a New Earth and a New Heaven	Isa 56:17 Rev 21:1-7

The hope of God's people of the Old Testament was the coming of the promised Messiah; the hope of God's people of the New Testament is the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

With that firm conviction deeply imbedded in our faith, we should conduct our life and live everyday as if that were the day before the coming of Christ. Let us have a look at this important subject in more detail.

Firstly, With regard to God; His glory will be revealed at the coming of His son our Lord. Everyone shall see it. Our Lord made

that crystal clear. “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it” (Isaiah 40:5).

Our Lord says; *“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky **with Power and Great Glory.**”* Repeatedly, the Lord says *“**For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels**”* (Matt 24:30-33; Matt 16:27; 2 Thess 1:7).

Secondly, With regard to the believers; they will be with their Lord forever when he comes.

Christ will return to gather His people to Himself. He will send out angels to ‘gather his elect from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens’ (Mark 13:27). In this way, the people of God will join their Lord to fulfil their eternal destiny in His everlasting kingdom.

Paul also writes of ‘our being gathered to Him’ (2Thess 2:1). In his first letter to the Thessalonians, he gives some specific details about how this will happen. Let us take a look at what Paul said:

*“For **the Lord Himself will descend from heaven** with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”* (1 Thess 4:13-18).

- First, the Lord will literally descend from Heaven with a shout and a trumpet blast.
- Second, there will be the resurrection of the believers who have died. They will be renewed and living believers will also be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51-58).
- Third, all believers will be “caught up” to meet the Lord in the sky. Just like Jesus Christ Himself was visibly “taken up” into the sky almost 2,000 years ago.

When taken literally, these words describe the visible second coming of our Lord, not a secret rapture. Certainly, this is the great hope of believers in Christ. Whether we die or whether we live, we know that the day is coming when Christ will come and we will be with Him forever. Amen.

Thirdly, with regard to unbelievers; they will be cast into the lake of fire forever, when the Lord comes.

There is one graphic passage in the parable of the weeds and when our Lord speaks in frightening terms; *“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear”* (Matthew 13: 40-43)

The teaching of our Lord is very clear. He will send out angels to assemble those under penalty. Everything that caused sin and every evil doer will be excluded from God’s presence and cast into *“the fiery furnace”*.

It is more likely that the Lord is using the imagery of the parable at this point, to describe a state of eternal frustration and despair (See also Matt 25:31-32; Revelation 20:15; 21:8).

Paul also makes it very clear that the return of Christ will be an unhappy day for the wicked. This is what he says;

“God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord

and from the glory of his might on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marvelled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you” (1: 6-10).

We should observe that God does not send anyone to hell. He desires that none should perish (2 Peter 3:9). It is the choice of humans to experience the agony of hell. Their sin sends them there, and their rejection of the benefits of Christ’s death prevents their escaping.

As C. S. Lewis has put it, sin is a person’s saying to God throughout life, “Go away and leave me alone.” Hell is God’s saying to that individual, “You may have your wish.” It is God’s leaving one to oneself, as he or she has chosen. (C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 127-28

Fourthly, with regard to Satan and his angels, they will be cast into the lake of fire forever, when the Lord comes.

Revelation 20:10 tells of the final end when Satan and his angels are cast into the lake of fire. This is what the Bible says;

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever”.

The eternal doom of demons will be with Satan in eternal fire. The demons know that their doom is coming. In Matthew we hear them saying to the Lord *“What do you want with us, Son of God?”* they shouted. *“Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”* (Matthew 8:29)

The teaching of our Lord is very clear. “.. Everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

Fifthly, with regard to the physical universe, the Lord will create a New Heaven and a New Earth.

Other events that will accompany the Second Coming deal with the ultimate end of this physical Universe. According to Isaiah 64:4 and Revelation 21:1, God will create a new heaven and a new earth, where *"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."* (1 Corinthians 2:9)

The apostle Peter, in a discourse dealing with scoffers who attempt to deny the Second Coming of Christ, wrote:

"But the day of the lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with a fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:10-13).

Peter's description of the destruction of this physical Universe leaves little to the imagination: the Earth and the heavens will utterly melt with a fervent heat, and will be destroyed once and for all. There will be no reign of Christ on this Earth at His Second Coming, since Peter clearly depicts the destruction of the physical Earth.

The New Heaven and the New Earth for which Peter says faithful Christians yearn, are the **spiritual** homes promised by our Lord Jesus in John 14:1-6, and described so vividly in Revelation 21 and 22. They will not be of physical matter like the present heavens and Earth, but instead will be designed especially for the new spiritual bodies discussed by Paul. When Christ comes again, this physical Universe will be destroyed.

What will happen to those who have not been faithful to Christ during their lives on this Earth? Since there will be no physical Universe on which they can continue to live, where will they go? The Bible paints a grim picture for those who reject Christ. John, quoting the words of Christ, wrote that *“the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation”* (John 5:28-29).

The apostle Paul later confirmed this statement when He wrote about the time *“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”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8).

On that fateful day, all of Earth’s inhabitants, both those that have died in the past and those that are living at the time, will be led into the final Judgment in which Christ will divide the righteous from the unrighteous, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. The righteous will be ushered into heaven, while the unrighteous will “go away into everlasting punishment” (Matt 25:46). All those who have rejected God and Christ, whose names are not found written in the Book of Life, will be cast into the lake of fire with the devil, and “they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev 20:10-15).

Although many strange fiction stories have been circulated among people around the world regarding the Second Coming of Christ, the Bible presents a crystal clear picture of what will happen: Christ will appear to the entire world, the heavens and the Earth will be burned up, and at the final Judgment, every person who ever lived will either live eternally in heaven or hell. There will be no second chances once Christ comes back. “Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of person ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness” (2 Peter 3:11).

CHAPTER VII

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS COMING

According to Scripture people have many different attitudes about the second coming of Christ. Some do not expect it and mock those that do (2 Pet. 3:3-10). Others believe it will probably happen someday, but are not really living in anticipation of it. Instead, they are “just passing time” as they assume it will not be today (1 Thess. 5:1-3). And then, some expect it and even prepare for it. *“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ”* (Titus 2:11-13).

But every Believer will fit into one of the following four states concerning the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The Bible addresses the condition of those in each state. Only one state is pleasing and acceptable to the Lord.

I. Some Believers live in a state of Ignorance!

Paul says to the believers: *“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. 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”* (1 Thess 4:13-18)

It is not an insult to be ignorant, as ignorance simply means "without knowledge". Paul states he does not want us to remain in ignorance concerning these things.

II. Some Believer's live in a state of Indifference.

Peter says to the believers: "Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder, that you 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, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 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 creation" (2 Peter 3:1-4).

These verses are not speaking about the opinion of the world, for the world is not concerned with the things of God! These verses address the state of many in the church in the last days. While ignorance can be corrected through learning of truth, indifference is an insult to God and to His Word! Indifference is "Lukewarm" and we know how Christ feels about those who are lukewarm (Rev 3:16).

There are many who despise the message of Jesus coming. They claim that life issues are more important than doctrine.

Paul says to the Thessalonians:

"But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thes 5:1-6)

III. Some Believer's live in a state of Indulgence.

To the Church in Laodicea, our Lord Jesus says: *“Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked”* (Revelation 3:17).

Many Believers today that know and believe that Jesus is one day coming again have become "double-minded" as it pertains to the soon return of Jesus. This state is even worse than being indifferent ...this state is a state of unfaithfulness toward God!

Times are good, economy is good, and there are plans for the future. While they know they should be looking for Jesus, they secretly hope His coming will be later. After all, they have things they want to do! Rather than having their joy and security in the Lord, it has been placed in the things of the world. Temporary happiness has replaced joy, and their security is found in bank accounts, jobs, the stock market, their homes, etc.

Some have even become trapped in the very things warned about in II Timothy 3:1-5, and they have become lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. This is what God has to say to those living in this state of infidelity! *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”* I John 2:15-17

In Luke 12:16-21; we read the story of the rich farmer who tore town barns to build bigger ones. This man said to himself: *“And I will say to my soul: Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”* But God said to him, *‘Fool! This night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

Are you living in a state of indulgence, hoping the Lord doesn't come too soon because you are having too much fun? Recall the parable of the five wise and the five foolish virgins. In which group are you?

IV. Some Believers live in a state of keen Anticipation.

In Titus 2:11-13; we read: *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ”*.

As Believers we are to look toward the coming of the Lord with an earnest expectation. Jesus is the Blessed Hope! None other will do. There can be no substitute.

Paul writing to Timothy prior to his own execution taught one more lesson concerning the Lord's coming. He says:

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (II Timothy 4:6-8).

What then our attitude should be regarding the second coming of Christ?

1. Our attitude should be based on faith, hope, and love.

To the Church in Colossae Paul says: *“Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of the grace which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel”* (Col. 1:4-5).

It was this hope placed in the hearts of the Christians at Colossae by the implanting of the gospel that motivated them to have a wonderful attitude works, love, and faith. Verse six speaks of their “*constantly bearing fruit and increasing.*” They were not content to just relax and waste their time. It is because of this hope that we submit our wills to God’s and live the way He wants us to live.

2. Our attitude should be based on eager anticipation of the Lord’s return.

One is lacking in spiritual health and foresight if he or she is so at home in the world that there is little eager anticipation for the Lord to return. The eternal blessings of Christ are real and alive. I can think of only one thing that might cause hesitation: that we would like to see more obey the gospel first. But if we are so obsessed with the world ourselves, then we have the wrong attitude. We have misjudged the value of the things of this world when compared to eternal things (see 1 Pet. 1:3-5, 13, 17).

None of us should live with the attitude of recoiling at the thought that He may come today. If that is the case, then it is obvious that something is not right in our lives (see 1 John 2:28; 4:17-19).

3. Our attitude should be based on faith that becomes sight.

At the consummation of this age, great and wonderful things will happen to those who have been living with the attitude of prepared anticipation of Christ’s return.

We shall be changed! In a “*twinkling of an eye*” our bodies will undergo a metamorphosis that will involve something even grander than the cocoon-to-butterfly change we see in nature. The new body will be incorruptible, glorious, honorable and immortal. It will no longer be “flesh and blood” because such bodies are not adaptable to the wonderful experiences of eternal life in the kingdom of heaven (see 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 49-52).

We shall rise into the air to meet the Lord! He had already promised to go and prepare a place for us and to come again to receive us so we could go and be with Him. We will then go with Him to that place to *“ever be with the Lord”* (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

We shall be taken home! We will, for the first time, behold with our new eyes our incorruptible inheritance (Heb. 9:15). We will shine forth *“as the sun”* (Matt.13:43). Evil, suffering and wickedness will affect our lives no more (2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:3-5). Eternal day will dawn and there will be no sunset (Rev. 21:22-27).

How critically amiss is our attitude if we do not yearn deeply for such glory, beauty, and peace. One sure cure for the complacent Christian who feels too much at home in the world is this: obey Jesus with zeal and the right attitude. Speak out for Him; live for Him; be unashamed of His truth and righteousness. It will not be long until the world responds by letting you know that you are no longer welcome here (2 Tim. 3:12).

4. Our attitude should be based on the Lord’s eager anticipation of His return.

We do not often think of the second coming from Jesus’ perspective. We usually talk of His appearing in the air as we lift our gazes to Him. Right now the Son is sitting at His Father’s right hand awaiting the issue of the Father’s decree that it is time for time to be no more. Upon that decree, the Son will arise and return to earth with His accompanying legions of angels and the souls of His righteous ones who have died. The souls will be given new bodies, and the bodies of the living faithful will be changed. Then, the moment He has been waiting for: His people will rise to meet Him in the air as a result of which He will take us home (see Heb. 10:12-13; and see 1 Cor. 15:23-26).

But for now, He is watching and mediating for us with the Father. He is aware of our needs. He waits until that day when He will take us home so that we can see for the first time the inheritance which

He has prepared. It cost Him much. I am certain He is anxious to see the looks on our faces when we see it for the first time. Paul said that we have reason to be of good courage, and we certainly do. We are not here just to pass time until Jesus comes again. We are not awaiting an unsure future. We are to have an attitude that is full of hope and glory. We have a job to do. Jesus is coming again!

In what state do you live? Is it the state that is pleasing to God? Is it the state in which you want Jesus to find you when He returns? Are you looking in fervent anticipation?

Peter writes to the believers: *“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with intense heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with intense heat?”* (II Peter 3:10-14).

According to His promise, we look for New Heavens and a New Earth in which righteousness dwells.

PART II

**CONTROVERSIAL VIEWS
OF THE SECOND COMING**

CONTROVERSIAL VIEWS OF THE SECOND COMING

The study of Last Things has frequently divided Christians over the years, over the interpretations of the Book of Revelation in general and in particular over the 20th chapter of the same book. Yet Christians always have been in agreement over the hope of the return of Christ and the final state of the new Heaven where righteousness will dwell.

Different systems of interpretation over the book of Revelation has led to four major schools, they are; *preterist, futurist, historicist, and idealist.*

1. Preterist School of Interpretation

This is the belief that the majority (or all) of the prophecies found in Matthew 24 and the Book of Revelation as having been fulfilled in either the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D, or in the fall of Rome. For them, “The end of the world” usually means “the end of the Jewish Religion”. **Full-preterists** believe even the second coming of Christ occurred in 70 A.D, whereas **Partial-preterists** still believe in a future, literal return of Christ.

Differences between Preterists

	Full Preterists	Partial Preterists
Coming of Christ	All occurred at A.D 70 and ended the Jewish age.	At A.D.70, a coming of Christ occurred as a day of the Lord of judgment over Jerusalem. The Second Coming of Christ, the Day of the Lord and the Final judgment is still in the future and will be at the end of history.
Day of the Lord		
Judgment		
Jewish age		

2. Futurist School of Interpretation

In contrast to preterism, futurism usually sees the majority of Revelation's prophecies from chapter 4 onward as yet to come. This school of thought is often called dispensationalist, because of the underlying idea that the history of the world can be divided into 7 dispensations, or periods of God's dealing with mankind.

3. Historicist School of Interpretation

This is the belief that the book of Revelation presents in prophetic form an overview of human history from Christ's first coming to His second. In essence, historicism teaches straight forward, chronological progression by saying the major prophecies of Daniel and Revelation find fulfilment throughout Christian history while pointing toward the greatest visible event of the Second Coming of our Saviour.

4. Idealist School of Interpretation

This is the belief that the book of Revelation does not refer to specific events, but Revelation pictures the 'eternal struggle' between good and evil and the 'truth' contained in its narratives can be applied to any century.

One great message comes through- the ultimate victory is the Lord's. So it does not matter whether the antichrist is a Roman emperor, the papacy, Mohammad ... etc. Whatever form in which he comes, with however many 'heads' or 'crowns', he will never succeed. In the end, God will have the last word.

The different views over the 'thousand years' *millennium issue* in Revelation chapter 20 have divided Christians into three or four groups; they are: *A-millennialism, Post-millennism, Historic Pre-millennialism, and Dispensational Pre-millennialism.*

(1) A- millennialism view

The **a** in amillennialism means 'No'. The term amillennialism means there will not be a literal, future thousand year reign of Christ on the earth. The Bible predicts a continuous parallel growth of good and evil in the world between the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ. The kingdom of God is now present in the world through his Word, His Spirit, and His Church. This position has also been called "realized millennialism"

(2) Post-millennialism View

This is the belief that the kingdom of God is now extended through teaching, preaching, evangelization, and missionary activities. The world is to be Christianized, and the result will be a long period of peace and prosperity called Millennium. This will be followed by Christ's return.

(3) Historic Pre-millennialism

This is the belief that the return of Christ will be preceded by certain signs, then followed by a period of peace and righteousness (not necessary a thousand years) in which Christ will reign on earth in person as king. This was the dominant belief in the first three century of Christian Church.

(4) Dispensational Pre-millennialism

This is the belief that the return of Christ will be of two stages. He will come for his church in secret rapture, followed by seven years of great tribulation, and then He will come publicly with His church to regain literally one thousand years on earth. They believe that there is different stewardship of man under God. And there is a consistent distinction between Israel and the church throughout history.

Q1: Will the second coming be a dual-stage coming or a single coming?

According to ***amillennialists, postmillennialism, and historic premillennialism***; the second coming of Christ is a single event; in contrast, ***dispensationalists*** teaches Christ’s coming in two phases.

The Dispensational View (started around 1830) which I do not agree with, assumes that there are two second comings, separated in times of seven years followed by thousand year of Christ’s Reign on earth. They say; Jesus is coming twice, the first time secretly and unexpectedly for his bride the Church, the second time publicly and with preceding signs to establish his kingdom. This view teaches that believers will be “raptured” out of the earthly scene before they can watch for the signs of his coming.

The following four tables summarises the four views concerning the Last Things;

Summary of Amillennialism view

Categories	(1) Amillennialism
Second Coming of Christ	Single event; no distinction between rapture and second coming; Introduces eternal sate.
Resurrection	General resurrection of believers and unbelievers at second coming.
Judgments	General judgment of all people at second coming
Tribulation	Tribulation is experienced in this present age.
Millennium	No literal thousand years on earth after second coming. Kingdom present in the church age.
Israel and the Church	Church is the new Israel (Jews and Gentiles) No distinction between Israel and Church.
Adherents	Louis Berkhof, O.T. Allis, G.C. Berkhouwer. W. Hendrickson

Summary of postmillennialism view

Categories	(2) Postmillennialism
Second Coming of Christ	Single event; no distinction between rapture and second coming; Christ returns after Millennium.
Resurrection	General resurrection of believers and unbelievers at second coming.
Judgments	General judgment of all people at second coming
Tribulation	Tribulation is experienced in this present age.
Millennium	Present age blends into Millennium because of progress of gospel.
Israel and the Church	Church is the new Israel (Jews and Gentiles) No distinction between Israel and Church.
Adherents	Charles Hodge, B.B. Warfield, W.G.T. Shedd, A.H. Strong

Summary of Historic Premillennialism view

Categories	(3) Historic <i>Premillennialism</i>
Second Coming of Christ	Single event; no distinction between rapture and second coming; Christ returns to reign on earth.
Resurrection	Resurrection of believers at beginning of Millennium. Resurrection of unbelievers at end of Millennium.
Judgments	Judgment at Second Coming. Judgment at end of Tribulation.
Tribulation	Post tribulation view: Church goes through future Tribulation.
Millennium	Millennium is both present and future. Christ is reigning in Heaven. When He comes will reign but not necessarily 1, 000 years.
Israel and the Church	Some distinction between Israel and Church. Future for Israel but church is spiritual Israel.
Adherents	G.E. Ladd, A. Reese, M.J. Erickson

Summary of **Dispensational Premillennialism** view

Categories	(4) Dispensational Premillennialism
Second Coming of Christ	Second coming in two phases: rapture for church; second coming to earth 7 years later.
Resurrection	Distinction in resurrections: 1. Church at rapture. 2. Old Testament/ Tribulation saints at Second coming. 3. Unbelievers at end of Millennium
Judgments	Distinction in judgment: 1. Believers works at rapture; 2. Jews/Gentiles at end of Tribulation. 3. Unbelievers at end of Millennium.
Tribulation	Pre Tribulation: Church is raptured prior to Tribulation.
Millennium	At Second coming Christ inaugurates literal 1,000 year Millennium on earth.
Israel and the Church	Complete distinction between Israel and Church. Distinct program for each.
Adherents	J. N. Darby, Scofield, J.F. Walvoord

The following five teachings of the **Dispensational** view have become immensely popular. The orders of events are summarized below:

1. All true Christians will soon vanish in the secret coming of Jesus “rapture”. It will deliver the church from the agony of the great tribulation.
2. After the rapture the Church now in heaven will experience the Judgement Seat of Christ (judgement of works) followed by the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. During this seven-year period, the antichrist will take over the world, the earth will endure the seven-year tribulation, and the antichrist will enter a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem claiming to be God.
3. At the end of the seven years Christ will come back publicly to the earth, and Israel will be saved and enjoy His Millennial Kingdom (the throne of David) for 1000 years. During the

Millennium, Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit, and Christ will rule the earth in peace and justice. The curse from the Fall of Adam is lifted, and the saints will rule with Him for 1000 years.

4. At the end of the 1000 years, Satan is loosed to again deceive the nations into waging war against Christ. The final battle at Armageddon is waged, followed by the Great White Throne Judgement of all the wicked dead according to their works.
5. Then comes the New Heavens and the New Earth after the current earth is cleansed by fire. The New Jerusalem comes down from Heaven, and we begin eternity with God.

These five concepts are being taught on radio, television, at prophecy conference, in books and magazines, on the Net and in end time movies, such as (*A Thief in the Night, Left Behind ...etc*).

The real question is: ***Will Christ comes invisibly? Will the Church disappear secretly? Does the Bible really teach a secret coming and vanishing Christians?*** Without a doubt, the most quoted passage used to support a silent return of Christ before the seven year tribulation is in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Revelation 4:1.

The ***Dispensationists*** argue, that Apostle John was told to “come up to heaven” in Revelation 4:1 and that refers to the secret Rapture of the church and since then there is no mentioned of the church after Revelation chapter 4. But the answer to this is: first of all, John did not actually go to Heaven, he was simply taken up in a vision. Secondly, the Church is on earth after Revelation 4. Because Revelation 13 mentioned that the beast makes war with saints, who keep the faith of Jesus (13:7, 10; see also 14:12).

Also, the three major terms for the second coming are: ***Parousia, apokalypsis, and epiphaneia***. The ***Dispensationists*** argue that *parousia* refers to the secret rapture, the first stage of the return of Christ. The believer’s blessed hope of being delivered from this world

before the tribulation begins. The other two terms refer to Christ's coming in public and every eye will see him with the saints at the end of the tribulation.

When examined closely, the terms which designate the second coming do not support the distinction made by the dispensationalists. In 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, for example, the term *parousia* is used to denote an event which it is hard to consider of as silent and secret rapture. On the contrary it is loud and visible. There is a shout, a voice, a trumpet.

Here is what the Bible actually says: *"According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."*

When taken literally, these verses describe the visible second coming of Christ, not a secret rapture. The truth is, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is one of the noisiest verses in the Bible. As George Ladd says, *"It is very difficult to find a secret coming of Christ in these verses."* (Ladd, *Blessed Hope*, p.63.)

Far from being a secret event, our Lord Himself said of the *parousia*: *"For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man"* (Matt 24:7). Nor do the other two terms fit the dispensationalists' view. Whereas it is supposedly the *parousia*, not the *apokalypsis* or *epiphaneia*, that is the blessed hope awaited by the church, Paul is thankful that his readers have been enriched in knowledge as they *"wait for the revealing {apokalypsis} of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Cor1:7).

Finally, Paul also speaks of the *epiphaneia* as the object of the believers' hope. He writes to Titus that believers are to live godly

lives, “awaiting the blessed hope, the appearing {*epiphaneia*} of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

We conclude that the use of a variety of terms is not an indication that there will be two stages in the second coming. Rather, it clearly points to single event. There is only one advent. The ***Dispensational***’s view “two advents” are not scriptural (see Scofield’s “Both Advents”, Ref. Bible. P. 1212, note I and see Scriptural reference of 2 Thess 1:6-8; 1 Peter 1:7, 13; 4:13; 1 Tim 6:14 and 2 Tim 4:8).

Q 2: Will Christ come to remove the church from the world before the great tribulation or has the great tribulation already occurred at A.D. 70 on Jewish People as the Lord foretold?

According to amillennialism, postmillennialism, and historic premillennialism, the tribulation ***is experienced in this present age***. It represents the whole gospel age. But the great tribulation “the wrath” has already happened at the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 as was clearly foretold by the Lord Jesus (Luke 21:40-24).

I strongly believe that there will be always tribulation and persecution for the people of God, although it will vary in intensity from time to time and from place to place (John 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:12; Revelation 1:9).

But only the ***Dispensational*** view teaches that there will be an intense period of 7 years of tribulation immediately after the secret rapture of the church. Rapture first, then 7 years of horror.

Dispensationalists teach tribulation is the last week of the “***seventy weeks***” of Daniel prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27). According to the prophet’s terminology, a week equals seven years (Ezekiel 4:6). Consequently seventy weeks equals 490 years according prophecy regarding Israel’s future, commencing in 444 B.C. And sixty nine

weeks or 483 years concluded with the death of Christ “shall Messiah be cut off” (Dan. 9:26).

They teach that there is a gap between the 69 week (A.D.33) and the seventieth week (the future Tribulation period) which will start immediately after the secret rupture of the church. They slide the 70th week (the last seven years) all the way down to end times, and call it the tribulation! They teach that tribulation will be a time of God’s wrath poured out in judgment upon an unbelieving world. If the church is the object of Christ’s love, how can it be present during the tribulation?

Dispensationalists interpret Daniel 9:27 as follows:

1. “He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.” “He” is the antichrist who will make a covenant (or peace treaty) with Israel during the seven year of tribulation.
2. “In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease ...” In the middle of the seven year tribulation, the antichrist will break his covenant, turn against Israel, and stop their animal sacrifices.
3. The phrase, “he shall cause the sacrifice ... to cease” is proof that a Jewish temple must be rebuilt on the Temple Mount inside Jerusalem.

Dispensationalists’ teaching is based on speculative interpretation of two little words “one week” in one single verse in Daniel 9:27. There is no mention of any seven years of tribulation, antichrist, or rebuilt Jewish temple! Could there be something wrong with this interpretation?

The entire prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 covers a period of “seventy weeks”, Logic requires that “seventy weeks” refers to one consecutive block of time, which started during the reign of Persia and continues to the time of the Messiah. Logic also requires that the 70th, week follows immediately after the 69th week, no gap of

2000 years or more should be inserted between the 96th week and the 70th week. If a gap of 2000 years or more is inserted, then it cannot properly be called the 70th week!

Historically, the vast majority of well- respected Bible scholars have not applied Daniel 9:27 to a seven year period of tribulation at all. Neither have they interpreted the “He” as referring to a future antichrist. Instead, they applied it to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew Henry says about Daniel 9:27: “By offering himself a sacrifice once and for all He [Jesus] shall put an end to all Levitical sacrifices” ((Vol. IV, p 1094).

The British Methodist **Adam Clark** says that during Daniel 9:27’s “term of seven years,” Jesus Himself would “confirm or ratify the new covenant with mankind and thus bring “everlasting righteousness”” (Vol IV, p 602).

The stated focus of this prophecy is the Messiah, not the antichrist. “He shall confirm the covenant.” Paul said “the covenant” was “confirmed before by God in Christ” (Galatians 3:17). Our Lord came ‘to confirm the Covenant with many’. He said “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many” (Matt 26:28).

“In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.” After exactly three and half years of His ministry, our Lord died on the cross “the Messiah cut off”, in the midst of the week [in the middle of the seven years].” At the exact moment of His death, “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom...” (Matthew 26:51). This act of God signified that all animal sacrifices at that moment ceased to be of value. Why? Because the Perfect Sacrifice had been offered!

In the words of that 1846 Presbyterian publication, “Christ and Antichrist” by Rev. Samuel Cassels, page 49 we read; *“the seventy weeks of Daniel therefore, have certainly ended many centuries ago. We are not to look to the future for the fulfilment of these*

predictions. We must look to the past. And if to the past; where is there one who can have any adequate claims to being the subject of these prophecies, but Jesus? He, and he only can claim them; and to him they most certainly refer... one would think, the people [the Jews] among whom [these events] occurred, could not possibly have misapplied the prophecy”.

The entire “seven year period of tribulation” is an end time delusion, and I strongly agree with Millard J. Erickson who says;

*“The pretribulation position involves several distinctions which seem rather artificial and lacking in biblical support. The division of the second coming into two stages, the postulation of three resurrections, and the sharp separation of Israel and the church are difficult to sustain on biblical grounds ... The Bible indicates that the elect individuals will be present during the tribulation, but will be protected from its severity (Matt 24:29-31; Rev 3:10). The Bible is replete with warnings about trials and testings which believers will undergo. It does not promise removal from these adversities, but ability to endure and overcome them (**Introducing Christian Doctrine**, pp.393-394.)*

The attempt to interpret Matthew’s and Mark’s record of the great tribulation as occurring in the future is error, because there will never be a similar siege of Jerusalem when Christians will be escaping as they were instructed in each of the three gospels. But in general, we believe that there will always be tribulation and persecution for Christians, although it will vary in intensity from time to time and from place to place (see John 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:12; Revelation 1:9).

Q3: Will there be a millennium, an earthly reign of Christ in Jerusalem, or not? Did the Lord Jesus offer a kingdom to the Jews?

Dispensationalists are insistent that all the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Jews and the kingdom of the thousand years must be taken literally and not “spiritualized”.

The saddest feature of the millennial scheme and a literal interpretation is the restoration of all the old carnal order- earthly temple, Levitical priesthood, and carnal sacrifices, the keeping of the Sabbath (Ezek 44:24), the Passover with feast of the unleavened bread (45:21), circumcision (44:9) and offerings for sin, trespass and free will gifts (*Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 890).

But how can there be animal sacrifices in a millennium? To restore all these today, under the New Covenant, would be apostasy. But, in a millennium, under the same New Covenant, it is supposed to be according to prophecy! This “division” of the New Covenant is irreconcilable with the Word of God.

According to ***amillennialists***, there will not be literal, future thousands year’s reign of Christ on the earth. Revelation 20:4-6 refers to “the present reign of the souls of the deceased believers with Christ in heaven” while the kingdom of God is now present, realized and is fulfilled entirely in the present age, where Christ “is now ruling his people by his Word and Spirit, though they also look forward to a future, glorious, and perfect kingdom on the New Earth and in the New Heaven in life to come when Christ our Lord return.

The Reformers view is best summed up in ***the Larger Westminster Catechism*** where we read-

We are to believe that at the last day there will be general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust... Immediately after resurrection shall follow a general and final judgement of angels and men; the day and hour whereof no man

knoweth, that all may watch and pray, and be ever ready for the coming of the Lord (Questions 88 and 89).

There is not one verse in the Bible stating that our Lord came into the world to set up an earthly kingdom. John the Baptist, at the very beginning of the ministry of Christ, points Him out. As the King? Definitely not. John clearly states the purpose of the presence of Christ. Seeing the Lord Jesus coming to him, he tells all people: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, 36). Paul states that the kingdom of God is not natural but spiritual "*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*" (Rom 14:17). Paul also stated that the purpose of why our Lord did come; "*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*" (1 Tim 1:15).

The true basis of reasoning and revealed scriptural contrast is not the "literal" versus the "spiritual" but the "natural" versus the "spiritual". Paul states that what was first was the "natural" and afterwards the "spiritual". This order is seen in the Scriptures, viz. Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Saul and David, the Levitical priesthood and the Melchisedec order, the Old Covenant of carnal ordinances and the New Covenant of spiritual life, the earthly Inheritance and the heavenly Inheritance, and the natural body on earth and the spiritual body in resurrection (1 Cor 15:44-46; Heb 5:6, 7:17; 1 Pet 1: 3-5).

The spiritual blessings of the New Testament are just as literal as their natural counterparts in the Old Testament. The Jewish era of the Old Covenant was preparatory to the Christian era of the New Testament. The Gospel age is the final age and mankind is called to spiritual blessings which are enjoyed in their fullness in the New Heavens and the New earth (see 1 Cor 10:6, 11; 1 Peter 1: 10-12)

This truth is the basis of the allegory of Abraham's two sons in Paul's letter to the Galatians (ch. 4:22 to 5:6). These two sons

represent the “natural” Jew of Israel and the “spiritual” Israel, composed of both Jew and Gentile believers in Christ.

The Natural As Abram	The Spiritual As Abraham
Gen 16:4; Gal 4:21-31	Genesis 17:5; Gal 4:21-31
Hagar the bondwoman	Sarah the freewoman
Ishmael	Isaac
The Old Covenant from Mount Sinai	The New Covenant from Mount Zion
Jerusalem on earth in bondage	Jerusalem above is free
Mother of natural Jews born after flesh, under the Law of Circumcision	Mother of Jew and Gentile born after the Spirit “In Christ” Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision.
The persecutor – A servant	The persecuted – A son
The End: “Cast out the bondwoman and her son”	The End: Heirs of God through the true Seed, Christ.

Further, the kingdom is no longer of the earth, earthly, but of God and heavenly, being the kingdom of God and of Heaven. The Jerusalem, the City beloved, is “Above” (Gal 4:25-26). Mount Zion is from now on spiritual and eternal (Heb 12:22-24). The Temple is no longer of stones and gold, but living and spiritual (1 Cor 6:19; Eph 2:20-22). The acceptable sacrifices are no longer animals, but the redeemed (Rom 12:1-2; 1 Peter 2:5). The “blood” that avails is no longer of “bulls and of goats” but of Christ (Rom 3:24-25). The Land, so dear to the heart of the earthly people, is no longer of earth, as it now is, but the New Heavens and the New Earth. The High Priest is no longer of earthly order but of Melchisedec, even our Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 7:17). The king both now and forever is our LORD JESUS CHRST, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Q 4: Are There Two Gospels?

Dispensationalists speak of “two” forms of the Gospel: the Gospel of the kingdom for the Jews and the Gospel of the Grace for the Gentiles. They teach that the Jews did not need the death of Christ on the Cross, for the fulfilment of their prophets and kingdom: “the kingdom was promised to the Jews; Gentiles could be blessed only through Christ crucified and risen” (Ref. Bible, page 1008, ref g).

They teach that the Gospel of the kingdom will be preached after the rapture of the church and during the seven years of the great tribulation (Matt 24:14), and immediately preceding the coming of the king in glory.

But the Bible knows of only one Gospel- the Gospel of Christ, and “it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jews first, and also to the Gentiles” (Rom 1:16).

In the Bible, the Gospel of Christ is usually simply termed “the Gospel”, sometimes the Gospel of the Grace of God, the Gospel of His Son, the Gospel of Peace, the Gospel of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of the Kingdom, and the Everlasting Gospel. These are not different “forms”.

Q 5: Is there a Second Chance? Will any be saved after the Lord Comes?

Dispensationalists teach that, after the Christian Church is taken out of the earth at the secret coming of the Lord, there will be a great period of salvation! The salvation of the Jews and a great number of the Gentiles! (see *Scofield Ref. Bible*, p. 1272, note 3, and p 1337, note)

But this teaching is not only contrary to the Scriptures but also contrary to the whole work of salvation. The Bible is very clear **No Second Chance for any after the Lord comes**. The salvation of the

Gentiles, which is described as the “fullness of the Gentiles”, is the “times of Gentiles” which is now, not after the Lords comes.

The Apostle Paul states, “***Behold now is the day of salvation***” and “***Behold now is the accepted time***” (2 Cor 6:2). “Christ comes”, writes Paul, “*in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (2 Tess 1:18). Just as the “Day of Salvation” was clearly stated, so was the “Day of Judgment” (see Rom 11:25; Luke 21:24; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:5, 16; 1 Cor 3:13; 2 Tim 4:8; 2Pet 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17; Jude 6).

Our Lord Jesus spoke many parables about the separation of the righteous from the wicked in “the end”, but never once even hinted that, after such a division, there would be a second chance for some who were not among the righteous company. The illustrations used from history, the days of Noah, and the judgment of Sodom, afford no “hope” of a “second chance” (Read Matt 24:36-44; 25:10-12; Luke 17:26-36).

It is clear the Bible does not teach a “second chance” after the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Q 6: How is the Armageddon story to be interpreted?

Armageddon!!! The very word strikes terror into the minds of many people! It was the description given to the Gulf War: before that to Vietnam, and before that to Hitler's attempted conquest of Europe. Twenty years ago media correspondents from the former Yugoslavia transpose talk about a coming "Armageddon" in the Balkans if the current Bosnia crisis is not resolved.

On the other hand, Bible-thumping televangelists, popular preachers, and writers of Christian paperback books warn of a time when the world will come to an end with what Sadam Hussein once called the "Mother of Battles"!

So what is Armageddon? What does the Bible have to say?

In order to present what the Bible has to say we must first clear away a lot of misinformation on the subject. Considering that the word "Armageddon" occurs only once in the Bible, it is amazing how well it is known, whilst at the same time it is so little understood! This is simply because it has been taken completely out of context and applied to pretty well any major battle in the history of mankind.

The most obvious interpretation is the literal one. Popular belief of dispensationalists refers to some forthcoming battle involving Russia, Arabs, Israel and others on the Plain of Esdraelon in Northern Israel which is also described as Jezreel or the valley of Megiddo.

Unfortunately "experts" in linguistics and religious studies seem unable to agree about the location of Armageddon. Some say that it was originally spelt "**Har-Megiddo**" and therefore means a Hill at the end of the Megiddo valley. The problem with that is that we never read in the Bible of a battle on any such hill. On the contrary the Biblical battles fought at Megiddo were on a plain not a hill, when Josiah the king of Judah was killed by the Egyptian Pharaoh Necho (see 2 Chron 35:22).

Meanwhile, another expert assures us that even though in the 1881 Revised Version of the Bible the word **Har-Mageddon** appears (and it is the only major version of the Bible to carry this description), the earliest known interpretation extant is in **Arabic** and means "**a level trodden place**". Nevertheless, the general consensus among popular writers and preachers is that Armageddon refers to the place in Northern Israel where a future battle is to be fought.

So is there another way of approaching the matter? Yes, let us find out. Although the word "**Armageddon**" occurs only once in the Bible, it does so in a very significant place, the book of Revelation. This is **a book of signs and symbols** which have to do

with the continuous unfolding of God's purpose from the end of the First Century AD (when the book was written) through to the establishment of the New Heavens and of the New Earth at the return of Christ. Here is the reference:

"For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon" (Revelation 16:14, 16).

From this it will be seen that the nations come together for the purpose of executing **God's judgement** upon them. There is nothing new about this: time and time again we read of this **event** in both the Old and New Testaments.

The prophet Zephaniah states; ***"Therefore wait ye upon me, says the Lord until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy"*** (Zephaniah 3:8) Clearly this is an echo of Revelation 16:14!

Let us now turn to the Bible for further enlightenment. When we do so we soon realise how much the Bible tells us of this **event**. Studying the contexts of the following passages will leave us in no doubt that they apply to that great day of God Almighty referred to in Revelation, the day when God settles his account with the nations of the world.

The prophet Joel states; "Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:13-14)

The striking thing about these passages (and there are many others we could turn to) is how they all use the metaphor of "**the**

harvest being ripe"; or, "*a time of threshing*" or the "*gathering of nations as sheaves*" etc. Other passages which use similar symbology are Habbakuk chapter 3 and Isaiah chapter 63.

One further intriguing point about this particular quotation is how the prophets talk about threshing mountains. ***Now, how can mountains be threshed?*** Literally speaking, they can't! But when we realise how often the prophets (e.g. Daniel chapter 2:35 above) **refer to nations as "mountains"** we can see a beautiful example of the sort of symbology involved.

Appropriately enough, the book of Revelation takes up the same symbology in chapter 14:14-16 and speaking of a time when the son of man will bring about God's judgements on the earth:

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."

From these few references we can see that the great day of God Almighty involves gathering the nations of the world together. This will be when, in God's plan, both the time and the harvest are ripe: when the time will have arrived for threshing and judgement.

As we have already seen the prophet Joel describes this event of God's judgement as taking place in a valley ... the valley of Jehoshaphat ... in the valley of decision." (Joel 3:12, 14) But To understand what the prophet Joel is getting at we need to find out more about Jehoshaphat.

The most important point is that the people of the good king Jehoshaphat were delivered from defeat by the intervention of God. He brought His judgements to bear upon those who were invading

the land, and this was a blessing upon the people of Israel. As a result, the valley of God's judgements upon these invading nations became known as *Berachah* or the Valley of Blessing for God's people (2 Chronicles 20).

What is so significant is that that is just what Jehoshaphat's name means! "The Judgements of Yah". So when Joel talks about the location of Armageddon being the Valley of Jehoshaphat, clearly he does not have in mind the valley of Berachach down near the Dead Sea, but rather a symbolic place of the "threshing judgements" of God. Nowhere does the Bible describe such a valley, nor does the Jewish historian Josephus who lived near to the time of Christ. That is not surprising because that identification was not known until Empress Helena (the mother of the Byzantine emperor, Constantine) wrongly applied the description, to what we know today as the deep-sided ravine of the Kidron Valley which runs down between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.

So bearing in mind how all nations are to be drawn to Jerusalem (Zech 14:2) for the great day of God Almighty, one thing becomes quite clear, ***Armageddon is an event -- not just a place***. It is not a hill or a plain 60 miles north of Jerusalem or even a deep sided gorge one mile East of the city, nor is it only a set piece battle between competing rival blocks of nations. It is the ***event of God's judgement upon the nations***, when he will settle His controversy with the nations (Jer. 25:31) and when He will start His long programme of judging the world with righteousness (Acts 17:31).

Having then seen *what* and *where* Armageddon is, there remains a further question: **when can we expect Armageddon to occur?**

Three Views of when Armageddon occurs;

1. One symbolic interpretation sees **Armageddon as having occurred at the cross!** All the forces of hell and humanity were ranged against Christ.

This idea is hinted at the key passage on this subject, Revelation 16 “a loud voice from the throne saying, “It is done!”. It was the same word of Jesus on the cross when He cried in a loud voice, “It is finished” (John 19:30).

Did Armageddon occur at the Cross? Was the greatest conflict ever known to history actually fought there? Was the greatest victory of all time accomplished at Calvary?

2. Another symbolic interpretation sees the battle as spiritual, but as a battle still to be won. **When we consider Jerusalem means the Church, in this case, we have a picture of an assault against the Church by antichristian forces.**

This idea is hinted in the victory of the Word of Christ when He said “I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

3. **The End- Age Judgment and the triumph of the Christ when He comes to judge all nations** (Rev 16:17).

About that time, we do not know when this day will be! The wise thing to do is to live with both what the Lord *has* revealed and what He has not! Moses tells us in Deuteronomy 29:29 that certain things still remain as the undisclosed secrets of the Lord. The important point is for us to realise that what God *has* revealed is sufficient for us to do His will.

The real reason, however, why we do not know when Armageddon will take place is because it involves not just a war between nations but the return of Christ himself. It is the Great and the Terrible Day of the Lord (Joel 2:31). It is indeed the same event as we read about in Ezekiel (chapter 38), Daniel (chapter 11), Zechariah (chapter 12-14) and elsewhere. A careful reading of those chapters and the contexts in which they occur make it quite clear that they refer to the event described in Revelation 16:14-16 as Armageddon, or, the time when the nations of the earth are gathered together for

the battle of that great day of God Almighty. So it is very simply to say because we do not know when Christ will return therefore we cannot say precisely when Armageddon will occur.

Again Zechariah chapters 12-14, DO make it clear when we can expect Armageddon. When is it to be? More than 15 times we are told it will be "***in that day...***"! What day? **The great day of God Almighty described in Revelation 16:16 as Armageddon!**

The message is clear: Christ Is Coming again, we need to be ready. Will he take you by surprise? Are you ready for his return?

Q 7: How will the Righteous be Preserved in the Day of Fire?

There are two great signposts in human history, the flood and the fire (the Day of Judgment); one has already passed, and assures the fulfilment of the other in the future. Peter tells us that between these two crises there is no divine intervention, no break in God's longsuffering. The Lord Jesus likened His future coming to the fiery destruction of Sodom, and as that judgment was both exterminatory and final, so Christ taught in parables that His coming judgment would be likewise (Matt 13:40-42).

Before the Flood, God revealed to Noah the means of his preservation and in the New Testament He has revealed how the righteous will be preserved during the renovation of the earth and heavens by fire. As Noah and his family were borne up above the Flood, so the righteous are to be "caught up" and away from the fearful fiery holocaust which will mean destruction to the wicked and will bring to pass the reconstruction of the New Heavens and the New Earth. Christ has declared, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev 21:5).

It is clear that the Bible teaches that the righteous are to be preserved in the day of God by the resurrection and the rapture when the Lord comes. The Christian has this sure knowledge and satisfying comfort.

Conclusion

It has ever been a temptation to forecast the future, but today, as never before, many want to know “what is around the corner”. However, to God’s people we need not be either “confused” or “unsatisfied” regarding the details of the events of the future, because from Abraham’s day till the very end of Time the one and only goal of all Faith is “The New Heavens and the New Earth”.

Before the first coming of our Lord, from the beginning of the history of mankind, men of faith have longed to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. They have longed for the eternal amidst the limitations of the temporal. They have groaned amidst the material, longing for the spiritual. They have confessed themselves to be “strangers and pilgrims” on the earth, looking for a *“better country, a heavenly City”* and for the *“City whose builder and maker was God”*. *“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided better things for us, that they without us should be made perfect”* (Heb 11:13-40).

After the first coming of our Lord, all of God’s people of the New Covenant have joined their ranks as “strangers and pilgrims” on the earth, and look forward to the “New Heavens and the New Earth”. This goal was the simple, plain and entirely satisfying hope of the first Christians, and is our today (2 Pet 3:1-8).

The Christian Hope should not be an “escape door” from an unsatisfying, aimless, and useless existence in Time; this can only tend to indifference to responsibility towards others. Our Lord has left His own “in the world” to be its light, and our responsibility is to reveal to the world a life that is truly adjusted to our Eternal Hope.

The Christian Church must never forget she is the instrument Christ uses to extend His glorious kingdom, and the Commission of the kingdom is essentially a missionary one (Matt 28:19-20). Christians need to be continually conscious of the eternal and the spiritual in the light of the coming of our Lord and Master.

If we love our Lord Jesus Christ and His appearing, the time of His coming will be relatively unimportant; what will matter most will be our watchfulness and diligence to be found faithful to our stewardship should He come or we be taken to be with Him through death. As Edward Mote so powerfully put it:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus Christ, my righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found;
In Him, my righteousness, alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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**“What Will Happened When The Lord Returns”
Dr. Botros Botrosdief**

What you find in this book is a message of hope. The Christian Hope should not be an “escape door” from an unsatisfying, aimless, and useless existence in Time; this can only tend to indifference to responsibility towards others. Our Lord has left His own “in the world” to be its light, and our responsibility is to reveal to the world a life that is truly adjusted to our Eternal Hope.

If we love our Lord Jesus Christ and His appearing, the time of His coming will be relatively unimportant; what will matter most will be our watchfulness and diligence to be found faithful to our stewardship should He come or we be taken to be with Him through death.

Dr. Botros authored 35 books, 7 in English and 28 in Arabic. Currently Dr. Botros is preaching at

Mernda and Whittlesea Presbyterian Church

Come and Join us every Sunday

9:15 am @ Mernda, 1345 Plenty Rd

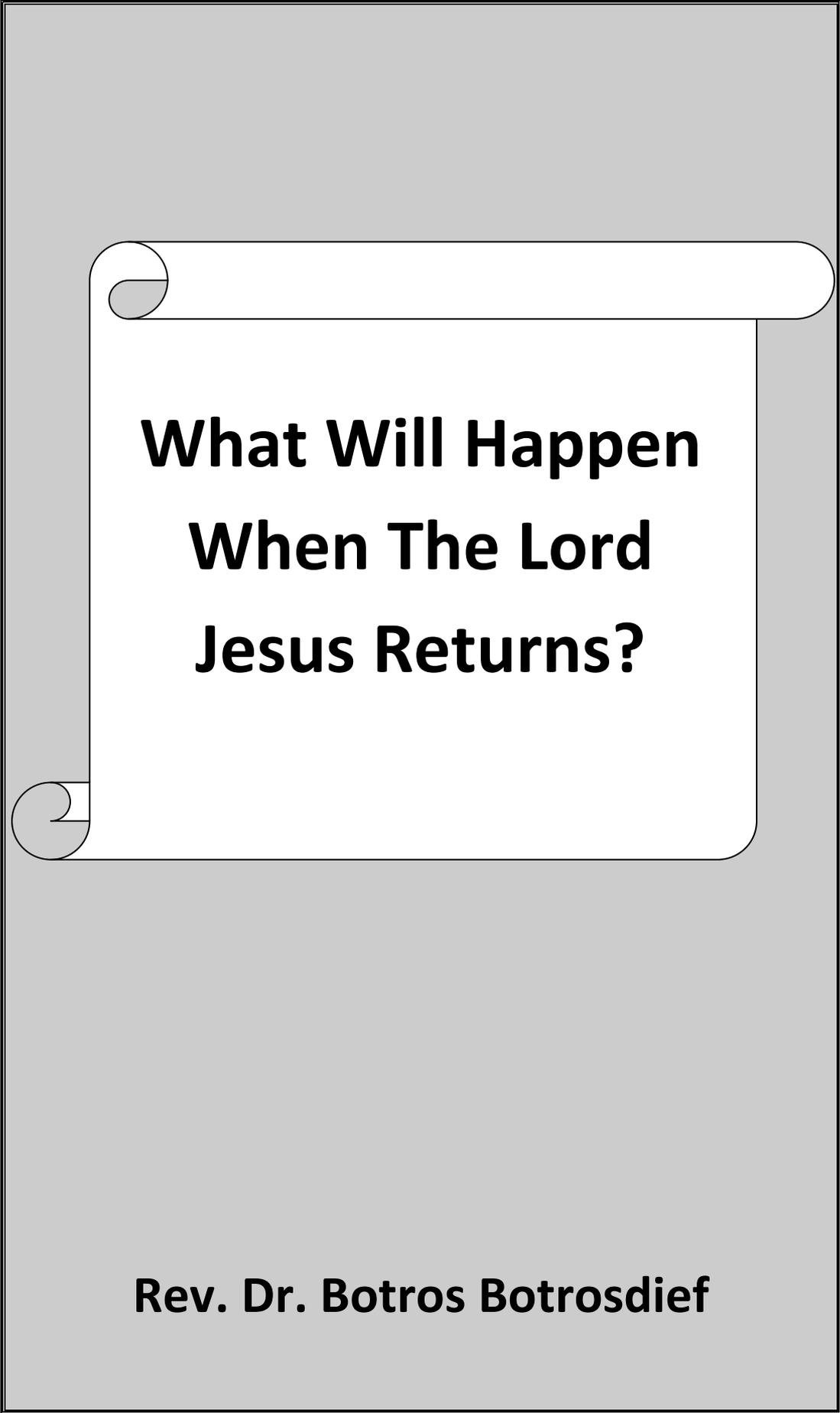
10:30 am @ Whittlesea, 10 Lime St

1:00 pm @ Mernda, the Arabic Service

الكنيسة الإنجيلية العربية بميرندا الساعة الواحدة ظهراً كل يوم احد

1345 Plenty Rd, Mernda

For inquiry call 0401967468



**What Will Happen
When The Lord
Jesus Returns?**

Rev. Dr. Botros Botrosdief

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