

THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST

LESSON #12

Memory Verse: Matthew 25:31

But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

There is no more relevant and necessary knowledge for the believer in Jesus Christ than to know that he will one day stand face to face with the one who bore his sin to give account for all his thoughts and actions as a child of God.

I. The First Coming of Christ

The mission of Jesus Christ coming to earth the first time was spiritual salvation.¹

A. Jesus presented Himself as the Savior of Israel.

1. Why did the angel tell Joseph that he should name the child Jesus (Matthew 1:19-25)?

2. To whom was Jesus sent (Matthew 15:24)? _____

3. Which aspects of Isaiah 61:1-2 did Jesus claim to fulfill during His first advent (Luke 4:16-20)? Which aspect did He omit? _____

B. Jesus presented Himself as the Savior of Gentiles (non-Jews).

1. How was the centurion's faith representative of the Gentiles who would believe in Christ (Matthew 8:10-12)? _____

2. How did Jesus describe the elect Gentiles in John 10:16? _____

¹ For more information regarding the first coming of Christ, please see lesson #5.

II. The Second Coming of Christ

The return of Christ is a series of events fulfilling all end-time prophecies. These include predictions of His coming *for* His Church (rapture) and His coming *with* His Church (physical return to earth). There are certain similarities between rapture and second coming passages, since they both refer to future events. However, similarities do not always mean the events are the same. Careful observation reveals a clear distinction.

A. The rapture – The removal of the Church from the earth.

1. How did Jesus promise His disciples that He would receive them to Himself (John 14:1-4)? _____

2. How is the rapture described in 1 Corinthians 15:51-55? _____

3. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and answer the following questions.
 - a. What was Paul’s purpose for teaching his readers about the rapture (v.13, 18)? ____

 - b. Who will be raptured by Christ (v.15)? _____

 - c. From where will Jesus descend to claim His church (v.16)? _____

 - d. What will happen to those who are alive at that time (v.17)? _____

B. The judgment seat of Christ – The judgment seat of Christ serves not to determine the eternal destiny of believers, but to reward them for faithful service to the Lord.

1. According to Romans 14:10, where will every believer stand? _____

2. What is the purpose of the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10)? _____

3. Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 and answer the following questions.
 - a. What is the foundation of every believer (v.11)? _____
 - b. What is tested at the judgment seat of Christ (vv.12-13)? _____

- c. What is distributed at the judgment seat (v.14)? _____
- d. What happens to the one who did not do much to build on the foundation of Christ (v.15)? _____

Some years ago a young man told me he was leaving a certain ministry. The reason he gave was: "I wasn't doing what I do best. I was using my abilities but not my spiritual gifts." There was nothing wrong with the work he had been doing. In fact, for another person it could be gold. But for him it was wood, hay, or straw, because he was doing what others thought he should do rather than what the Lord had particularly gifted and called him to do.²

C. The marriage supper of the Lamb – Initiated in heaven but extends throughout the 1,000-year millennial kingdom

- 1. Who is considered to be the wife of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27)? _____
- 2. How is the bride of Christ described in Revelation 19:7-9? _____

D. The physical return of Christ to earth – The culmination of redemptive history

- 1. How did Jesus promise that He would return to earth (Acts 1:11)? _____
- 2. With whom does Christ appear in His second coming (Matthew 25:31)? _____
- 3. Who will come with Jesus at His second coming (Zechariah 14:4-5; Revelation 19:8, 14)? _____
- 4. How will Christ appear (Matthew 24:29-31)? _____
- 5. Read Revelation 19:11-21 and answer the following questions.
 - a. What actions of Jesus are described in v.11? _____
 - b. What is His name (v.13)? _____

² John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, (Chicago, IL.: Moody Press, 1984).

- c. Who will follow Him (v.14)? _____
- d. What will He do to the nations (v.15)? _____

- e. What name is written on His robe and thigh (v.16)? _____

- f. How will the unbelieving world respond (v.19)? _____

E. The judgment of Satan and the antichrist

- 1. How is Christ's judgment on the antichrist and the false prophet described in Revelation 19:19-21? _____

- 2. What does Jesus' encounter with demons in Matthew 8:28 teach us about the knowledge of Satan and his minions concerning coming judgment? _____

- 3. What judgment is waiting for the dragon according to Revelation 20:1-3? _____

- 4. Revelation 20:7-10 addresses the devils ultimate judgment. What will characterize Satan's eternal dwelling place? _____

F. The great white throne judgment – The final damnation of all unbelievers

- 1. Revelation 20:11-15, 21:8 describes the great white throne judgment. Read the passage and answer the following questions.
 - a. On what basis will unbelievers be judged (vv.12-13)? _____

 - b. What is their destiny (vv.14-15)? _____

III. The Eternal State

Everything in this life ultimately points to eternity. The Bible teaches that every human will face one of two possible destinies: heaven or hell. There are no other options and no one is exempt.

A. The eternal state of the saved.

1. Prior to Christ's return to earth (second advent), the spirits of the saved (Old and New Testament saints) at death immediately go into God's presence.
 - a. How did Paul describe death for believers and where do they go (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:21-23)? _____

 - b. How does 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 describe the fact that believers in the Church age (Acts 2 – present) are reunited with their physical body at the rapture? _____

2. At the Christ's second coming, the spirits of deceased Old Testament and tribulational believers will reunite with their bodies, which shall be raised from the grave and changed into the likeness of Christ.
 - a. Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 and answer the following questions.
 - (1) What is the difference between the body that dies and the body that rises for the believer (vv.42-44)? _____
 - (2) Why must the believer's body change (vv.47-50)? _____

 - (3) What are the implications of knowing this truth (vv.51-58)? _____

3. After being transformed into the likeness of Christ, believers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ.³
4. Believers will spend eternity with Christ in heaven.
 - a. Read Revelation 21:1-7, 22:3-5 and answer the following questions.
 - (1) With whom will believers spend eternity (21:3)? _____
 - (2) What will it be like (21:4, 22:3-5)? _____

*Heaven itself is an infinite, eternal expression of the divine glory.*⁴

³ Please see section II-B above for details.

⁴ John MacArthur, *The Glory of Heaven: The Truth About Heaven, Angels, and Eternal Life*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway Books, 1996), 105.

B. The eternal state of the unsaved.

1. Prior to the return of Christ, the spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are reserved for punishment until the day of judgment.

a. Where does an unbeliever go after death and what is it like (Luke 16:23-24; 2 Peter 2:9)? _____

2. After the Millennium, the spirits of deceased unbelievers throughout history will reunite with their bodies, which shall be raised from the grave. After being raised from the grave, they will face the great white throne judgment. They will then be cast into the lake of fire, where they will experience final and everlasting punishment.⁵

IV. Personal Application

A. How does understanding the difference between the first and second comings of Christ impact your life and ministry? _____

B. How does the knowledge that you will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give account for everything you have done in His name motivate you to serve Him? _____

C. How does the knowledge that unbelievers will stand before the great white throne and be judged and cast into the lake of fire for eternity motivate you to pray for them and share the gospel with them? _____

⁵ Please see section II-F above for details.