

## **The Second Coming of Christ**

There have been a number of great events in the world, The creation of the world in six days (Genesis 1, Exodus 5); the universal flood (Gen 6-8); the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14); the giving of the ten commandments (Exodus 20); fall of Jericho (Josh 6); and so many others too numerous to mention since the creation of the world. However, as great as these events were, we, today, stand between the two greatest events of all time: the first and second comings of the Son of God.

During His first coming, Jesus accomplished all the things He came to do. He overcame Satan: he cast out his agents, the demons; He withstood his temptations and sinned not; finally, in death, He defeated him, was resurrected and now holds the keys of death and hades. He established His spiritual kingdom and now rules over it on David's throne. He fulfilled the law and took it out of the way nailing it to His cross. He lived so as to be the perfect example for us. He manifested His great love for mankind by willingly going the way of the cross. He established the gospel that men might have forgiveness of sins, be reconciled to God and have hope of everlasting life. In all this and more he glorified the Father having accomplished the work He was given to do.

We stand today in a unique position. We are able to benefit from and enjoy the blessings and fruit of His first coming while we wait in great anticipation and desire for His second coming. There are a few events that men have speculated on that will not take place: there will be no rapture of the church; no one antichrist will appear to be a world ruler; no three and a half year period of tribulation and no carnal battle of Armageddon. However there are at least six great events that will take place:

1. Probation will cease.
2. Time ends.
3. Christ will raise all, righteous and wicked.
4. Heaven and earth will cease to exist.
5. The final judgment will take place.
6. Christ will deliver the kingdom to God.

His coming will be characterized by such great events as: the resurrection of all, the good and the evil, from the dead; the change of those that are alive at the time; meeting the Lord in the air; the judgment of both the righteous and the wicked; the deliverance of the kingdom to the Father; consigning the wicked to eternal punishment; the destruction of the earth and time is no more.

### **Jesus' Second Coming is Sure**

Jesus, himself said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." (John 14:3). Here is a promise that it will be Jesus himself that returns, not a representative. It will not be some angel or other spiritual being that our eyes will behold, but He who made our salvation possible.

The Holy Spirit said, "Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time . . ." (Heb 9:28)

Paul, the great apostle, said, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: . . ." (1 Thess 4:16).

Angels promised that He would come again, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." (Acts 1:11).

James said, "Be patient therefore, brethren unto the coming of the Lord." (James 5:7)

Peter answers the scoffers who question the Lord's coming. "Knowing this first, that thee shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Wher is the promise of his coming?" Peter answers, "But, beloved, by not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter 3:3,4,8) The Lord does not reckon time in the keeping of His promises.

Peter, John, and other New Testament writers are equally as assuring that Jesus himself will appear a second time. (see Col 3:4; 1 John 3:2; 1 Pet 5:4; Luke 18:8; Jude 14, 15).

### **The Manner of His Coming**

At His first coming Jesus entered the world as a baby in an animal shelter in the obscure town of Bethlehem in Judea. His second coming will be a personal, worldwide appearance in great majesty. He will return with the clouds of heaven in great glory with His mighty angels in flaming fire, with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and the trump of God. (Matt 25:31; 1 Thess 4:16; 2 Thess 1:7; Jude 14; Acts 1:11).

No one knows the date of His coming. All speculators have been wrong, expecting Jesus to come too soon. At the time God determines, Jesus will suddenly appear on the scene. There will be no advance warning immediately prior to His coming to give people time to prepare. Yes, in Matthew 24 there are many signs given: the appearance of false teachers, some claiming to be the Christ; Wars and rumors of wars; famines; earthquakes; apostasy of some who will betray their brethren; the gospel preached in all the world; the abomination of desolation; etc. However, all these signs do not refer to Christ's second coming but to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus said, "This generation (the people then living, see Matt 23:36) shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished." (Matt 24:34). Of the second coming He said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage (*the normal everyday affairs were taking place - DB*), until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and **knew not** until the flood come, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (Matt 24:36-39).

His second coming is also compared to the coming of a thief. The comparison is not that He is coming to steal or to a secretive coming, but that it will be unannounced and unexpected. “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” (1 Thess 5:2). The Lord also used the same analogy. “Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered the house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.” (Matt 24:42-44).

### **The End of Probation**

“Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.” (Heb 9:28). His return will not be to offer a second chance or to make further provisions for the salvation of men. His return will be at the end of the last days in which we are now living. (Acts 2:16-17).

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9) If the Lord has delayed the Lord’s coming so that probation (opportunity for repentance) may continue, will probation not end when He comes? In verse 15 Peter says, “Account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation . . .” When God’s longsuffering ends, that is, the day Christ returns, the opportunity for salvation (probation) end.

“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Heb 9:27) No second opportunities after death. Probation is only available to men in this dispensation of time and only while they live on earth. (2 Corinthians 6:2)

### **The Resurrection of the Dead**

“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 that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess 4:16-17). The resurrection of the dead takes place when Jesus descends from heaven. The term “first” does not and should not suggest to the reader the idea of a “second” resurrection. It is used in reference to the dead and the living saints. Paul is here correcting a wrong impression, that is, that one must be living at the time Christ returns to receive the reward. Paul points out that before the living receive anything the dead in Christ will be resurrected, then secondly the living will be changed, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye and then together both the first (the resurrected) and the second (the changed) will together be caught up in the air to be with the Lord. Thus this passage teaches one resurrection at the coming of Christ.

The resurrection of both the just and the unjust will take place at the same time, in fact, in the same hour. “Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which **all** that

are in the tombs 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 judgment.” (John 5:28-29). This passage speaks of one resurrection for all at the same time, not years apart. Likewise, Paul before Felix declared, “. . . there shall be *a resurrection* both of the just and unjust.” “A resurrection,” singular, not “resurrections,” plural.

There is a group of passages which speak of the “last day” which reveal that there is only one resurrection.

1. John 6:40 “For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up *at the last day.*”
2. John 6:44 “No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up *in the last day.*”
3. John 6:54 “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up *at the last day.*”
4. John 11:24 “Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection *at the last day.*”
5. John 12:48 “He that rejecteth me, and reciveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I spake, the same shall judge him *in the last day.*”

The references in John 6 all have reference to the resurrection of the righteous. The reference in John 11 is without regard to either righteous or unrighteous. The reference in John 12 is with regard to the judgment of the unrighteous. All this, the resurrection and the judgment, will takes place *at the last day*. There cannot be two last days. Therefore it logically follows that the resurrection of the righteous and the judgment of the wicked will be on the SAME day – *the last day*.

There is another group of passages which confirm the truth that there is just one resurrection. I refer to the group of passages that use the term *last trump*.

1. 1 Cor 15:52 “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.”
2. 1 Thess 4:16 “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and *with the trump* of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

There cannot be two *last* trumps. At the *last trump* Jesus descends and the dead are raised. The *last* enemy, death, will have been overcome. If the wicked dead are not raised at the *last trump*, they will not be raised, for there is not another trump. If they are not raised, death is not overcome and Paul was mistaken in saying this *last* enemy would be abolished when Jesus comes. (1 Cor 15:20-28). I believe Paul. When the *last trump* sounds, at the time Jesus returns, the *last* enemy, death will be overcome by the simultaneous resurrection of all, both good and bad. Nowhere does the Bible picture two resurrections, one for the righteous and another for the wicked.

## **Heaven and Earth Cease to Exist**

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?” (2 Peter 3:10-12). The “day of the Lord” and “day of God” refer to the second coming of Christ for Peter is answering the mockers who are attempting to deny that Christ is coming. Peter tells us that the same limitless and inexhaustible power of the omnipotent God that brought about the creation, the flood of Noah and that uphold all things now will eventually, in His good time, bring the world to a fiery end. (2 Pet 3:5-7). The dissolution of the earth will be accompanied with a great noise. All the works upon the earth, whether they be of man or God, will be burned up. Not only will the works be destroyed but the earth and the heavens themselves shall be dissolved. The elements, the building blocks out of which the earth is made, will melt with fervent heat. It will be the greatest conflagration of all time.

John saw this vision, “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.” (Rev 20:11). After the resurrection when the mortal body of man puts on immortality, the natural body becomes a spiritual body and the righteous inhabit the dwelling place Jesus has prepared (John 14:2) there will be no more need for a physical realm. No longer is there found a place for it in God’s scheme of things.

### **Final Judgment**

“But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats.” (Matt 25:31-32).

The judgment is sure. The judgment is just as sure as death, “and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Heb 9:27). It is just as sure as the resurrection of Jesus. “Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31).

There will be the greatest crowd ever assembled. The millions who could not be persuaded to assemble with the saints because they had other things to do, or other places to go, or thought it was not important, or complained of hypocrites being present, or for a hundred and one other reasons, will be present at this assembly. Adam, Eve and all mankind that has come after them will be there. More to the point, you and I will be there. No excuse will be accepted or allowed. Paul said, “For we must **all** be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

We will stand to be judged by the greatest judge that ever sat on a throne. God will judge all men by His son, Jesus Christ. (Acts 17:31) Peter said that this same

Jesus ". . . commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead." (Acts 10:42).

This judgment will not be for the purpose of gathering evidence for or against anyone. When that day is come all the evidence will have been collected. The period of collecting evidence is now. Each one is now writing his record before God.

The judgment will not be an occasion of trial for anyone. There will be no jury, no lawyers, no arguments will be presented, all pleading shall have been completed. All the +’s and -’s will already have been determined. It will be a day of eternal judgment.

The judgment will not be a time for correcting any wrongs committed. It will be too late to say, "I’m sorry" or "Forgive me" and receive pardon. It will be too late to obey the gospel or to be restored to one’s first love. The time of probation and mercy will have passed - judgment day has come.

The judgment will not deal with nations, communities or congregations. Whatever judgment God has for these will have already been meted out before this day. Each one will stand in the judgment to be judged individually. Each one will answer for himself. What other have or have not done will not accuse or excuse you at the judgment. (2 Cor 5:10).

The greatest books that ever were will be opened. (Rev 20:11). The Bible with its Old and New Testaments will be there. Each will be judged by the word God gave for the dispensation in which they lived and how they responded to it. The book of life will also be opened which is God’s roll of all the righteous people throughout all ages. Jesus told the apostles to rejoice that their names were written in heaven. (Lk 10:20). To those that overcome Jesus promised that he would in "no wise blot his name out of the book of life." (Rev 3:5). The only ones that will be allowed to enter the city whose streets are pure gold and God’s glory is its light are those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life. (Rev 21:27). Is your name there? Will it be there at the judgment when the book is opened?

The greatest separation will take place. Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats. (Matt 25:31-46). "So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous," (Matt 13:49). This separation will be for all eternity - FOREVER.

The judgment will be a revelation to some as to why they are not on the side of the saved. "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt 7:21-23 see also Matt 25:41-46).

The greatest verdict ever pronounced will be rendered. The righteous, those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, will hear: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:" (Matt 25:34). They will go away into eternal life. (Matt 25:46) They will be before the throne of God; and they will "serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd,

and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Rev 7:15-17).

To the wicked the judge of all the earth will say, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels:” (Matt 25:41) “And these shall go away into eternal punishment.” (Matt 25:46). “So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and the gnashing of teeth.” (Matt 13:49-50). “If any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev 20:15).

The basis for the judgment is revealed in the Bible. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.” (Gal 6:7-8). Paul sets forth four principles of the judgment in Romans 2:

1. “And we know that the judgment of God is according to *truth* . . .” vs 2.
2. “the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his *works*.” vs 5-6
3. “for there is *no respect of persons* with God.” Vs 11
4. “in the day when God shall *judge the secrets* of men, according to my gospel. . .” vs 16

God’s standard of judgment will be truth (His word. John 17:17); Our works (that which we have done whether it be good or bad); without respect of persons (there will be no partiality) and even the secrets of men (things only known by the individual himself) will be there.

## Conclusion

When Jesus shall return in the majesty of His glory with His angels at a time unexpected and all the dead will be resurrected, the earth will cease to exist for there is no place for such a physical universe any more. Then, all the dead will be judged by the righteous judge Jesus Christ. The wicked are cast into the lake of fire in the outer darkness separated from God, who is the light, throughout eternity. The redeemed of all the earth whose names were found in the book of life are delivered up to God to serve Him forever and ever. As the great apostle Paul said, “Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power, for he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, He put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all.” (1 Cor 15:24-28).

The kingdom is the church and the church is the kingdom. The terms “kingdom” and “church” reveal different aspects of the same body of saved people. Those born again see (enter, experience) the kingdom (John 3:3-5) Those born again are new

creatures “in Christ.” (2 Cor 5:17) To be “in Christ” is to be in His spiritual body, the church. (Eph 1:22-23). It is the church that Jesus is the saviour of (Eph 5:23) and the kingdom that He delivers to God. (1 Cor 15:24) Perhaps, at this present time, the church is not important. However, suppose, that after the judgment you stand without and see the church (kingdom) delivered to God and yourself delivered into eternal fire. I suggest that at that moment you would come to believe and see the importance of the church. But at that moment it is too late, too late. Now is the time to recognize its importance and to be a member of it faithful to Christ and God.