

13) The 2nd Coming; It's Signs & Manner

For centuries, Christians have been saying Christ's return is near, yet, He hasn't returned. Are Christians wrong about this, or perhaps is there more to understand?

Lets discover what the Bible teaches about the second coming (return) of Jesus Christ, the signs that precede it, and the manner in which it happens

John 14:1-3. Jesus made a wonderful promise to His disciples, and all His followers, that He was leaving. He would be preparing a place for each believer to dwell in God's house, His city – New Jerusalem.

Acts 1:11 Scripture promises that Jesus will return to this earth in a manner similar to how He left – literal, visible, audible, and in a cloud.

Jesus clearly stated, in Matthew 24;36, that no one knew the day or hour of Christ's return, not even the angels, and for good reason. God does not want us to procrastinate in choosing to give our hearts and lives to Him!

But Scripture does give signs so we can know when it is near.

Matthew 24:1-3, 4-14, 23-28 describes 4 areas the signs would be recognizable in. As Jesus described the impending destruction of their beloved city Jerusalem, the disciples were astounded. Apparently they could only associate this with the end of the world and asked Jesus two questions: 1) when would this happen? And 2) what would be the signs of His return and the end of this world? Jesus proceeds to answer both their questions, in reference to the end of the city, and the signs of the His return and the end of this world.

- Religious World: False Christ's; & false prophets who will even perform miracles (Pharoah's magicians were able to replicate some of the miracles of Moses). Miracles, in and of them-selves, are not a sign that something is from God. It could also be Satan's work. Jesus knew that these false leaders and their "signs/miracles" would be very deceptive and warned His followers not to even investigate, not even out of curiosity, because when He actually returns in the eastern sky, it will be as bright, as loud, and as quick as lightening!
- Political world: Wars, rumors of wars; Nation rising against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom.
- Social World: Tribulation and persecution for God's followers; People would lose their love and compassion for others, and lawlessness would increase.
- Natural World: Famines, diseases, and earthquakes in various places

We should pay special attention to verse 8, 13, & 14. In verse 8, the Greek word translated as “sorrows” actually means “birth pangs/pains”. Jesus was simply saying that these signs would keep increasing in frequency and magnitude (intensity) until the final end. That is exactly what has been happening. In verse 13 Jesus encourages us to be faithful to the very end. In verse 14 we see the only sign that has not yet occurred, the eternal gospel of Christ must be shared with the whole world! While not complete, this is certainly in the process of happening and you’re reading/studying these lessons attest to that! Those “left behind” are not given second chances, no, they had their opportunity and have made their eternal choice. As such, they die at His return, and with no one to bury them their bodies are corpses left to the scavengers.

Daniel 12:4. Another sign of the nearness of Christ’s return is how clearly the book of Daniel is now understood. Daniel was told that the prophecies he was shown and recorded would not be understood until the “time of the end” – a period of time in earth’s history close to the end of time. We are now living in this “time of the end” period.

2 Timothy 3:1-5. Paul further described the attitudes of people, self-proclaimed religious people, living in the last days of earth’s history. This certainly fits with our world today. People who claim religion but have not actually surrendered their heart to God and allowed His transforming grace to transform them!

Revelation 1:7. Scripture is clear - when Christ returns in a cloud (of angels), every person alive will see Him! There is nothing secret about the rapture or the return of Christ.

There will be 4 Groups of people when Jesus Returns. Scripture describes what will happen to each group:

- The Righteous Living
- The Righteous Dead
- The Unrighteous (Unrepentant) Living
- The Unrighteous (Unrepentant) Dead

Acts 9:1-11

Psalms 50:3. When Christ returns, it will be loud and stormy. The very brilliance of His glory and holiness is a consuming fire to sin.

Matthew 24:27. Which is why His coming is described as lightening, denoting the appearance and the speed.

Mark 13:26-27. When He returns in the cloud His unfallen angels, they gather His repentant followers from all over the earth.

Matthew 25:31. The “cloud” is the very assembly of His angels.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. When Christ returns all those who died with their faith resting in Christ will be resurrected! And then, together with the living faithful, they will all ascend (together at the same time) to meet Christ who awaits them in the cloud. It is important to note 2 points here: 1) those who died in Christ as well as those living for Christ when He returns meet Him at the same time! One group does not get to heaven before another! 2) They meet Him in the air, in the cloud, and get to be with Him for eternity after. But Christ does not step foot onto this planet at His second coming!

1 Corinthians 15:42. Upon their resurrection at the second coming of Christ, the faithful are then given brand new immortal bodies. They will never get sick, have infirmities, or die because they will have perfect health.

Philippians 3:20,21. At Christ’s return, the living faithful are also given new perfect immortal bodies. These are real, literal, flesh & bone bodies, like Christ’s body after His resurrection. But they no longer have the curse of sin and it’s effects on them or their health.

Luke 24:36-39. Jesus appeared to His followers after His resurrection and assured them He was not a ghost but a real person with a real body.

Revelation 6:15-17. The second coming is a traumatic experience for living unrepentant. They would rather be crushed by the mountains than face a holy God that they rejected as their Creator and Redeemer.

2 Thessalonians 2:8. The holiness and brilliance of God is as a consuming fire to sin. Christ’s second coming appearance destroys the antichrist and all the living unrepentant/wicked. But this is not yet the fire of hell, the lake of fire.

In a future study we will see that the unrepentant/wicked who were already in their graves simply remain there until they, along with the unrepentant/wicked who are slain by Christ’s brightness at His second coming, are resurrected to face/hear their judgment and then cast into the lake of fire, along with Satan and his host of angels, to be utterly consumed and turned to ashes.

Ezekiel 33:11. The destruction of the wicked is not something that God enjoys or takes pleasure in. Jesus came to seek and save the lost! He wants the wicked to turn to Him for repentance and salvation. That was and is God’s plan. Any person who is lost will be lost because of their choice to reject God and His gift of salvation, not because God’s grace was not sufficient or offered.

Matthew 24:31,36-41 & Luke 17:24-36. Jesus compared the time just before and at His return to the days of Noah just before and at the flood. There is nothing wrong with eating the right food, drinking the right things, or marriage that is approved by heaven. The point is simply this, people were so busy with life that they missed – they were not paying attention to – the signs that they should have noticed. And most of the world of Noah's day perished because of it. Sadly, Jesus' warning is that the same thing will happen with the return of Christ. Jesus also compared the unexpectedness of His return with the parable of "two people" in different settings – working in the field, or grinding at the mill, or sleeping – with one, the repentant, being taken back to heaven with Christ, and one being left behind. Some have tried to explain that those left behind have a second chance, another opportunity, to get their life right with God. But by comparing Scripture we see that is not at all what Jesus was saying or teaching. When Christ's disciples asked Him where? He replied that they are left dead. Those who have not given their sins, their heart, their life to Christ, those left behind, are left dead. Their lifeless bodies, now corpses, become food for the scavenger birds.

John 14:3. Jesus promised that He if He left, He would also return, to gather His children.

2 Timothy 4:8. All those who have faithfully looked forward to His appearing will receive a crown of righteousness, and all at the same event – Christ's return.

Matthew 16:27, 26. When Christ returns, He is bringing a reward, the reward that each person has chosen. Eternal life in Christ, or eternal destruction. Our works simply reflect the fruit of our choices: to surrender our heart to Christ, or to continue serving self and Satan.

2 Peter 3:9-11. Ultimately, all sin, sinners, and traces of sin will be consumed with a fire that no one can quench. So friend, what kind of person do you want to be?

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6. Jesus' return is compared to the coming of a thief. Jesus coming is not secret, rather it is unexpected and takes people by surprise! Most people will not be prepared because they have been too pre-occupied with the business of life. That should not be the case for a follower of Christ.

Hebrews 9:28. When Jesus came to earth as a babe, He came to redeem sinners by becoming the perfect sacrifice for sin. But when Jesus returns the second time, He is coming to separate the repentant and the unrepentant, the righteous from the wicked. He separates them so He can take the redeemed back to heaven, to live with Him in a perfect world with perfect bodies, for eternity.

My friend, if you haven't already, it's not too late to give your heart to Jesus. Time really is running out, is there anything keeping you from it? Please let me know how I can help you give your heart and life to Jesus and find peace and joy!

