

Christ and The Future

The Momentous Event! Christ's Glorious Return

Lesson 3

I. Three biblical words commonly used to refer to Christ's return

“Revelation” (apokalupsis) (lit. the removal of a veil)

1 Cor. 1:7-8; 2 Thess. 1:7; 2:3, 6, 8; 1 Pet. 1:5, 13; 4:13; 5:1

“Appearance” (epiphaneia) (to be visibly seen)

Col. 3:4; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 2:8; 4:8; Tit. 2:13; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 John 2:28; 3:2

“Coming” (parousia) (Often used in ancient times to describe the visit of a king)

Matt. 24:3, 27, 37,39; 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; 4:5; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1,8; Jas. 5:7-8; 2 Pet. 1:16; 3:4; 1 John 2:28

(Other New Testament terms to refer to the return of Christ)

“The end” Matt. 24:6,14; 1 Cor. 1:8; 15:24; 2 Cor. 1:13-14

“The end of the ages” Matt. 13:39,40,49; 24:3; 28:20

“The day of judgment” 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Pet. 2:9

“The day of the Lord” 1 Cor. 5:5

“The day of God” 2 Pet. 3:12

“That day” Luke 10:12

II. The Return of Christ is the Centerpiece of Biblical Expectation

1. The return of Christ will be an event at the close of the present age in which the present splendor, honor and authority that belong to the risen and ascended Lord will be visibly, personally and publicly displayed in his being revealed from heaven.

2. The return of Christ is the blessed hope of the church of Jesus Christ and every child of God.

3. The truth of Christ's return undergirds exhortations to wakefulness and eager expectation.

4. The promise of Christ's return is invariably understood to be a fearful prospect for all those who do not belong to Christ through faith.

III. Characteristics of Christ's Return

1. Christ will come personally. Acts 1:11

2. Christ will come visibly. Rev. 1:7

3. Christ will come suddenly and unexpectedly. Matt. 24: 36-42; Rev. 16:15

4. Christ will come gloriously, triumphing over all things. Rev. 19: 11-16

5. At Christ's coming there will be a "rapture" of all believers, living and dead, unto resurrection transformation. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:50-55

6. At Christ's coming Christ will bring both comfort for believers and just judgment for unbelievers. 2 Thess. 1:6-10

7. Christ's return will usher in the New Heavens and the New Earth. 2 Pet. 3:3-13

IV. Can we know anything about the time of Christ's return? (Are attempts to set a date for Christ's return warranted by Scripture?)

1. No one knows the day or hour! Mk. 13:32; Matt. 25:13; Lk. 12:39-40; Acts 1:7

2. The return of Christ is essentially unpredictable. Matt. 24:43-44; Rev. 16:15

Note: A clarification of what it means for believers to "watch."

1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10-14 – Watchfulness as spiritual readiness

3. A balanced view of Christ's return holds to both imminence and delay.

Some passages emphasize the imminence ("soon-ness") of Christ's return

Rom. 13:11-12 "at hand"

1 Cor. 7:29 the time is "very short"

Phil. 4:5 the Lord is "at hand"

For the believer, the return of Christ is always "near" to the eye of faith.

Some passages emphasize the idea of delay or a considerable period of time intervening before Christ comes.

Parables requiring a period of growth or delay: leaven, mustard seed, tares

Parable of the pounds - "those who supposed that the kingdom was to "come immediately"

2 Thess. 2:1-12 – cautions about things that must still occur before the end.

2 Pet. 3:3-12 – God's "patience" in this period of calling the nations to repentance.

V. Points of application regarding the return of Christ:

1. Meditating on Christ's return energizes us to live for God's glory and seek to do God's will. 2 Thess. 1:12; 1 John 3:2-3

2. The promise of Christ's coming gives us comfort and enables us to persevere in suffering and hardship. 2 Thess. 1:6-10; Rom. 8:22-25; 1 Pet. 1:13

3. The promise of Christ's return helps us to continue to faithfully serve Christ.
1 Cor. 15:58