



My Bible School Lessons

Exploring the Word of God

Lesson #5: "Coming Again!"

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13; 5:11

Memory Verse: "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:11

The return of Jesus is mentioned more than three hundred times in the 260 chapters of the New Testament, an average of one verse in every twenty-five, according to Dr. M. E. Dodd, in his book, *Jesus Is Coming to Earth Again*. In the Bible, there are eight times as many references to the second coming of Jesus as to the first. Patriarchs, in the Old Testament, looked forward to it (*Jude 14; Job 19:25-27*); and it has also been the blessed hope of the church in the New Testament (*Titus 2: 13; Acts 3:19-21*).

This great truth has been embraced by prominent Christian leaders throughout recent centuries, and many have given voice to their belief in the second advent.

Martin Luther wrote, "I ardently hope that, amidst these internal dissensions on the earth, Jesus Christ will hasten the day of His coming."

John Calvin said, "We must hunger after Christ till the dawning of that great day."

John Knox wrote, "We know that He shall return, and that with expedition."

John Wesley, commenting on the closing verses of Revelation, said, "The spirit of adoption in the bride, in the heart of every true believer, says . . . 'Come and accomplish all the words of this prophecy.'"

John Milton sublimely wrote, "Come forth out of thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth. . . take up that unlimited scepter. . . For now the voice of Thy bride calls thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed."

Moody said, "The church has had very little to say about it [the second advent]. Now, I can see a reason for this; the devil does not want us to see this truth, for nothing would wake up the church so much."

A deep and abiding faith in the second coming of Christ has a tremendous purifying and uplifting power.

1: WILL CHRIST COME AGAIN?

John 14:2-3: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 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."

We can rely upon the word of Christ. Our eternal future is secure when it rests upon the promises of His Word. Jesus said, "I will come again," and He surely will. Nothing in heaven or earth can be more certain than His Word and, therefore, His coming.

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For centuries the people of God awaited the fulfillment of the promises concerning Christ's first coming as the Messiah. Then came the wonderful day when heavenly messengers made the announcement: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (*Luke 2:11*).

Just as surely as the promises of God were fulfilled in the first advent of Jesus to this world, just so surely will be those that pertain to His second advent. The day of His return will be the most wonderful day in all history.

When Jesus was put under oath by the high priest at His trial, as He stood a prisoner flanked by guards at the foot of Caiaphas' throne, He said, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (*Matthew 26:64*). This promise, made under the oath, and can be depended upon - He will come again.

2: HOW WILL HE COME?

1. So we can see Him.

Revelation 1:7: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him."

Matthew 24:30: "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 24:23-27).

2. So we can hear Him.

Matthew 24:31: "He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

1 Thessalonians 4:16: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."

3. He will come in glory.

Matthew 25:31: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory."

The effect of this glory upon the inhabitants of earth we can only faintly imagine. If, at the time of Christ's resurrection, the appearance of one angel prostrated the Roman guards as dead men (*Matthew 28:2-4*), it is no wonder that many will try to hide from the glory of Christ, praying for the rocks and mountains to fall on them (*Revelation 6:14-17*) when He appears in the glory of all the holy angels.

4. He will come unexpectedly.

Matthew 24:44: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Matthew 24:36: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only."

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In the clearest language, Jesus Christ taught that His coming would be open, announced, personal, literal, visible, and that good and bad alike would see Him come. He was to come as a "thief in the night" only in the sense that none would know the "day and hour," and multitudes would be unprepared.

Sometimes we find, in certain commentaries or in Bible footnotes, references to a secret coming of our Lord. These are only expressions of man: and, although well-meaning, they are not the inspired Word of God. If we are led into delusions about secret comings of Christ, we shall be open to other deceptions. Eve was "deceived," but God held her responsible. Before she could believe the deceiver she had to disbelieve God. Jesus warned, "Take heed that no man deceive you" (*Matthew 24:4*).

A woman came up to a preacher and asked, "Are you the man who talks over the radio?"

"Yes," he said, "I am one such man."

"Do you believe Christ is coming literally?" she queried.

"Yes," answered the man.

Said she, "I wish you would come over to my town. My minister has a private séance. I will get you in for nothing. A mighty power comes. A glorious being appears. This is Jesus Christ."

"Well," said the preacher, "I will not be there." Said he, "I have an old Book that explains all that."

He took out his Bible and read *Matthew 24:26-27*: "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Then he said, "Madam, I don't deny that somebody comes there to that private séance, but it is not my Saviour, and it is not my Lord, and I will not be there to meet the one who comes there."

Friend, if some glorious being, or any other kind of being, should appear to you and even perform some miracles of healing or work a thousand wonders, it is not Jesus Christ. He is not coming that way. Fantastic delusive teachings are sweeping millions into a river of deception.

When Christ comes back, He will be "this same Jesus" who went away (*Acts 1:9-11*). "This same Jesus" who rose from the dead had flesh and bones (*Luke 24:39-43*). He ascended to heaven as the Son of man to be our Mediator (*1 Timothy 2:5*). He is coming back literally and physically as the Son of man (*Matthew 26:64*). There will be nothing secretive or ghostly about it.

3: WHY WILL HE COME?

1. To raise the righteous dead.

1 Thessalonians 4:16: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. with the voice of the archangel. and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

2. To catch up the righteous living with the resurrected dead.

1 Thessalonians 4:17: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds. to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord:"

3. To change their vile bodies.

Philippians 3:20-21: "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

4. To take the righteous to heaven.

John 14:2-3: "I go to prepare a place for you. 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."

He comes for His people. With intense longing has He desired that "they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am (*John 17:24*)."

The One who was rejected, crucified, exalted, and glorified is "coming again in like manner as He ascended; to raise the dead, to judge the world, to save His people, to be glorified in His saints, to crush the usurper, to destroy His foes, and to reign forever as the Lord of all" (*H. L. Hastings*).

5. To destroy the living wicked.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels. in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:8, about those whom He will "destroy with the brightness of His coming").

4: HOW MAY WE BE READY?

1. We can come to Him.

John 6:37: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

If we are to be accepted by Christ when He comes, He must be accepted by us now. One great reason He has not already come is that there are still honest souls to be saved.

2. We can live for Him as did Paul.

2 Timothy 4:7-8: "I have fought a good fight. I 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."

Mere profession of Christianity or church membership will not avail. "For me to live is Christ," said Paul (*Philippians 1:21*).

3. We can seek to be like Him.

1 John 3:2-3: "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

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A man visited an art gallery to see a famous painting. Rules limited all visits to five minutes. The man came day after day and gazed upon the picture, then hastened away to sketch what he could remember. After a long time he invited friends to see his completed work. They marveled at his exquisite workmanship. "We did not know you were such an artist!" Then he told them the secret, that this was only a copy of a great masterpiece. Then they all exclaimed, "If that is only a copy, we must see the original."

Shall we not gaze upon Christ until we ourselves are so like Him that others will want to see Him and prepare to meet Him?

4. We can look for Him.

Hebrews 9:28: "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

If we look for Him, it will affect our preparation for His coming. In the parable given by Christ, one servant said, "My lord delayeth His coming," and he began "to smite his fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunken. The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him, and in an hour that he is not aware of. And shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites" (*Matthew 24:48-51*).

5. We can love His appearing.

2 Timothy 4:8: "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."

Yes, those who love His appearing will be ready.

A minister preached on the second coming. After the service a woman came up to him and said, "Young man, I am just as good a Christian as you are." He said, "I don't doubt that at all." She said, "I love the Lord as much as you do, and I'm old enough to be your mother."

"I can't deny it," said he.

"I know the Bible as well as you do," she continued.

"I do not doubt that either," he replied.

"Well," she said, "I love the Lord, but I don't want Him to come in my day."

"Now, Mother," said the preacher, "suppose a young man and a young woman should fall in love and marry, and he should say, 'Dear, I must go off to Europe. I am to have a great job over there. When I have started to work and built a home, I am going to come back for you.' He promises to write her letters, and the letters begin to come. She reads them, and takes them to her friends, and reads them over and over. She says, 'Oh, isn't it wonderful? Isn't he a wonderful husband? Isn't it wonderful? I love him; he is the grandest man in all the world, but I hope he doesn't come back in my day.' Don't you think there would be something wrong with a person like that?"

The woman saw the point. She said, "I'm wrong."

"If Jesus should come at this moment
To catch up with Him in the air
All those who love His appearing,

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Forever to be with Him there,
How would He find you? I wonder
Watching, waiting, faithful, true?
Dearly beloved, consider
How will it be with you?"

To be among those for whom Jesus comes—this is the supreme hope of the human heart. God grant that when Jesus comes He will come for you.

This time He is not coming to lie on a cross, but to end sin and death. He is mindful of your sufferings; and, in the great day of His appearing, He will take them all away. He knows what to do for every trouble and how to make all things right. He will establish His kingdom of righteousness and banish all cares, which weigh down the heart with sorrow. War, tyranny over the weak, oppression of the poor, and weapons of destruction with their constant threat of death will all be removed.

How much it means to be ready when Jesus comes! What a thrill to see Him face to face and to feel His arm around you thrown! How will it be to meet Him in peace and hear Jesus speak your name? What joy awaits you, living with Him through the endless ages of eternity! When Jesus comes for you -That is the most satisfying experience that can ever come to any human being. May that experience be yours.

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

"One of the most solemn and yet most glorious truths revealed in the Bible is that of Christ's second coming to complete the great work of redemption. To God's pilgrim people, so long left to sojourn in 'the region and shadow of death,' a precious, joy-inspiring hope is given in the promise of His appearing, who is 'the resurrection and the life,' to 'bring home again His banished.'

"The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures. From the day when the first pair turned their sorrowing steps from Eden, the children of faith have waited the coming of the Promised One to break the destroyer's power and bring them again to the lost Paradise. Holy men of old looked forward to the advent of the Messiah in glory, as the consummation of their hope. Enoch, only the seventh in descent from them that dwelt in Eden, he who for three centuries on earth walked with his God, was permitted to behold from afar the coming of the Deliverer. 'Behold,' he declared, 'the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all' (Jude 14,15).

"The coming of Christ to usher in the reign of righteousness has inspired the most sublime and impassioned utterances of the sacred writers. The poets and prophets of the Bible have dwelt upon it in words glowing with celestial fire. The psalmist sang of the power and majesty of Israel's King: 'Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence. . . . He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.' (Psalm 50:2-4). 'Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad. . . before the Lord: for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth.' (Psalm 96:11-13). .

"When the Saviour was about to be separated from His disciples, He comforted them in their sorrow with the assurance that He would come again: 'Let not your heart be troubled. . In My Father's house are many mansions. . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself' (John 14: 13). 'The Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him.' 'Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations' (Matthew 25:31, 32).

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"The angels who lingered upon Olivet after Christ's ascension repeated to the disciples the promise of His return: 'This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven' (Acts 1: 11). And the apostle Paul, speaking by the Spirit of Inspiration, testified: '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). Says the prophet of Patmos: 'Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him' (Revelation 1:7)." *Great Controversy, 299-301*