

CHRIST  
PROMISED  
TO COME  
BACK



# Christ's Coming

by

H. M. S. RICHARDS

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## Christ Promised to Come Back

NINETEEN centuries ago this commonplace earth of ours was visited by Somebody from another world. What a thought that is! And when that Somebody was here, He said, "I came down from heaven," and we have every reason to believe His Word.

However, He is not here now. He was received up again into heaven. Witnesses saw Him go. But if He was here once, it is certainly not impossible that He should be here again. Not only did He say, "I came down from heaven," but just before He left the earth Jesus also said, "I will come again."

While He was here, Jesus inaugurated and taught His holy gospel, which is still spreading over the world. The very nature of this gospel demands His return. Jesus taught that He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He was born, He lived, He taught, He labored, He worked miracles, He gave Himself a sacrifice for sin, He died, He was raised to life, and He ascended to heaven. This is all true, but it was not enough to accomplish His stated purpose. And that purpose demands His return. Why? Because what He began here should be finished here.

Jesus said that He came to seek and save that which was lost. If He came to do this, then His work will not be finished until the work of salvation is completed. He must destroy the works of the devil. The purpose of God must be completed for this earth. He must inaugurate His kingdom of glory. Redemption must be accomplished, and the human race brought back again to the glorious condition it knew before sin entered the world. The earth itself must be

reborn, if we may use the word, and there must be a new heaven and a new earth. Therefore, Christ must come again to fulfill His plan.

Now let us read His own words on the subject. And remember He said of His words,—

*"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."* — Matthew 24:35.

Jesus wrote no books; yet His words have lived, and they live today. They live in the record of His apostles, in the literature of the ages, in the hearts of millions. He claimed that His words were given Him of God, that they would outlast the world, and that men must meet them in judgment at the last day.

Now for the prophecies of Christ in His own words, the prophecies of His return. He stopped on the Mount of Olives one day and wept over Jerusalem. He said of it:

*"The days shall come upon thee, . . . and shall lay thee even with the ground."*—Luke 19:43, 44.

He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, and said the desolation thereof was nigh. He said that not one stone would be left upon another. (Matthew 24:1, 2) He predicted the coming of false christs. He spoke of nation rising against nation, of famines, earthquakes, and pestilences which would come, along with abounding iniquity and persecution. And finally He told of the final deliverance of His people from the enemy when the city should fall. There is no main feature of the history of the city and of the people of Israel which He did not foresee and foretell. He prophesied also the dispersion of the people of Israel as captives over the earth. Every one of these things has taken place just as He foretold it. Christ Himself was despised and rejected and given up to be slain, but the generation then living did not pass until Jerusalem was actually overthrown and the chosen nation scattered into other countries.



Jesus said: "I go to prepare a place for you. And . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Christ's prophecies of Jerusalem were invariably fulfilled, so the words of Jesus can be relied upon, they are dependable, they can be trusted.

With that in mind, let us turn to John 14:1-3:

*"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."*

*"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 [there are the words—I will come again], and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."*

Jesus said He was coming, that He would return. Here is a clearcut, plain promise. There can be no possibility of mistaking His meaning. He said, "I will come again."

To His enemies who had gathered about Him one day just before His betrayal, He said—

*"Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."* — Matthew 23:39.

When His disciples asked questions concerning what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the world, He instructed them:

*"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: . . . and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."* — Matthew 24:30.

He emphasized the glory of His coming.

*"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels."* — Matthew 16:27.

When adjured by the High Priest at His trial, Jesus answered:

*"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.

And finally, in the very last chapter of the Bible, we find the record of Christ's last promise on this subject made to His servant and Apostle John:

*"Behold, I come quickly. . . And, behold, I come quickly; . . . Surely I come quickly."* — Revelation 22:7, 12, and 20.

Here are three promises in the very last verses of the Holy Bible. These are Christ's own promises. Certainly He will return, because He said so, and His words never fail.

But there is other testimony in the Holy Bible besides that of Jesus. The truth of the second coming of Christ was taught from the earliest times. The most ancient patriarchs, even before the Flood, believed it and taught it.

*"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,*

*"To execute judgment upon all."* — Jude 14, 15.

And here is the testimony of David, who wrote the Psalms over a thousand years before Christ was born:

*"When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory."* — Psalm 102:16.

And in another place:

*"For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."* — Psalm 96:13.

And the prophet Isaiah repeatedly refers to the second coming of the Lord. He says, —

*"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us."* — Isaiah 25:9.

*"For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity."* — Isaiah 26:21.

*"Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come, . . . he will come and save you."* — Isaiah 35:4.

*"Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him."* — Isaiah 40:10.

*"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind."* — Isaiah 66:15.

Turning the pages of our Bible to the New Testament, we find the testimony of Paul:

*"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."* — Phillipians 3:20.

*"Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;*

*"And to wait for his Son from heaven."* — 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10.

*"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown, of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"* — 1 Thessalonians 2:19.

*"To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."* — 1 Thessalonians 3:13.

*"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout."* — 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

*"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels."* — 2 Thessalonians 1:7.

*"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."* — Titus 2:13.

*"Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time."* — Hebrews 9:28.

*"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."* — Hebrews 10:37.

And the Apostle Peter unites his testimony with that of the Apostle Paul and says, speaking of God:

*"He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you."* — Acts 3:20.

*"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."* — 1 Peter 5:4.

*"We made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* — 2 Peter 1:16.

And the Apostle James, the brother of our Lord Jesus Christ, gives the same testimony:

*"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. . . ."*

*"... for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."* — James 5:7, 8.

Last of all, the Apostle John says:

*"And now, little children, 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.

*"Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him."* — 1 John 3:2.

*"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him."* — Revelation 1:7.

So important is this truth, that the heavenly Father, at the time of the ascension of Jesus, sent a message to the earth to tell the disciples that Christ would return. Two beings, who appeared as men in white apparel, said to Christ's disciples:

*"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.

Christ's wonderful promise that He would return has been discredited by many modern teachers. There are thousands of churches in whose pulpits the subject has never been mentioned. Thousands of preachers never preach upon it; in fact, many of them know little about it. But here it is in the Scriptures, promised in the very words of Christ, of His apostles, and of the holy prophets, as well as the angels of God. Millions of people on earth today do teach and believe that the time of our Lord's return is near. Others think it is fanaticism. Whatever we may think of it and say about it, the promises are in the Holy Scriptures.

Did Jesus believe He would return to this earth? There is no doubt about it. He was here once, and He said, "I will come again." His return is foretold in the Old Testament and promised in the New. Friends, I believe His words are true and that He will come again. He did not say, "I will send an angel." He said: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." — John 14:3.

A well-known minister was once called away from home on a weekend to preach in a distant city. He arrived by train and stood with his luggage at the curb in front of the station waiting for someone to come for him. Soon a motor car drove up and the driver asked, "Are you Mr. Brown?"

"Yes," answered the minister, "I am. I am expecting someone to meet me here."

His luggage was placed in the car, which was immediately driven away. Mr. Brown was just wondering what to do next when another more handsome car drove up to the curb. "Mr. Brown, I believe," said the gentleman who was driving.

"Yes, I am Pastor Brown," he replied. "Someone else just asked me that question and has gone off with my luggage."

"Oh, that was a servant of mine. I sent him for your luggage, but I have come for you myself."

So the Lord Himself will come for His people—not the highest angel, not the most brilliant seraphim, not the most glorious cherubim. The angels will come *with* Him, but He comes Himself for His people.

As the Apostle Paul said,

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

*"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.—1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.*

Such a wonderful event as this is enough to make us all constantly look forward to the Lord's return, and not only look forward to it, but make ready for it.

While I was a minister in the city of Ottawa, Canada, I heard a lecture by Sir Ernest Shackleton, the great explorer. He spoke of a great adventure, his expedition to the Antarctic. On one occasion he had to turn back and leave some of his men on Elephant Island amid snow and ice. They were in desperate need of food and other supplies, and he realized the only hope was for him to go and get help. By heroic efforts he reached the island of South Georgia, made a perilous trip over snowy mountains, and finally came to the settlement where he obtained another ship and the needed supplies. Then he started back for the men.

He tried again and again to reach Elephant Island, but failed every time. Fog, storm, and ice blocked his way. Suddenly one day there appeared an opening through the ice leading to the island. Quickly he ran his ship through this channel, got his men on board, and came back just before the ice closed again. The whole thing was done in half an hour.

When the excitement was over, Sir Ernest Shackleton asked one of the men who had stayed on the island, "How did it happen that you were all packed and ready for my coming? You were standing on the shore ready to leave at a moment's notice."

The man replied, "Sir, you said you were coming back for us, so we never gave up hope. Whenever the sea was partly free of ice, we rolled up our sleeping bags and packed our things saying, 'Maybe Shackleton will come today.'"

And friends, that is the secret of the Christian life today. Believers need to remember that the Lord is coming. We need to be ready to go with Him any day, any hour, and, then, whatever happens, we shall be ready.

The words of Jesus, "I will come again," are never to be forgotten. He will return, and every

eye will see Him. He was here before as a Man among men, but when He returns, He will come as the King of glory, and the whole world will know about Him. Will we be ready?

We have all, as school children, heard the story of Peter the Great, the Czar of Russia, who left his throne in St. Petersburg, and in lowly disguise apprenticed himself as a ship-builder in the towns of Zaandan and Amsterdam in Holland. Among the common laborers he wrought, dressed in working clothes, living in a hut, preparing his own food and making his own bed. Yet all the time he never ceased to be the emperor of Russia, though his royal splendor was laid aside for a time.

So Jesus laid aside the glory of heaven and came to earth in the likeness of men. Divinity was clothed with humanity. But He never ceased to be the Son of God, and someday He will come all glorious, the Lord victorious, and before Him all evil shall forever flee away.

When we die in this world, we are soon forgotten, but, as Lacordaire said, "There is one who lived nearly 2,000 years ago, yet His tomb is still wet with tears. In every land there are still those who cry out to Him and love Him still."

That is the incomparable glory of Jesus, always to be remembered, and always loved and longed for. And He says, "I will come again."

Yes, He will come;  
He Himself, and not another;  
He for whom our hearts have yearned.  
Through long years of twilight waiting,  
To His ransomed ones returned.

For this word, O Lord, we bless Thee,  
Bless our Master's changeless Name;  
Yesterday, today, forever,  
Jesus Christ is still the same.

—HMSR.



## Nine Reasons for His Return

**H**IS NAME *shall be called Wonderful.*—  
Isaiah 9:6.

Christ created a feeling of wonder among all the classes and sections of people in His day. The doctors in the temple were amazed at this boy of twelve years. The multitudes were astonished when they saw Him and heard His teaching and saw what He did. The disciples marveled. The Nazarenes wondered. The devils also believed and trembled. Jesus impressed men everywhere with His uniqueness. There was no one like Him. They could not explain Him in ordinary lines.

*"Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?"*—Matthew 13:54.

Jesus was a puzzle, an enigma to men. The Apostle Peter could account for Jesus only by confessing that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus was wonderful in His birth, wonderful in His life, wonderful in His works, wonderful in His teachings, wonderful in His death, wonderful in His resurrection, wonderful in His ascension. He is wonderful now in heaven as our High Priest and Mediator, and He will be wonderful in His second coming.

Why is He coming back again? Men may sometimes do things for no reason, aimlessly, and without purpose, but God does not. The first coming of Christ had a direct and definite objective. So also has His second coming. When He was here 1,900 years ago, He sowed the seed of His kingdom. When He comes again, it will be to reap the harvest of the earth, the harvest of that sowing.

It has been said by thorough Bible scholars that the purpose of the second coming of Christ is ninefold. He is coming—

1. To receive His people unto Himself,

2. To raise the blessed dead,
3. To translate the righteous living,
4. To judge the world,
5. To reward the righteous,
6. To destroy the wicked,
7. To redeem the earth,
8. To restore all things, and
9. To reign forever.

Let us look at each of these nine purposes briefly. First, He is coming the second time to receive His people unto Himself. Just before His crucifixion, He spoke words of comfort to His disciples and clearly stated this object of His return. He said, —

*“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

*“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.”—John 14:1-3.*

From the beginning of time it has been a part of God’s eternal purpose in Christ that His people should be with Him for all eternity. It was to make preparation for this that Jesus came the first time to this earth, and that He returned to heaven from this earth. Now He is preparing a place in His Father’s house for His people. He will come again and take them to Himself, that where He is, they also may be. His people at last, at His second coming, are to be gathered together by the angels of God. We read it in Matthew 24:31:

*“And 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.”*

The second reason for His coming is to raise the blessed dead. Vast multitudes of His disciples are asleep in the grave. Those who have

died are to be raised to life again. His words:

*“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.*

Some time ago I visited a place where a number of beautiful paintings of the life and work of Christ were on display. One picture was of the resurrection of the dead at His second coming, and as hundreds of people passed by, this was the picture that drew the attention of the most—the resurrection of the dead.

Many have never thought of it, but the resurrection will take place. If you die, you will live again. All who have ever lived will live again. Christ is coming, and the resurrection of the righteous will take place at the moment of His return; for it is written,

*“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.”—1 Thessalonians 4:16.*

*“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

*“But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”—1 Corinthians 15:22, 23.*

Not only is Christ coming to raise the blessed dead, but He is coming to translate the living righteous, the third reason for His return. For it is written in Holy Scripture:

*“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.”—1 Thessalonians 4:17.*

This is the moment when the heavenly trumpet will sound, at the second coming of Jesus, and the sainted dead and the living saints shall both be changed in the twinkling of an

eye from their corruptible, mortal state to a glorious new and endless life.

*"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

*"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

*"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."*—1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

The fourth reason for our Lord's second coming is to judge the world. There is to be a judgment.

*"The Lord shall judge his people."*—Deuteronomy 32:36.

*"God shall judge the righteous and the wicked."*—Ecclesiastes 3:17.

*"God shall bring every work into judgment."*—Ecclesiastes 12:14.

It is impossible for this judgment to take place before the end of all things, for God holds men responsible not only for their deeds, but also for the consequences of their deeds.

*"I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."*—Jeremiah 17:10.

While the ways of a man may be manifest at the time of his death, the fruit of his doings will not then be fully ripe, neither for good nor for evil.

Now let us read from the ninety-sixth Psalm, the thirteenth verse:

*"The Lord . . . cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with truth.*

The Apostle Paul wrote these inspired words:

*"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick*

*[living] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."*—2 Timothy 4:1.

It is clear that the time of this judgment will be when Jesus comes. We read this majestic picture of the judgment in Matthew 25:31, 32:

*"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:*

*"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."*

Yes, "He cometh to judge the earth." Psalm 96:13. He "shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." 2 Timothy 4:1.

The fifth reason for our Lord's return is to reward the righteous.

*"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."*—Revelation 22:12.

The righteous are to be rewarded according to their faithfulness and according to their works. The trial of their faith is to be "found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:7.

*"When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."*—1 Peter 5:4.

The final testimony of the Apostle Paul is written in 2 Timothy 4:8, in which he says:

*"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."*

Read also such texts as Isaiah 25:8, 9; Daniel 7:27; Matthew 25:34; and Revelation 5:10.

The sixth reason why Christ is coming the second time is that He may destroy the wicked, who have rejected the love of God, turned away from His truth, persecuted His people, trampled upon His law, and done despite to His grace.

They will then meet their eternal fate. The proof of it is written in Second Thessalonians, the first chapter:

*"You who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord 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:*

*"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;*

*"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."—2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.*

Read also 2 Thessalonians 2:7 and 8, a description of the destruction of all wickedness.

The seventh reason for our Lord's return is that He is coming to redeem the earth itself. Jesus came to seek and to save that which is lost—not only *men* who are lost, but *that* which is lost, the very earth itself, the first dominion. The earth was cursed because of man's sin. It still groans and travails because of that curse. It is out of order, tossed about and wracked like a sick man. The malady of sin rests heavily upon it as well as upon the human race. When Christ returns, He, the second Adam, will completely undo the works of the first Adam. We are all now waiting for the redemption of His purchased possession.

*"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."—Romans 8:22.*

When Christ comes, then shall take place the "restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:21. So now we look for "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13.

*"But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."—Psalm 37:11.*

Christ is coming to fit up the earth as a dwelling place for His people.

The eighth reason for His return is that He is coming to restore all things. All that was lost with the introduction of sin will be restored when Jesus comes again. In the original new earth man was placed in a garden and given access to the tree of life. It was God's purpose that man should ever remain in this paradise and possess eternal life. But sin changed it all, and "death passed upon all men." Romans 5:12. But God has kept His purpose in mind through the ages, and through Christ all things will be restored to those who accept His plan of salvation. This has been foretold by the prophets and the Apostle Peter, who speaks of it in these words:

*"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:*

*"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:20, 21.*

The second coming of Christ will prepare the way for the establishment of this new earth and this restitution of all things.

Last of all, the ninth reason for our Saviour's return: He comes as King of kings and Lord of lords to reign forever and ever. For it is written in Revelation 19:11 and 16:

*"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war . . .*

*"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."*

Christ is not returning as a babe in Bethlehem's manger; He is coming as the King all glorious. The kingdom over which He will rule will be an everlasting kingdom.

*"And in the days of these kings [that is, the earthly nations of western Europe] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never*

*be destroyed: . . . it shall stand for ever.*—Daniel 2:44.

*"And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."*—Daniel 7:14.

*"The Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever."*—Micah 4:7.

*"And of his kingdom there shall be no end."*—Luke 1:33.

Surely with all these wonderful and glorious purposes to be accomplished at the second coming of Christ, we cannot at all afford to give up this glorious and precious doctrine of His coming. The Scripture calls it "the blessed hope," and no wonder! When we think of the stupendous future which is just before us, yes, the near future, with all the wonderful events that cluster around the glorious appearing of Christ, the prayer comes involuntarily to our hearts, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Revelation 22:20.

The ninefold purpose for our Lord's return is glorious beyond compare. He will come to receive His people to Himself, to raise the blessed dead, to translate the righteous living, to judge the world, to reward the righteous, to destroy the wicked, to redeem the earth, to restore all things, and to reign forever. Truly this is what the Scriptures call it—an "exceeding weight of glory." This is our hope. We have this hope.

*"We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."*—2 Peter 3:13.

And if we believe these things we must be happy, we must be in constant expectation. We can never be truly downcast when we think of the apostolic admonition,—

*"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."*—2 Peter 3:14.

Anyone who has this hope in Him, the Apostle John says, "purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John 3:3. We must forget those things which are behind and reach forward to the things which are before, and "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13, 14.

Canon Liddon of the church of England once said, "If Christ is not coming, we might as well lock the west door of this cathedral and throw the key into the river. In other words, Christianity would be proved false, and all its great music quenched, and its lights and hopes would have faded out into darkness for all eternity."—Macartney's *Illustrations*, p. 321, 322.

But He is coming back. He said He would. We have His word for it and the word of the faithful and true witness. He is the rightful King, and He will return.

In the old days in Scotland, "The Jacobites never met one another on the mountain paths, never sat down to a table of council and conference, without lifting a cup to pledge the return of their king and prince, Charles. At length Charles came back, but only to bring to Scotland defeat, disaster, and suffering. In every celebration of the Lord's Supper, since that last and first night in the Upper Room, the followers of Christ have lifted the sacramental cup as a token of their faith that their King shall come. That is the meaning of those words which we hear so often that we forget their deep import:

*"As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."* (1 Corinthians 11:26.)—Macartney, p. 321.

"Till He come." We drink this cup "till He come." Yes, we hear these words so frequently that we often forget their deep meaning. And when He comes, He shall come not to bring pain and suffering and defeat as did King Charles to unhappy Scotland, but to bring the kingdom and the glory and the power, forever and ever. Amen.

## Prophecies and Parables of Christ's Second Coming

IT IS WRITTEN in First Thessalonians 1:10 the Holy Bible:

*"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."*

To wait for the Son of God to come from heaven is one of the glorious privileges and duties of Christians. Take this hope away, and we would be, of all men, most miserable. Leave it, and no matter how many tribulations we have, life is worth living. We are to comfort and encourage one another with the promise of His coming, especially as we "see the day approaching." Hebrews 10:25. We must be faithful and remember His promise, "I will come again." John 14:3.

The fisher folk who live along the shores of the Adriatic Sea have an interesting custom. When the twilight falls, the families of the fishermen who are out upon the sea gather on the beach and build fires of driftwood. They stand about the fires and sing the old folk songs. The fishermen returning through the dusk, weary from their long day's work, hear the songs of those they love, are guided by the fires, and pull a little harder at the oars to get safely home.

Many years ago, a young man and his sweetheart came down to such a beach in the evening to say their farewells. Riding at anchor out in the bay was the ship on which the young man was sailing at dawn to a far-off land where he hoped to find his fortune. Then he was to return and take his sweetheart for his bride. They gathered driftwood and built a fire, stood beside it, and talked of their plans. Then he asked her to sing a love song that was dear to both of them. They plighted their vows anew, prom-

ising each other to be faithful and wait for the day when he would return.

Then he asked her to sing the song once more, and he said, "I shall come back to you, and then I shall take you to a beautiful home in that wonderful land to which I am going. While I am far away, I shall be lonely and sometimes discouraged. Every day at this time I shall think of you as I have seen you here tonight. Promise me that every evening you will come to this beach, build a fire, and sing the song you have just sung to me tonight. I shall return at this same time and when I see your fire and hear your song, I shall know you have been true and waited for me."

With sadness the girl promised. There was a last goodbye, and he stepped into his boat and rowed away into the night.

The next evening, true to her promise, she came down to the beach. Standing by her fire, she sang the old love song, thinking of him far away at sea. Night after night she did this, and week after week, month after month, until years had gone by. Friends advised her to stop it. They insisted that he had long since forgotten her, or he would have been back before. But her faith did not waver. He had promised; therefore, he would come. So she would go to the beach every night, build a fire, and sing their song.

Years and years went by. Time was writing its history on her face. Finally one evening, more discouraged than usual, she came to the appointed place in the twilight. Hope seemed gone, but still she knew she must be true. She built the fire. It flickered out in the wind. She gathered wood a second time. She sang again the song she had sung so many times. She was about to return home, when she heard the sound of oars out in the bay. Probably some late fisherman, she thought; but loving hope is not given up easily. She kindled her fire anew and sang her song once more. Then he was there, taking her in his arms and telling her about the wonderful home he had built and the troubles that had come upon him, preventing his earlier return.

"I waited out there in the bay, and when I saw your fire and heard your song, I knew.

What was it that Jesus said?

*"I will come again, and receive you unto myself. . ."*—John 14:3.

Let us look at some of the prophecies of Christ's second coming. In Deuteronomy, the eighteenth chapter, Moses predicted the coming of a great prophet—that is, Jesus Christ—and his prophecy included Christ's second coming. It is affirmed by the Apostle Peter in Acts 3:20-23.

Then there are the prophecies of David which apply to the second coming of Christ. Remember, David lived a thousand years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and yet he foresaw not only His first coming, but His second coming. David declared that his own son should arise, and that he should be established on the throne forever—not merely for a little while, but forever. See Second Samuel 7:12 and 13. In the fiftieth Psalm we read:

*"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*

*"He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people."*—Psalm 50:3, 4.

Isaiah prophesied the coming of the day of the Lord. Read it for yourself in Isaiah 13:6-9:

*"Behold the day of the Lord cometh. . ."*—Verse 9.

Then he described the destruction of sin and sinners and the desolation of the earth which will take place at the second coming of Christ.

*"For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity."*—Isaiah 26:21.

We read the same great truth in Isaiah 35:4 and 10. Jeremiah, too, spoke of the Lord our Righteousness, a prophecy of Jesus and His glorious reign. Jeremiah 23:5 and 6. Ezekiel predicted a time when the true King of Israel

would reign forever. Ezekiel 21:25, 27. We think of the great prophecy of Daniel:

*"And in the days of these kings [that is, the great nations of Europe which he has just described] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."*—Daniel 2:44.

In the seventh chapter of his prophecy, Daniel described one like the Son of man who came with the clouds of heaven, who came to the Ancient of days (or God), and was given a kingdom, an everlasting dominion. See Daniel 7:13, 14.

There are many other prophecies in the Old Testament, and also in the New. The Apostle Paul wrote about the coming of the Lord.

*"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout."*—1 Thessalonians 4:16.

*"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels."*—2 Thessalonians 1:7.

*"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."*—Titus 2:13.

The Apostle Peter prophesied His coming:

*"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;*

*"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you."*—Acts 3:19, 20.

The Apostle Peter was present at the transfiguration of Jesus. Speaking of that, which was actually an enacted prophecy of the return of our Lord, Peter said,

*"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables [that is, we have not made this up as a mere story out of our minds], when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty."*—2 Peter 1:16.

Peter recognized the transfiguration as an enacted prophecy of the return of Jesus.

The Apostle John prophesied:

*"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him."*—Revelation 1:7.

What a sight that will be! What a great surprise to millions!

A small cloud rises in the East. It looks natural at first, but it gets larger, larger, larger, brighter, brighter! People everywhere are looking at it! Thousands are looking at it around the world. It is growing, it is enlarging, it is brighter, it is coming closer. The radio and television picture it. There are big headlines in the newspapers on the street. It is growing. The radio is chattering away. It is coming! It is beginning to fill the eastern heavens. It seems alive! It is moving! Then all of a sudden the blazing light of day takes on a new brightness above all the glory of the sun. It grows - still more light, brighter and more dazzling, until there is revealed the advancing glory of the King of kings. All the heavens are filled with radiant forms, because all the holy angels are with Him.

That is a picture of the great scene that will soon take place. But before we say more about it, let us look for a moment at the wonderful parables of Jesus regarding the second coming. Often people read the parables of Christ and do not see what they really teach. There are no stories in the world like the parables of Jesus. They are stories about common events and things with which people are acquainted, and yet mighty truths are revealed in them. And in many of them the second coming of Christ is clearly indicated and illustrated.

At the time Christ gave His great prophecy of numerous signs of His second coming (Matthew 24), He also spoke the parable of the ten virgins. He said that the kingdom of heaven was like ten virgins who went out with their lamps to meet the bridegroom; five were wise, and five foolish. The foolish ones carried no extra oil in their vessels. While they were waiting for

the bridegroom, all the virgins went to sleep, and their lamps began to go out when the oil was used by the flame. The wise virgins replenished the oil from their extra supply, but the foolish had none. They went to buy oil, and while they were gone, the bridegroom came. Those who were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. When the foolish virgins came back with their oil, they could not get in. Matthew 25:1-12.

*"Watch therefore [Jesus said], for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."*—Verse 13.

Millions are spiritually asleep today, and all of us have slept spiritually at one time or another. It is certainly high time to awake out of sleep,

*". . . for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."*—Romans 13:11.

Therefore, let us not sleep as do others. Christ will return, and when He returns and takes those who are ready, the door will be shut. There will be no more hope for salvation.

And here is the wonderful parable of the talents in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man who plans to travel into a far country. Before leaving he calls his servants and delivers to them his goods. One receives five talents, another two, another one, according to their ability. Then the master leaves on his journey. When he comes back he finds that the servant who received five talents and the one who received two had traded with their Lord's goods and had doubled their money. But the one who received only one talent had buried it and simply returned it to his Master without any increase at all. When the master learned of his servants' acts, he commended the earnest workers, but of the other he said,

*"Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents."*

*"For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that*



*hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.*

*"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*—Matthew 25:28-30.

Jesus was the man traveling to the far country, which is heaven, from which He will return. Before going away from this world, He left His affairs in the hands of His stewards, His people. They have privileges and opportunities. They are to look after His work, and to be good, profitable, faithful servants. After a long time, now nearly at hand, He will come again and reckon with them in the final judgment. Then they will be required to give an account of their stewardship, and all will be rewarded according to their work.

And here is the parable of the tares. Remember, a man sowed a field of wheat, but the tares came up with the wheat. An enemy had sowed the bad seed in the night time. The servants of this farmer wanted to go and pull up the tares. The master said,

*"Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them."*

*"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."*—Matthew 13:29, 30.

Jesus explained this parable to the disciples.

*"He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man [that is, Christ Himself];*

*"The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;*

*"The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. . .*

*"The Son of man shall send forth his angels and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend."*—Matthew 13:37-41.

And so shall it be at the end of this world. The tares will be cast into the fire, but "the righteous [shall] shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matthew 13:43. Here He is plainly speaking of the end of the world. It is connected with the work of separation between the righteous and the wicked.

Then there is the parable of the net, also in Matthew 13, in which the Saviour describes both good and bad caught in the net. They are separated after the fishermen come to the shore. Jesus said,

*"So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just."*—Matthew 13:49.

Then we have the parable of the forgiven servant, in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. The servant was forgiven for his debts to his master, but would not himself forgive a fellow servant's debts and had the fellow servant cast into prison. The master on hearing of the forgiven servant's injustice,

*". . . was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due."*  
—Verse 34.

This parable brings us again to the time of the return of the Lord when the judgment will take place.

The sixth parable that we shall consider is the one of the laborers in the vineyard. It is found in Matthew, the twentieth chapter. Some workers were hired early in the day, some at noon, and some in the very last hour; and, while some only worked a little while, they all got the same reward. The men who worked longest thought they should get more pay, but they all received the same. This a lesson of the future accounting in reference to the work of the Lord's servants. When the work of the heat of the day is finished, all will receive eternal life, all God's children will be rewarded according to their deeds and labors.

Our seventh parable is in Matthew 22, the

great parable of the marriage of the king's son. This is definitely a picture of the second coming of Christ. The king made the marriage and invited the guests. When the time came, some made light of it, others had excuses, and none would come. So the king sent his servants out into the highways and byways to find guests for the marriage. Special garments were provided for all the guests, but one man who came did not bother to put his on. The king came through to see the guests, and finding this man, he said, "How comest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" Matthew 22:12. The man was speechless. He had no excuse.

*"Then said the king to his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

*"For many are called, but few are chosen."*  
—Verses 13, 14.

Here the invitation of the gospel is sent out and not accepted; sent out again and made light of; sent out again with great urgency. The good and bad are gathered to furnish the wedding

**"How comest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?"**



with guests, and wedding garments are provided for the guests. These garments represent Christ's own righteousness, and are given free to those who will take them. Only those wearing these wedding garments are allowed at the marriage supper; those who do not accept the garment are cast into outer darkness.

So, in this parable, Jesus sets before us His teaching of the truth of the coming of His kingdom, His own personal return as King and Judge in the final judgment of the world, and the ultimate rendering of rewards and punishments based upon the relationship of the individual to God Himself and to His offer of salvation.

As a boy, I lived on my grandfather's farm. I often heard my grandmother singing to herself. One of her favorite songs was about that great day when the King shall return. I can remember the words distinctly. They ring in my soul now:

There's a great day coming,  
A great day coming,  
There's a great day coming by and by,  
When the saints and the sinners  
Shall be parted right and left;  
Are you ready for that day to come?

Those words made a great impression on my youthful heart. Then she would sing on:

There's a bright day coming,  
A bright day coming,  
There's a bright day coming by and by,  
But its brightness shall only come  
To them that love the Lord,  
Are you ready for that day to come?

I wanted to be ready—I really did. I still want to be ready, and remembering that song makes me think seriously—Am I ready for that day to come?—for now, I seem to hear Grandmother singing the last stanza:

There's a sad day coming,  
A sad day coming,  
There's a sad day coming by and by,  
When the sinner shall hear his doom,  
"Depart, I know ye not,"  
Are you ready for that day to come?

—W. L. Thompson

Well, friend, are *you* ready? We *can* be ready, all of us. Christ Jesus will be our Saviour if we will have Him.

A great lover of children once visited a certain school. He talked to the youngsters for several minutes. Before he left he told them, "I'm coming back again sometime, and I'm going to give a prize to the one who has the cleanest desk when I come back."

"Well, when are you coming back?"

"Well, I don't know the day exactly. I can't tell you now."

A little girl who was known for her disorderly habits announced to the other children that she was going to win the prize. "You!" they jeered and laughed. "You'll never get it. Your desk is always out of order."

"But I'm going to clean it the first of every week."

"Yes, but suppose he should come at the end of the week. Then what?"

"Then I'll clean it every morning," she replied.

"Suppose he comes in the afternoon?"

She thought awhile, and then she found the answer. She said, "I know what I'll do! I'll just *keep* it clean."

And that is exactly what we ought to do if we love the Lord's appearing. If we love Him, we shall love His coming. "We'll watch for Him; we'll wait for Him, and by God's grace, through faith in His Word, we may not only be ready on occasions, but keep ready all the time. We can keep our lives clean through His grace, and His alone. We do not know when He will come—at evening or midnight, or in the morning, or at noon. We know not the day nor the hour, but we must remember that the Saviour's words were not "Get ready," but

*"Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."*—Matthew 24:44.

## How and When Will Christ Come? Can We Know?

**S**HORTLY after the first atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, I stood amid the terrible havoc wrought by the explosion. There was such vast destruction on every side, it seemed that it just couldn't be true. Some time before this, Robert Ripley had given his worldwide broadcast from that very spot. He began with these words: "I am speaking to you from the spot where the end of the world began."

One could not help but think of the destruction to be wrought at the day of God, the end of time on the earth for human civilization, when the King returns in glory to take His people to Himself—for Christ *will* come again. Let us repeat that once more. He said Himself, "I will come again." John 14:1-3.

But *how* will He come and *when* will He come? Can we know anything about His coming? Yes, we can. Listen carefully. We shall have to go very quickly, because there are simply hundreds of texts in the Holy Bible about the coming of Christ, and we can mention only a few.

First, let us get one thing clearly in mind once and for all—Our Saviour's reappearance, His second coming, will be no secret, hidden event. It will not be a spiritual coming. When He comes again, He will come in person. He will come literally; He will come visibly; He will come bodily; He will come in the open sight of all the world. He will come accompanied by a demonstration of glory and power never before witnessed on earth.

Notice, He will come in person.

*"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.

That is what the Bible says. That is the record of the angelic voices comforting His disciples. The Apostle Paul adds his testimony.

*"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout."*—1 Thessalonians 4:16.

Notice, it is the Lord Himself, not a spirit, not an angel, not death, not the Bible, not Providence, not the work of the church, but the Lord Himself. He went away literally; He will come back literally—the same Christ who was here before. And it will be a glorious coming.

*"He shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."*—Luke 9:26.

He shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire (2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8), and everyone alive on earth will see Him, for it is written, "Every eye shall see him." Revelation 1:7. His coming will be open, visible, literal, and bodily. No one will need to announce it, for all will know it. The Bible is clear on the manner of His coming.

*"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many [that was on the cross]; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."*—Hebrews 9:28.

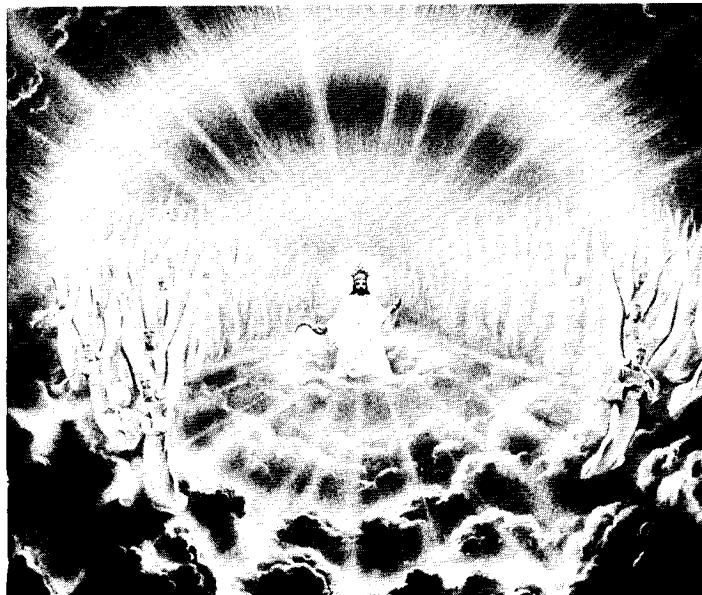
He will appear to *all* men, but to those who look for Him and are ready for Him, He will appear without sin; that is, not dealing with sin.

Notice, though, He will appear. That word "appear" is very important. It is used over and over again in reference to Christ's return. In fact, His return is called the "blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13. Yes, He will appear. His coming will be literal, personal, bodily, and visible. It will be a real thing, and not the coming of a spirit being, an invisible Lord, seen by the eye of faith alone.

*"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear. . ."*  
—Colossians 3:4.

*"When the chief Shepherd shall appear. . ."*  
1 Peter 5:4.

*"And now, little children, abide in him; that,*



**"Behold he cometh with clouds."**

*when he shall appear, we may have confidence . . ."*—1 John 2:28.

*"We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him . . ."*  
1 John 3:2.

His coming will be literal, personal, visible, and public. It will be a worldwide appearing.

*"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and 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."*—Matthew 24:30.

Now notice that those who are not ready for Him, those who mourn at His coming, will also see Him. This is no spiritual coming observed only by the righteous. All the tribes of the earth will see Him come.

*"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."*—Revelation 1:7.

The current popular teaching is that Christ will come secretly, taking one here and one there, and that His coming will become known to the rest of mankind only by the absence of

those who have been taken. This idea is plainly demonstrated to be mistaken by the passages and teachings we have just read.

Not only will Christ be seen, but He will be heard. He is not coming in silence. He is coming with a shout.

*"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.

Do you think the trump of God could sound and the people on earth not know about it? Here is a strong text on the subject:

*"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."*—Matthew 24:27.

Christ went away literally; He will come back literally. He went away bodily; He will come back bodily. He went away with clouds, clouds received Him out of sight, and "behold he cometh with clouds." Revelation 1:7.

Just a word, now, about the brightness of His coming. When the wicked see Him coming, they will actually pray for the mountains to fall on them and hide them from His presence (Revelation 6:15-17). This is because "the Lord hath a controversy with the nations." Jeremiah 25:31.

No sinful man can look upon the brightness and glory of that scene and endure it. When Jesus comes, only the righteous will be able to endure it, and they will be transformed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. . . .", and immortalized. 1 Corinthians 15:52. They will be caught up together with the risen righteous dead into the presence of the Lord, ". . . and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

The wicked will be smitten down by the brightness of Christ's glory, as we read in the first and second chapters of Second Thessalonians. For more on this line, read Jeremiah the fourth

chapter, Isaiah the sixty-sixth chapter, and Revelation the eighteenth chapter.

Christ's coming will be unexpected.

*"In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."*—Matthew 24:44.

This applies to all; no one knows the time of His coming. But the wicked world will be dreaming of pleasures and will be worried about this and that. Their minds will be without rest, like the troubled sea which casts up mire and dirt. Isaiah 57:20. The false cry of peace, safety and world unity, and prosperity and security will be sounding everywhere. Then, suddenly, He will come. As the blinding glare of lightning suddenly stabs across the sky, so Jesus will come and the glory will be here. Matthew 24:27.

"Behold," says our Lord, "I come quickly." Revelation 3:11. Christ is coming sometime, that's true enough. But it is not all the truth. He is coming soon. He is coming quickly. He is at the door with His feet on the threshold, His hand on the latch. Soon and suddenly He will come. Decades will not pass into centuries, and centuries into millenniums before we witness the solemn scenes of the end. The earth will soon tremble as the voice of God rolls around it. Quickly, quickly Christ will come. Speedily, speedily He will return. Soon, He will be here.

People put off the eventful day, and try to think of other things. But on that day all will think of the same thing. All will be looking, watching, listening, hearing, and they will finally realize that it is true after all—Christ is coming! He is coming now! What a day that will be!

Satan knows Christ is planning to return, and he will attempt to imitate the second coming.

*"For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and shall deceive many."*—Matthew 24:5.

Jesus warns us,

*If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not."*—Matthew 24:23.

We can answer with this scripture if someone comes around and says, "Christ has come! Let's drive out in the desert to see Him." Or, "Let's go up to a certain city. He's coming in some secret room of some great building." I have had this said to me, and I have turned down these friends every time, because the Bible says, "Believe it not."

*"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."*—Matthew 24:24.

Yes, these false christs will try to imitate the great works and miracles of our Lord. They will perform mighty wonders, but this cannot prove that the so-called christ is Christ. Notice the next words:

*"Behold, I have told you before [that is, I have warned you so you will be on the lookout].*

*"Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert; go not forth [do not put one gallon of fuel in your car, do not drive one mile into the desert to see this mighty being]: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not [do not go into any darkened room to see an apparition claiming to be Christ, for He is not coming that way]."*—Matthew 24:25, 26.

The next verse says,

*"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."*—Matthew 24:27.

He is not coming secretly. He is coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. The whole world will know when He comes and no one will need to tell you about it. He will be here and we shall all know it. This is something Satan cannot imitate.

Now, can we know anything about the *when* of His coming? Is that a closed book to us? There has been much useless speculation about this, and we are not going to add to it. Manuscripts, papers, and even books are sent to me

from time to time by well-meaning people who think they know when Christ is coming. They try to prove it with all sorts of speculations and mathematical computations; but I know that they are wrong, because Jesus said that no man knoweth the day nor the hour. In fact, the Bible says that even the angels do not know the time of His coming; only God in heaven knows. Matthew 24:36-44. There is one thing sure: He will not come on any day pointed out by these speculators,

*". . . for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."*—Matthew 24:44.

Because of this scripture many think it is useless to study on this subject at all, for no one can know when Christ is coming. It is true that we cannot know the exact hour, but we can know when His coming is near. Some say, "He may come today, and He may not come for a thousand years. We don't know. In fact, we can know nothing about it at all." But they are entirely wrong. It is sad that there has been so much fanaticism on this subject, but it is hard for some people to look at the truth.

While we read in Matthew 24:36 that, ". . . of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only," we also read in the same book and chapter that we can know when He is nigh, "even at the doors." See Matthew 24:32 and 33.

As Jesus sat upon the Mount of Olives one day, His disciples asked Him, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Matthew 24:3. He replied to this, giving in great detail His prophecy of the future, right down through the dark ages, past the great dark day of May 19, 1780, and the falling of the stars on November 13, 1833. And then He said, "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Matthew 4:33.

When a person is at the door, he is near. One step more and he will be inside. "These things" have happened, and we are now living in the latter days of the prophecy. Jesus said

that there would be signs of His coming, and He mentions many of these signs. The apostles and prophets in the Bible mention others. There are at least ten signs prophesied to occur when His return is near: signs in the heavens (Matthew 24), signs in the physical world (Luke 21), signs in the social world (Luke 17), in the industrial world (James 5), in the religious world (2 Timothy 3), and in the political world (Joel 3). The peace and safety cry over all the earth will be a sign (Isaiah 2 and 1 Thessalonians 5), as will spirit wonders (1 Timothy 4), scoffers (2 Peter 3), and the gospel going to all the world (Matthew 24).

Then there are at least ten great prophecies of the Lord's return which have been fulfilled in history at exact times and which have all focused on our day, though they have not shown the time for His coming. These are: the four world empires (Daniel 2), the work of anti-Christ, (Daniel 7), the sanctuary and 2300 days (Daniel 8 and 9), the prophetic forecast (Daniel 11 and 12), the seven trumpets (Revelation 8 and 9), the two witnesses (Revelation 11), the dragon and 1,260 days (Revelation 12), and the two-horned beast of Revelation 13 and 14.

After giving His list of signs in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, Jesus said,

*"When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near."*—Matthew 24:33.

This is His command, "Know it!"

*"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."*—Matthew 24:34.

Just as the destruction of Jerusalem was to come at a certain generation according to Christ's prophecy, so the coming of Christ in the latter day is predicted to take place in a certain generation. When He came the first time, He said,

*"Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."*—Matthew 23:36.

In the very next chapter, speaking of things to happen in the latter days, He declares that they will take place in a certain generation. The last

generation is to be the generation of the fulfilled signs. We cannot set a definite time for Christ's coming, but we can see the signs being fulfilled. God knows when the day will be, and His signs indicate that ours must be the last generation.

Are we happy when we think of the Lord's return? Do we rejoice in the glorious certainty of it? Do we live for Him? Do we realize that our attitude as we wait for the Lord from heaven will help others to be ready or not ready for that event?

How can I be ready to meet Him? How can I help other people to be ready to meet their Saviour if I am a false Christian, if I am a hypocrite, if I myself am unsaved?

When Alexander the Great was carrying on his overthrow of mighty nations, a frightened young soldier was brought to him and charged with misbehaviour. Looking down at the trembling young man, the great military leader said, "What's your name?"

"Alexander, sir."

Thinking he was being mocked, Alexander thundered, "Tell me your name."

"Sir, my name is Alexander. That's the name my mother and father gave me at my birth, and I've borne that name all my life."

Leaping from the throne upon which he was sitting, Alexander seized the young culprit by the tunic, shook him violently, and said, "Do one of two things; either change your name or change your way of living."

Radio friends, the Christian is to be the servant of Christ. He is to represent Christ in this world. All who take that holy name upon themselves should by His grace live worthy of it—or cease to call themselves Christians.

By God's grace we may keep the lamp of truth burning. We may be awake and waiting with glad anticipation for our Lord's return.

*"Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing."*—Matthew 24:46.



## Twelve Great Signs of Christ's Coming

WHEN CHRIST CAME to this world, new light and hope spread over the earth. When He went away, the hope did not die. His followers began to preach to the world that He would come again. Year after year, century after century, His church has repeated the creed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who . . . ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

This has been the hope of the church through the ages. When the Saviour was here and said, "I will come again," He did not say when He would come. He said, in fact, that no one would know the day or the hour. But He did explain how people might know when the time of His coming was near at hand. He foretold conditions that would exist in the world just before His second coming, and described several signs which, when they should appear, were to be understood as evidence that He was soon to come. Then He told His people to watch. He said,

*"Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:*

*"So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."*  
—Matthew 24:32, 33.

We have entitled this broadcast, "Twelve Great Signs of Christ's Coming." In Christ's own day there were signs and evidences which fulfilled prophecy and showed that Christ was the Son of God. The leaders in the religious world

should have known Him, but they could not recognize the signs. He said to them:

*"When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.*

*"And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"*  
—Matthew 16:2, 3.

What are some of the signs of the times for our generation, for the people who live on earth today? We shall now name them each briefly, and give references. A broadcast is naturally only a few minutes long, so we must pack a great deal into a small space. Those who wish to know more about this and go deeper into these great prophecies of the signs of the times can secure adequate literature by writing to us.

The first sign we shall mention is the increase of knowledge. If we could go back 100 years, 150 years, or even 200, we would scarcely know how to live. There would be no telephone, no telegraph, slow and uncertain mail delivery, no electric cars, no automobiles, no elevated trains—in fact, the railway itself would only be a dream. There would be few steamboats, no airplanes, no jets, no rockets in their orbits and satellites in their orbits, no electric lights—not even a kerosene lamp—no phonographs, no radio, no television, no sewing machines, reapers, threshers, or modern farm machinery, no India rubber goods of any kind, no photographs or photo engraving, no gas engines, no elevators, no steam fire engines, no asphalt pavements, and so on and on. We would be in another world. People who lived 200 years ago lived practically the same as the people who lived in the days of Abraham. George Washington and Abraham traveled the same way and lived the same in many respects. We can hardly imagine this world of 200 years ago, or even 150 years ago.

But, suddenly, there came a great change—not an evolution, but a revolution. Great inventions came one after another, and everything

was speeded up. Bible translation was pushed, so that the number of translations increased from about 25 or 30 languages at that time, till today we have this Word of God in over a thousand tongues, available to about 90 per cent of the population of the earth. Think of the wonders of electricity, telegraph, telephone, radio and television! All the modern countries are criss-crossed with paved roads, speedways, freeways, and tollways with people running to and fro on them. The railways run in every direction. Even the skies are filled with traffic, and now, man plans to use the earth as a footstool and stretch out his dominion amid the stars. Our great cities are a blaze of light at night. By means of radio and television the very air about us is filled with voices and pictures. What do these things mean? Here is a prophecy of the end time:

*"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."*—Daniel 12:4.

Here are two of our great signs in one passage of Scripture. The time of the end is to be marked with two chief characteristics: unusual increase of knowledge and extraordinary running to and fro. This is the time of the end. Knowledge is increased and people are running to and fro. The highways are packed with millions on wheels at one time. Tens of thousands are slain on the roads every year. Knowledge has been increased. Universities spring up on every hand. There is a great increase in Bible knowledge. Great newspapers are available by the tens of millions. Education is becoming world wide. The human race is on the move. This is the time of the end. Evidence is all about us.

Now we come to the third sign, the great dark day, May 19, 1780. Christ's disciples asked Him what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the world. Matthew 24:3. He replied to this question by giving them the signs which would precede the destruction of the city of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. These

all took place. He also foretold something else which would come to God's people—a long period of tribulation to follow the destruction of the city. Then He said:

*"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, . . . and the stars shall fall from heaven."*—Matthew 24:29.

Religious wars and times of religious persecution ended along about 1776, when America became a place of refuge for the oppressed of Europe and of other lands. Immediately after this time of persecution and trouble, Jesus said, the sun would be darkened. History proves that God spoke the truth. On the day of May 19, 1780, North America experienced its great dark day. The night following, the moon appeared as blood. The exact physical cause of this phenomenon is not known, though various ideas have been expressed. Whatever may have been the cause, the dark day came at the right time.

The poet Whittier experienced it and wrote about it, in his poem entitled, "Abraham Davenport":

*'Twas on a May-day of the far old year  
Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell  
Over the bloom and sweet life of the Spring,  
Over the fresh earth and the heaven of Noon,  
A horror of great darkness. . .*

People believed the dark day to be a sign of the end, and thousands cried out to God for deliverance; multitudes were filled with awe and alarm.

In this same text, Jesus mentioned our fourth great sign, the falling of the stars. He coupled it with the great dark day, which we have already found took place on May 19, 1780.

*"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and . . . the stars shall fall from heaven."*—Matthew 24:29.

Or, as Mark puts it, "The stars of heaven shall fall." Mark 13:25. In the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John says,

*"And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs*

[that is, her unripe figs, her green figs], when she is shaken of a mighty wind."—Revelation 6:13.

During a wind storm the figs fly out in every direction from the center of the tree. And similarly, history tells us, the great star shower, with stars flying out in every direction, took place on November 13, 1833. That means it occurred after the great dark day, just as the prophecy indicated—53 years after the great dark day.

Denison Olmsted, professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Yale College, wrote of the falling stars, in the *American Journal of Science*, and said, "Probably no celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country since its first settlement which was viewed with so much admiration and delight." He spoke of it as the shooting stars.

Professor Simon Newcomb, in his book *Astronomy for Everybody*, page 280, describes this great star shower as the most remarkable one ever observed. And it appeared exactly as it was described in the Bible. This great sign was seen not only in North America, but in the West Indies and a number of other places around the world.

Now for the fifth sign:

*"Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars:*

...

*"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. . . ."*—Matthew 24:6, 7.

In the nineteenth century men were looking for an age of peace. Commerce, invention, and travel would bring peace to the world, they said. But time proved otherwise. The last part of that century had greater and more terrible wars than the first half. Then the twentieth century opened. "Now surely we shall have peace," it was said. Men were too wise to fight anymore. One great religious journal named itself for the new century, "The Christian Century." But in the twentieth century we have

already had two mighty world wars and plenty of small ones boiling around most of the time. What the future holds no man knows, but we do know that the words of Christ have been fulfilled in all events so far.

*"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles [said the prophet Joel]; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:*

*"Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.*

*"Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord."*—Joel 3:9-11.

What a picture this is of the latter days: as the nations gather together, the hosts of God descend from heaven! This brings us right up to the very time of the end. The day of the Lord is at hand, according to this scripture. There will be a time when—

*". . . the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged."*—Revelation 11:18.

A little later on in this text, the prophecy declares that God will "destroy them which destroy the earth." Today we see a very real threat of destruction of the earth as a habitable globe. Wars and rumors of wars are all about us. The time of the end is here now. Good men have tried to end wars. There have been peace conferences, peace proposals, peace meetings. Everybody wants peace. According to the Scriptures, when they desire it so much, and preach, teach, and long for peace and safety,

*". . . then sudden destruction cometh upon them, . . . and they shall not escape."*—1 Thessalonians 5:3.

We may thank God for the good work of men of peace, for without them the world would be worse than it is. But, as long as the majority of men are unregenerate, war, which begins

with the human heart, is bound to spring up again in one form or another. And these great signs prophesied by Christ will continue until we have a new race, a new earth, where there is no sin, and therefore, no war or pain or death.

The sixth great sign: restlessness, lawlessness, and abounding iniquity. "Iniquity shall abound," said Jesus. Matthew 24:12. The preaching of the gospel in all the world has blessed millions, but iniquity has not been rooted out of the earth. Jesus said,

*"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man."*

*"They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all."*

*"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;"*

*"But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all."*

*"Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."*—Luke 17:26-30.

What was it like in the days before the flood? Here is an eye witness report:

*"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*—Genesis 6:5.

The wickedness and atheism of those days were accompanied by violence, too. Read verse 11.

*"The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence."*

Then came the destruction of the Flood.

Lawlessness today is a real menace to our civilization. Lawlessness leads to tyranny when it becomes necessary to hold the lawlessness in check. When men do not control themselves, then someone else must control them, to keep

civilization going. In many parts of the world today, in the highest areas of civilization, men seem to have lost their sense of decency. Many books and magazines are printed and circulated, which, as far as literature is concerned, are merely examples of perfumed obscenity. Crime is increasing at an appalling rate; every year the statistics mount. Pre-Flood conditions are rapidly beginning to prevail. The spiritual atmosphere of Sodom and Gomorrah, like a pestilential smog, infiltrates the greatest cities of earth. As it was in the days of Noah, as it was in the days of Sodom—the prophecy is being fulfilled. Read Second Peter, the third chapter, and Second Thessalonians, the second chapter.

The seventh sign: pestilences, earthquakes, storms by land and sea. Matthew 24:7.

The prophet Joel quotes Jehovah as saying,

*"And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke."*—Joel 2:30.

Jesus said,

*"Great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven."*—Luke 21:11.

Destructive earthquakes seem to be increasing in frequency. Beginning with the first century, there has been a gradual increase. There were 115 earthquakes reported in the thirteenth century. The fourteenth century had 137; the fifteenth, 174; the sixteenth, 253; the seventeenth, 378; eighteenth, 640; nineteenth, 2,119; and so far in the twentieth century, the number is increasing still more.

After World War I, an epidemic of the Spanish influenza swept away millions. Typhus and other plagues have carried off their multitudes, and vast famines have struck China, Russia, and other lands during this century.

The eighth sign: the great social and labor changes of the latter days. Read the fifth chapter of James. He describes an unparalleled

heaping together of riches in some areas, vast need in others, conflict and tension between labor and management. Verses 1-6. In verses 7 and 8, he says,

*"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."*

*"Be ye also patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."*

The ninth sign: distress of nations with perplexity. This we read of in Luke 21:26-28.

*"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: . . ."*

*"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."*

*"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."*

The tenth sign: demon manifestations in various lands.

*"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."—1 Timothy 4:1.*

Notice, these seducing spirits do their miracle works in the latter times. They have power, they perform signs and lying wonders. Their final end and destruction is brought to view in Second Thessalonians 2:8-12.

The eleventh sign is one of the most startling. It is the prevailing unbelief in the church, the constant drift away from faith and the fundamental principles of Christianity in the Holy Scriptures. The Apostle declares that,

*"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"*

*"And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."—2 Timothy 4:3, 4.*

Read the third chapter of Second Timothy. Here are people who have a form of godliness, but are denying all the basic faith in back of godliness. As a result there will be an easy-minded, second-rate, hollow, feeble, uncertain religion. Salvation by Christ's blood atonement will be denied, and His deity will also be denied.

Last of all, the great and glorious sign: the gospel to all the world in the last generation.

*"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."—Matthew 24:14.*

The reason for all the modern inventions, for rapid transit, publication, and communication, is this—to give God's message quickly to all the world.

*"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."—Revelation 14:6.*

Before Christ comes the second time, the gospel must go everywhere, to all nations; the everlasting gospel, the offer of peace, and eternal life must go to everyone who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. This message will announce the coming of the glorious kingdom at the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. We see that message going today, and so, we should look up and lift up our heads, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh.

*"When ye shall see all these things, know that it [Christ's coming] is near, even at the doors."—Matthew 24:33.*

## How to be Ready for Christ's Return

ONE day when Jesus was in Jerusalem, some Greeks who had come from far away to worship in that city, said to Philip, one of Christ's disciples, "Sir, we would see Jesus." John 12: 20, 21. They had heard about the Saviour and they wanted to see Him, they wanted to meet Him.

There are many people on earth today who would like to see Jesus. They are pleased with the thought that He is coming back to this world. They are the ones spoken of in the Bible as those "that love His appearing." 2 Timothy 4:8. His second coming is their crowning expectation; it is the end of history, the object of all human living. Their hopes of the future depend upon it, and the very thought that He will return has its effect upon them now.

But what effect does the hope of Christ's return have on believers? Is it good or evil? It is a good hope; it brings good results. If they were looking for some evil thing, it would have an evil effect upon them; but when they are looking for the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, it is bound to have a good effect upon them. They want to be ready to meet Him; therefore, their lives will have to be continually patterned after His life. They must surrender themselves to Him. They must, through faith by the grace of God, repent of their sins and be born again, "... not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." 1 Peter 1:23. They must have a new life and live this new life before the world.

Christ's second coming is a high and holy hope. He must therefore bring corresponding results in the lives of those who have this hope.

It is called "the blessed hope," and the Bible says that—

*"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."*—1 John 3:3.

Notice what the Apostle Paul said about this when he was writing to Titus, who was a young preacher and needed all the encouragement he could get. The Apostle spoke of "the blessed hope," which is the second coming of Christ, and said:

*"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*

*"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*

*"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."*  
—Titus 2:12-14.

There is the actual result of this hope in the hearts of people. It is a blessed hope, and as a result of it, our lives will be moved toward God, and we shall, by God's grace, deny ungodly living, and live soberly and rightly here in this present world while we are looking for that blessed hope. We are to be redeemed from all iniquity through the vicarious atoning sacrifice of Jesus and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that changes our lives while we are living among men. We are to be purified unto Christ Himself, to be His peculiar people, zealous of good works, doing good deeds. This is the effect of the hope on a true believer. This is the preparation we need to meet Christ when He comes.

The greatest preparation we can make for the coming of Christ, then, is to trust our all to Him, to surrender ourselves to Him, to believe on Him as our Saviour and Redeemer, and accept His atoning sacrifice for us.

When relatives of the injured Mrs. Mary Jane Drummond of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, asked if there was any money to pay the doctor, Mrs.

Drummond said that all her money was in her bed. Among canvas pieces, between the mattress and pillows, they found \$20,321 in gold and bills. In each of 292 squares of canvas was a \$10 gold piece. When they told Mrs. Drummond (who later died from her injuries) the amount, she replied, "Is that all? I thought there would be \$25,000. That isn't much for a fifty-year saving."

Surely even a money-stuffed mattress would be an unsatisfactory resting place for an invalid. The only perfect place of rest is found with Christ. He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. That rest which He offers us cost Him all, but it will cost us nothing. Come to Him, friend, for the rest of your life, and so be ready to meet Him with joy when He returns.

This blessed hope of the second coming of Christ gives a person a clearer light and understanding of the present state of the church. We can praise God for the good that does exist, but we must watch out for the apostasy which prophecy says will come. We know that the church will not *convert* the whole world to the gospel, but will only *preach* the gospel to all the world. There is a danger, however, that the world may convert a good deal of the church.

This wonderful blessed hope gives the believer exalted views of Jesus. In the Holy Bible He is revealed as both suffering and triumphant. He is Christ crucified, but He will be Christ coming as King of kings. Even though He is represented as a nobleman gone "into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke 19:12), He will come as Judge and as King.

This blessed hope gives the believer a deep concern for the salvation of others. He wants to see his loved ones prepared to go home with Christ when He comes. He is willing to sacrifice to do this. He prays for them, as well as for himself. He has a great interest in a world mission for Christ.

This blessed hope gives the believer a strong desire to search his own heart and examine his own life, and to put out of his heart things that are wrong. It makes him realize that his only hope is in a full surrender to Christ and complete trust in the merits of His blood. This blessed hope of Christ's second coming leads the believer to watchfulness and detachment from the world. It gives him decision of character and conduct. He believes that the Judge is standing at the door. He believes he will soon have to face the Lord whom he has loved and who is coming with power to gather all nations before Him and to separate them as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats.

This blessed hope gives the believer an earnest watchfulness for and anticipation of the Lord's return. He does not know the exact time Christ will return, but he knows that it must be soon because the signs of the times are being fulfilled. He is on guard against the attacks of Satan who tries to distract his attention and lead him into sin. His hope makes him willing to be separated from worldliness and evil habits—physical, mental, and spiritual. He seeks self-control and diligence. He uses moderation in the regulation of his desires, appetites and habits. He takes these words of Scripture seriously.

*"Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh."*—Jeremiah 45:5.

Immoderate indulgence has no place in the believer's life. He finds victory over wrong habits of diet and entertainment. He seeks the best friends, and seeks to develop everything that is good in life.

*"And take heed to yourselves [says his Master], lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."*—Luke 21:34.

He remembers the words of the Apostle:

*"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."*

*"Be careful for nothing."*—Philippians 4:5, 6.

This wonderful hope makes him desire to use his talents in the very best way to help in the accomplishment of the work of God. His talents were given him to use and to bring blessing to others.

It is a great practical truth, this great doctrine of the second coming of Christ. It brings to us an earnest longing for the appearance of the Lord. This longing will be felt in the heart of every Christian believer.

This is the nighttime of history; Christ's coming will be the glorious morning. With David, the believer cries out,

*"My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning."*—Psalm 130:6.

In the crimson of the morning, in the whiteness of the noon,  
In the amber glory of the day's retreat,  
In the midnight, robed in darkness, or the gleaming of the moon,  
I listen for the coming of His feet.

Down the minster aisles of splendor, from betwixt the cherubim,  
Through the wondering throng, with motion strong and fleet,  
Sounds His victor tread, approaching with the music far and dim,  
The music of the coming of His feet.

He is coming, O my spirit! with His everlasting peace,  
With His blessedness immortal and complete;  
He is coming, O my spirit! and His coming brings release;  
I listen for the coming of His feet.

—Carlyle B. Haynes

Until the Lord appears, it is the nighttime of His church. How she longs for the day! How she prays in her inmost heart,

*"Come quickly. . . . Even so, come, Lord Jesus."*—Revelation 22:20.

This blessed hope of the Lord's coming leads us believers to a larger study of the Word of God. We want to know when His coming is near.



**We must compare scripture with scripture.**

We must compare scripture with scripture. The prophecies must be unfolded so we can know where we are in the stream of time as landmark after landmark passes by. This hope must draw us away from the love of the world toward the love of God. In our study we learn that—

*"The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."*—2 Peter 3:10.

And then we know that we must be prepared for a better world, even an eternal one.

Lastly, we shall mention that this blessed expectation, this blessed hope, this patient waiting for Christ, is consolation and comfort in times of trouble. Someone we love very dearly may be taken away from us, leaving us to weep in our loneliness and desolation. But light breaks into our hearts through the words of Holy Scripture:

*"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep."*

*"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."*—1 Thessalonians 4:15, 16.



How much this promise has meant to me personally as I have looked upon those I love and have seen them taken by the hand of death! I long to hear that shout of victory when the Lord Jesus, who Himself was dead and rose again, will call not only one man (as He called Lazarus) from the dead, but all the sleeping saints.

*"... and the dead in Christ shall rise first."*  
—Verse 16.

What a promise! What a day!

*"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."*—Verse 17.

No wonder we have looked forward to the coming of the Lord with anticipation! Then we shall meet and greet those we have loved long since and lost awhile.

*"Wherefore [says the Apostle] comfort one another with these words."*—Verse 18.

What incentives this blessed hope has for Christian living and gospel work!

*"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching."*—Luke 12:37.

Now friend, time is short. Delay no longer.

*"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found."*  
—Isaiah 55:6.

Press into His kingdom of grace now, while you have your will power and your understanding, while you are able to make decisions.

*"Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee."*—Job 22:21.

*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."*—Acts 16:31.

To give this message properly, on how to be prepared for the second coming of Christ, the preacher needs a burning heart.

A Christian doctor in London wanted to arouse the desire for the salvation of his soul in the heart of a young man who was living and studying with him. One night he explained how the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and in conclusion he told the boy, "When the Lord comes you may have my house, John."

The boy looked surprised.

*"... and my carriages."*

The boy was more surprised.

*"... and my furniture and money."*

"Thanks," gasped the boy.

Alone in bed he began to think. "If the doctor goes to heaven, what will I do with this house, this carriage, and so forth? Where will I be?" He got out of bed, went to the doctor's room, and aroused him. He explained his desire and was pointed to Christ. Before the morning came, he was ready.

Do we live as if we really expect the Lord to come at any time? Do others see that expectancy in us, in our way of life? May God give us that burning heart.

A tourist traveling along the shores of Lake Como in Northern Italy came to the castle Villa Asconti. The friendly old gardener opened the gate so he could show him the grounds, which were in perfect order. The tourist asked when the owner had last been there. "Twelve years ago," was the reply.

"Does he ever write to you?"

"No."

"Where do you get your instructions?"

"From his agent in Milan."

"Does he come?"

"Never."

"Who does come here?"

"Once in a while a tourist like yourself comes by. But I am almost always alone."

“But you keep this garden in such fine condition, just as if you expected the owner to come tomorrow.”

The old gardener promptly replied, “Today, sir, today.”

“*Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*”—Revelation 22: 20.

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