

THE 2ND COMING OF THE CHRIST

The second coming of Jesus the Christ is one of the basic teachings of the Bible. Old Testament prophets of God prophesied that the Messiah would come into the world. The first four books of the New Testament tell us that the Messiah or Christ did come as the Savior of mankind. These books record that He lived as a man (Jesus of Nazareth), died on the cross, rose from the dead, and returned to heaven. But the New Testament also plainly says that Jesus will come again: *“To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time”* (Hebrews 9:28).

Why do we believe that Jesus will come again? The Bible is the word of God (2 Timothy 3:16,17), and God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18). So, when the Bible says that Jesus will come again, we accept this fact, just as we accept the facts that He died for our sins, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3,4). In our time we often hear people speak of Jesus' second coming, but much of what people say is not in harmony with the Bible and causes others to be confused. What does the New Testament teach about Jesus' second coming? Let us look at how the Bible answers some basic questions on this topic.

IS THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS REALLY A CERTAINTY?

Jesus told His apostles, *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”* (John 14:3). What did Jesus say? *“I will come again.”* Immediately after Jesus ascended to heaven, two messengers of God said to Jesus'

apostles, *“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:11). What was their message? *“Jesus . . . will so come . . .”* Inspired by God's Spirit, the apostle Peter describes the second coming of Jesus as *“the day of the Lord,”* and said that that day *“will come”* (2 Peter 3:10). It is a certainty.

Two New Testament books which emphasize the second coming of the Christ are the epistles of First and Second Thessalonians. In those epistles the Holy Spirit time and again declares that Jesus will, indeed, come again (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 2:2,3). Yes, if we believe the Bible, then we cannot doubt that Jesus will come again.

WHEN WILL JESUS COME AGAIN?

When Jesus spoke of the time of His second coming, He said, *“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only . . . Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your lord doth come . . . Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh”* (Matthew 24:36,42,44). The New Testament plainly teaches that the day of the Lord will come *“as a thief in the night”* (1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). Thus, His coming will be sudden and at an unexpected time. We must accept the reality that *“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God”* (Deuteronomy 29:29). The time of Jesus' second coming is one of those secret things that belong to God. We do not know when Jesus will come again, because God has not revealed it to us in the Bible. Despite

this fact, in history many have tried to predict when Jesus would come again. Each prediction has been false, and those who made the predictions have been shown to be false prophets. The Bible does not emphasize the *time* of Jesus' second coming, but emphasizes rather that *we must be prepared* before that day comes.

IN WHAT MANNER WILL JESUS COME?

The Lord's second coming will certainly not be a secret, silent affair for it is written, *“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him”* (Revelation 1:7). Again, it is written, *“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God . . .”* (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Notice that this verse shows that Jesus will come personally and bodily: *“For the Lord himself shall descend . . .”* This reminds us of what the messengers of God told the apostles: *“This same Jesus . . . will so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:11). Please note that the Bible nowhere says that Jesus will return to walk and live on the planet earth. Rather, it says that when He comes the faithful will be taken up *“in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air”* (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17).

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN JESUS COMES AGAIN?

When Jesus comes again, He will not die on a cross to save us from our sins. That was the purpose of His coming to earth the *first* time (Mark 10:45). It is important that we also understand that when Jesus comes again,

He will not establish an earthly kingdom and rule on an earthly throne. Jesus' kingdom is a spiritual one, not a physical or material one. Jesus Himself said, *"My kingdom is not of this world"* (John 18:36). The truth is, Jesus' kingdom has already existed nearly 2000 years. The Bible makes it plain that the saints of the first century were already in Jesus' kingdom. *"Who [God the Father, rdc] hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son"* (Colossians 1:13). So, where were those Christians after God translated them into His Son's kingdom? In Jesus' kingdom. They could not be in that kingdom if it did not already exist! Since the kingdom of the Christ already exists (and has existed since about A.D. 30), then His purpose in coming again cannot be to establish it.

When the Lord comes again He will raise all the dead. Jesus said, *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"* (John 5:28,29). But when will the dead be raised? Jesus Himself said that the raising of the dead will take place at *"the last day,"* in other words, the day when He comes again (John 6:39,40,44). Yes, Jesus will raise the dead when He comes again.

When the Christ comes again He will also judge every person of every nation. God has appointed the day in which He will judge all men in righteousness by Jesus (Acts 17:31). On that great day, *"... we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done,*

whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). We will thus be judged by the One that created us (John 1:1-3) and died in order to save us (1 Timothy 1:15). The Lord Jesus will judge us by His word (John 12:48).

When will this judgment be? It will be on *"the last day"* (John 12:48). *"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats"* (Matthew 25:31,32). In addition, the New Testament clearly teaches that when Jesus comes again, the earth and atmosphere around it will be burned up with fire (2 Peter 3:10,12).

WHY IS THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS IMPORTANT TO EACH OF US?

On the day that Jesus comes again, for the first and last time, all men that have ever lived on the earth will be together in one place for one purpose. It will be *"the day of judgment!"* (2 Peter 3:7). After the judgment, each of us will go to our eternal destiny, either to eternal life in heaven or eternal punishment in hell (Matthew 25:46). Are you and I ready for the second coming of Jesus? The way for us to be prepared is to believe and obey the gospel of the Lord, then faithfully serve Him all the days of our life. May each of us to have the courage to follow Jesus while we still have that chance.

Union Grove church of Christ
4889 Bates Pike SE
Cleveland, TN 37323 TEL: (423)-479-8307
Service Times: Sunday at 10:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

This booklet was written by Roger D. Campbell.

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