

Inside the Lines
P.O. Box 1261
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JESUS
His Return Lesson 8
return pages 4 & 5 only

Something for You to Study

The Bible repeatedly declares that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming back to earth. The Old Testament has many prophecies of a coming kingdom on earth over which the Messiah will reign. The New Testament adds a truth, previously hidden, that the second coming will begin a period of time in where the Lord comes to set up His kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven on planet Earth.

The second coming of Christ is the outstanding theme of prophecy in the Bible, for it is the crowning event of all that has happened or will happen in God's universe.

The prophecies in the Old Testament did not clearly distinguish between the two comings. The sufferings and the glory (1 Peter 1:10-11) were sometimes fused in the same prophecy. The prophets themselves were puzzled at some of what God revealed to them, for the present age between the two events was not clearly revealed. It is as though one sees mountain peaks in the distance that seem to be one, when actually there is a valley between. We stand in the valley of prophecy, so to speak, looking back upon the "sufferings of Christ" and ahead to the "glory that should follow."

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

A definite distinction is made in Scripture between the coming of Christ for His own and His coming in power and glory to the earth to establish His kingdom. The former event is called the rapture, from the word, which means to catch up. At that time Christ will not actually touch the earth but will come in the clouds to take believers away from the earth. Acts 1:9-11

This is a truth that could not be known to the Old Testament prophets, because the church was not formed at that time. Paul calls the rapture a mystery 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. It could not be known before the birth of the church in Acts when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost.

One great fact that is clearly emphasized in Scripture is that the return of the Lord for His own is imminent; that is, it may take place at any time. We are told to be awaiting Him expectantly (Philippians 3:20-21; Titus 2:13; 1 John 2:28); there is nothing that needs to be fulfilled before the rapture takes place (Titus 2:12-13; Revelation 3:3,10).

First Thessalonians 4:16-17 makes it clear that there will not be a general resurrection of all the dead at one time. At this aspect of the return of the Lord, believers who have died will first be raised. Then living believers will be caught up to meet Him in the air. This will be possible because of the instantaneous change that will take place in our bodies (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). All believers will then stand

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before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10). The judgment will not be for salvation, since only saved people will be there. It will be to give rewards for faithful service (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Scripture indicates that not all Christians have "fought a good fight" and will not be rewarded (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

EVENTS AFTER THE RAPTURE

There are certain signs given in Scripture to indicate nearness of the return of the Lord to the earth. One of most important passages is Matthew 24:27-30. These signs refer particularly to Christ's coming in glory to establish His kingdom on earth. Trends are apparent in our day, which will develop more specifically as time goes on. Some of these are the general departure from the faith in the professing church (1 Timothy 4:1), rampant unlawfulness and sinfulness (2 Timothy 3:1-5), the tendencies among the nations toward a world government and a world religion. Along with the return of Israel to its own land (Jeremiah 42:12). By the way did not happen in 1967.

After the church is removed from the earth, the terrible events of the tribulation period also known as the time of Jacob's trouble, (Jeremiah 30:7, Daniels 70th week, and the day of wrath will take place. This is described in many passages of Scripture, particularly in the book of Revelation. At the close of the tribulation, the Lord Jesus will personally appear and come to the earth in judgment (Zechariah 14:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 19). He will judge Israel (Ezekiel 20:33-44) and the Gentile nations (Matthew 25:31-46) and will establish the kingdom that was prophesied throughout the Old Testament. The duration of this kingdom is given in Revelation 20 as a thousand years, from which we have the expression, the "millennium."

At the beginning of the millennium, Satan will be bound (Revelation 20:2-3) and Christ will rule. The reign of Christ on earth will be a righteous rule and will result in the establishment of world peace and prosperity (Isaiah 2; Micah 4). At the close of the millennium, Satan will be loosed for a short time, and then mankind's final revolt will occur.

The one great and solemn final scene before the ushering in of the eternal state is the great white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). This will take place at the close of the millennium after Satan's last attempt to defeat Christ, when the lost are raised, judged according to their works, and consigned to their final destiny in the lake of fire with Satan and his hosts. Then will begin the glories of eternity described in Revelation 21-22.

PERSONAL MEANING OF CHRIST'S RETURN

While we should be interested in the prophetic details of the second coming doctrine our focus for this lesson is on the Lord Jesus Christ, our most important concern should be the eager expectation of the Lord Himself. Paul spoke of reward

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for those who "love his appearing" 2 Timothy 4:8, The "blessed hope" should be our incentive for holy living; as it was for the early Christians. Paul expressed a great longing for the Lord's return but was completely given over to serving Him regardless of the time of His return 2 Corinthians 5:6-9. We should live a holy life not from fear of punishment at His return but because of a deep love for Him and longing for His coming. We should "abide in him"; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at his coming" 1 John 2:28.

SUMMARY OF THE EVENTS PRECEDING THE SECOND COMING

- **Church Age, 2000 plus years beginning at Pentecost**
- **The Rapture, or catching away of the Church**
- **The Time of Jacob's Trouble, The great tribulation or 7 year tribulation**
- **Rapture of the believing Jews that have died during the Tribulation, the parable of the Ten Virgins**
- **The all at once moment when the remaining Jews see Him coming in the clouds and believe.**
- **Touch down of The LORD JESUS CHRIST on the Mount that is called Olivet.**

A Final Word

In conclusion, it is well to note that the subject of the Second Coming involves the meaning and goal of history. Scripture indicates that history is built along redemptive lines, moving to its final goal, it is a conflict of opposing forces heading toward a crisis. To the end of time, a mixed condition will prevail; wheat and tares love and hate, peace and war, faith and apostasy, righteousness and iniquity. In the end, however, God will prevail, for the final word of the conflict rests with Him, a word that will be spoken in judgment through The LORD JESUS CHRIST. The immense drama of human history, with its continuing conflict between good and evil, will not go on forever.

In the end JESUS and HIS righteousness will triumph in victory.

Notes

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Find Out for Yourself

Name _____

1. Read 1 Peter 1:10-12. Compare with Isaiah 28:5-6 and Psalm 24:7-10.
 - Why was it difficult for the Jews to accept the idea that Christ must suffer?

2. Read: Matthew 24:44, Mark 13:32, and Luke 12:40.
 - Why is it wrong to set a date for the Lord's return?

3. What do 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 indicate about the rewards of believers?

4. When will Romans 14:12 take place
 - for the believer?
 - for the unbeliever?

5. What should be the effect of the Lord's return on those whose saved loved ones have died, according to 1 Thessalonians 4:18?

6. **Read Isaiah 61:1-2.**
 - **Which verse refers to His first coming?**
 - **Which verse refers to His second coming?**

7. Read Hebrews 9:24-28. What words refer to Christ's preexistence?
 - To His death?
 - To His finished work?
 - To His incarnation?
 - To His resurrection?
 - To His ascension?
 - To His return?

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Check Your Memory

1. The word *imminent* means _____
2. Rapture refers to the _____
3. The church was born when the _____ came.
4. The word *millennium* refers to the _____
5. When Christ comes, believers who are _____ will be caught up first.
6. Believers will be judged according to their _____



Scripture memorization

(write it on the back page three times)

1Thes 4:16-18

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

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.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

(KJV)