



“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh,” Matthew 25:13.

Christ's Second Coming

Lesson Aim: The study of Article 22.

22. The personal, bodily and imminent return of Christ to earth.

L506. Date: March 1960. **Text:** Acts 1:10-11; Luke 17:22-29.

Topic: Christ: Return of.

INTRODUCTION — The goal toward which all human history is moving is the personal coming of Jesus Christ! This is the hope of the saint and the terror of the sinner. It is a pivotal point in God's dealings with His creation. It brings events leading to the final consummation of the age, the destruction of the heavens and the earth, the creation of a new heaven and earth and thus initiates eternity.

The New Testament often uses two terms to describe His coming. One is *parousia*, and is sometimes translated “coming” but it primarily means “presence.” It suggests the appearance of Christ is simply the act of a manifestation of His presence. The second word is *epiphaneia* and means “manifestation.” Christ is to manifest Himself in glory and power, as He was manifested before in humility and death. See Titus 2:14. There have arisen such differences in opinion as to details concerning the second coming of Christ that some people care nothing for the doctrine. While there may be room for honest differences of opinion concerning this doctrine, the Bible is sufficiently clear to set out these glorious truths: (1) Jesus is coming again. (2) He comes in glory and power to redeem His saints from the sinful environment of the world. (3) His coming begins a series of events which rapidly bring final judgment and eternal destiny for both saved and unsaved. The Christian is not waiting for death, but for the Lord Jesus’ coming! The fact of His appearing is the bright star of hope in what would otherwise be a gloomy future awaiting the world.

EXPOSITION

I. Jesus Is Coming, Acts 1:10-11.

1. He is coming personally. The angels who appeared to the disciples informed them that *“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,”* verse 11. This means that Jesus shall return, and not another come in His place. The rapture of the saints and following events is not entrusted to any creature. The Lord Jesus, Himself, having come and bought up by His own blood, will appear to take us unto Himself. If He willingly came the first time to suffer and die, He will surely come again to gloriously redeem the believers from the presence of sin. Though we do not know the time, we can be sure that the Lord Jesus has His coming fully scheduled and the powers of hell cannot keep Him from appearing.

2. He is coming visibly. The angels promised Jesus would come *“in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”* Since they had looked at Him as He ascended to heaven, watching until He passed beyond the clouds, so shall His return be witnessed. The clouds of heaven will open and the Lord Jesus shall appear. Some people deny the visible coming of our Lord. They say the death of a believer is the coming of Christ for Him. Not so. “In like manner” means “in like reality.” Just as surely as Jesus was seen during His first earthly ministry, so He shall appear and be seen with natural eyes when He comes again. Revelation 1:7 informs us, *“every eye shall see him.”* We do not understand how all the people of the earth are able to see Jesus at the same time, but do not limit the power of God according to our ability to understand. Look up in the sky some clear night and think about the appearance of the Lord Jesus. Feel your heart quicken with blessed anticipation. *“For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day,”* Luke 17:24.

3. He is coming bodily. That means that when Jesus appears He will have a body. His coming is not spiritual, as the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. His body will probably be like that body which He had after the resurrection. It will be a glorious body, Philippians 3:21. The bodily appearance of Jesus will guarantee the resurrection of His saints. (He is the “first-fruits” of those who sleep.) I Thessalonians 4:16 tells us *“the Lord himself shall descend from heaven.”* This means He shall descend in His own person—with His own distinct individuality. He shall have a body and

be visible and about His feet the saints shall doubtlessly bow in humble adoration.

II. Jesus Comes Unexpectedly, Luke 17:22-29.

1. No man knows the time of the Lord's coming. Just before the ascension, the disciples asked Jesus when the kingdom would be restored to Israel. Jesus answer is, *"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power,"* Acts 1:7. Again, Jesus informs us, *"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only,"* Matthew 24:36. Various groups of religious fanatics have revealed their ignorance by setting a time for the Lord's coming. Even as recently as the Spring of 1959 a group met in Waco, Texas, and prepared for His coming. When He did not appear at the set time, they announced that a mistake of one year had been made in their calculations. (When this lesson is studied by your class the year will almost be up. You will see if their date is correct!) It is not wise for us to set dates. We need rather to be concerned to be ready for His coming at any time. *"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch,"* Mark 13: 35-37.

2. The Lord comes after a period of religious apostasy, verse 23. Jesus warns that various ones will come saying, "See here," or, "See there." God's people are not to be misled by these imposters and heretics. The presence of false religions and the falling away of many professed disciples of Christ will make His appearing the more precious to the faithful believer. The falling away will reveal the man of sin and unleash upon the world a period of unequalled suffering. The Lord Jesus comes, however, to take His saints away! Praise God for this hope! (For a discussion of the man of sin read II Thessalonians 2:1-12.) Dr. Broadus has suggested, "If I am always ready, I shall be ready when Jesus comes."

3. The Lord's coming will interrupt the regular pursuits of men, verses 26-29. The fact that men do not realize when the Lord will come is seen in these verses. The normal activities of life will be in progress when the Lord comes. People will still be eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, planting, and building. If His coming were known to be near, they would not be doing these things. This is one reason why it is important for the believer to live in a consciousness of God. The Lord may come at any time. At least he wants to be faithfully doing his work when He appears. Let no one think that he can so perfectly prepare a calendar of events connected with the

Lord's coming as to distinguish the time. The Scriptures purposely do not give us that much information. We must be ready all the time. His coming will catch many unawares. Surely it must not catch the Christians so.

4. The Lord's coming is imminent. Jesus warns, "*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come,*" Matthew 24:42. A certain man once remarked, "There is so much prophecy which must yet be fulfilled that the Lord will not return for at least 100 years." Such opinions must be classed with all other efforts to set the time of His return. No man is an authority as to exactly how much prophecy has been fulfilled nor as to how long it will take for other prophecy to be fulfilled. We must live every day as if that were the day of His coming. The Lord's coming could well be just around the corner. We do not know. Our heart yearns that He may come. Until He does come we will be busily engaged in bearing the witness of His saving grace to sinners.

III. Jesus Comes to Redeem, I Thessalonians 4:13-17.

Peter informs us that there is a salvation "ready to be revealed in the last time," I Peter 1:5. Just as our soul was redeemed when we first trusted in Jesus, and our life is redeemed each day as we make it count for the glory of God, so our body will be redeemed when Jesus appears. Jesus will come in the air with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. Those saints who have all died will come forth from the grave. The living saints will be immediately transformed and all will be caught up in the air to Him. The resurrected body of the redeemed is described in I Corinthians 15:42-53. It will be incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual, and shall bear the image of the Lord from heaven. John says of our resurrected body, "*Beloved, 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; for we shall see him as he is,*" I John 3:25. Paul agrees with this, saying that Jesus shall, "*change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,*" Philippians 3:21.

Thus one grand purpose of our Lord's second coming is to complete the redemption of His own. Having saved them from the guilt and penalty of sin (in the salvation of the soul), and from the dominion of sin (in leading their lives in Christian service), He now comes to redeem them from the presence of sin (in taking them from a sinful environment to the pure and glorified presence of God). All the experiences we have had in the Lord have been little foretastes of the glory which shall be enjoyed when Jesus comes again. The redemption of the saved will also be the condemnation of the unsaved.

The resurrection of the saints will leave behind the unbelievers. These are caught up to the presence of the Lord while the others await a judgment of condemnation which is to follow. Is there some member of your family who does not know Jesus as Saviour? If so, hasten to win him before it is eternally too late! Read Matthew 24:40-44.

CONCLUSION—Jesus is coming again. He will return in the same manner in which He ascended into heaven—personally, bodily, and visibly. No man knows when He will come. Whenever the coming is, men will be surprised from their regular pursuits. Perhaps that coming is near—very near. The purpose of His appearing is to take the believers to be with Him. Paul says we shall thus always be with our Lord, I Thessalonians 4:17. The fact of Jesus' coming should make a difference in our attitudes. (1) We should be constantly watchful and ready for Him. (2) We should be busy winning every possible person to faith in Him. (3) We should seek out Bible truth on this subject and stand faithfully by it. (4) We should share this hope with those who are confused or who have not heard it. *“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus,”* Revelation 22:20. For more information on this subject be sure to study next Sunday's lesson.

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss: Jesus is coming personally.
2. Discuss: Jesus is coming bodily.
3. Just how much information do we have as to the time of the Lord's coming?
4. Define: “Apostasy” and “man of sin.”
5. Do you believe Jesus could come today? Give reasons for your answer.
6. Discuss the coming of Jesus as an act of redemption.
7. Discuss the resurrection of the dead at the coming of Christ Jesus.
8. Is the coming of Jesus a joy for you? How can you make it a greater joy to your heart?
9. What are you doing personally in preparation for His coming?
10. Name three sinners to whom you may witness this week and seek to prepare them for the coming of the Lord.