

Sunday, September 4, 2022 pm

Concerning First Principles

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN THE LORD RETURNS?

Today, I want to talk about the second coming of Christ. For Bible believers, this is a hotly debated topic with many different views. Some contend He has already returned. Other believe when He returns it will not be the end (premillennialism). Many have tried to set dates for His return only to be proven false, over and over. Others believe He is not going to return (or that He even is Lord). In this lesson, I would like to remind us of some things to consider about what the Bible says about His return. This is summary lesson of what will happen. Each of these points could be developed in much greater detail, but that is not my point today.

I. Events associated with His return:

- a. ***The Lord is going to return*** – John 14:2-3, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 4:13-18, James 5:7 – *Therefore, be patient brethren, until the coming of the Lord.* This is a fact emphasized and alluded to throughout the New Testament.
- b. ***It will be a literal return*** –
 - i. While there are passages that teach a representative return (e.g. the judgment of Jerusalem – Matthew 24:30 – a reference to judgment; Matthew 16:28 – “the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” during that generation, etc.), His second coming is an actual event that will literally take place.
 - ii. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, “The Lord Himself will descend...” Acts 1:11 – as Jesus ascended, two men (likely angels) noted, “*This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go to heaven.*”
 - iii. There have been many that describe the 2nd coming as a figurative event (realized eschatology, also Jehovah’s Witnesses said that Jesus came in 1914, but invisibly).
 1. That too is debunked in Revelation 1:7, *Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.*
 2. Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 15:52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16 speaks of the trumpet of God sounding – it will be heard by ALL!
 3. 2 Timothy 4:1, Hebrews 9:27, Titus 2:13, etc. speak of His appearing.
- c. ***We are going to be raised*** –
 - i. When He does come, we are ALL going to be raised.
 - ii. John 5:28-29, notes that “all who are in the graves will heave His voice and come forth...”
 - iii. Acts 24:15, Paul taught hope – “*that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both the just and the unjust.*”
 - iv. 1 Corinthians 15:50-53 – notes we will all be changed, in a moment – our corruptible will put on incorruptible. Death will be swallowed up in victory.
 - v. There are some who contend that there is no resurrection, or that only the righteous will be raised. That is contrary to passages we have noted. The Bible speaks of all being raised and judged.
- d. ***There will be a judgment of all mankind*** –
 - i. NOT 2 or more judgments, but ONE judgment for all. Both the righteous and wicked will stand in judgment
 - ii. John 5:28-29 again notes this – we will all be judged. Jesus also implied that in Matthew 25:31-46 where the sheep and goats are separated (judged at the same time).
 - iii. Revelation 20:12-15 - describes all being raised and judged.
- e. ***Our judgment will be based upon how we have lived***

- i. Again, Revelation 20:12-13 notes each one was judged by his own works.
- ii. 2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 14:10-12 both also teach that we must ALL appear before the judgment seat of Christ and give an accounting.
- iii. Romans 2:5-10 also notes this. This text also notes that God's judgment will be righteous.
- iv. Friends, when that happens, I am going to have to answer for the life I lived and the choices I made. There will be grace extended to those who have obeyed Him, but there will all be righteous indignation upon those who have not – 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10.
- v. Furthermore, we must not forget that God sees EVERYTHING! 1 Timothy 5:24-25 – man today may hide from others his sins, but not from God. Hebrews 4:12-13 notes there is no creature hidden from His sight. 1 Corinthians 4:5 -

f. After judgment, your eternal destiny will begin:

- i. After this judgment takes place, we will face our eternal reward. Many passages emphasize that there are 2 places of eternal existence – Matthew 25:46 speaks of everlasting punishment and everlasting life.
- ii. Heaven for the saved – the destiny of the saved where we will always be with the Lord –
 - 1. 1 Thessalonians 4:17. 2 Corinthians 5:1 speaks of a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens awaiting the godly.
 - 2. There are so many descriptions of heaven that we can consider – let me simply say – it is a better place – Hebrews 11:16 described it as a better place, than even the promised land. Hebrews 11:40 speaks of God providing something better for us.
 - 3. In this world filled with crime, heartaches, hatred, selfishness, immorality, etc., it is great incentive to know there is something better awaiting us on the “other side of eternity”. But it is only available to those who willingly submit to Him.
- iii. Hell for all others –
 - 1. To me, this is one of the most challenging doctrines in scripture to address apologetically, but it IS a part of scripture. The Bible is clear that there is a place of eternal torments – aka, “Hell”. And it is as real as heaven is – Matthew 10:28 – fear God who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.
 - 2. It is the place where the wicked (Revelation 21:8, cf. Galatians 5:19-21 – these will NOT inherit the kingdom of God, etc.) and the unsaved – 2 Thessalonians 1:8, Revelation 20:15 – anyone not found written in the book of life...;
 - 3. It is described in the most horrendous of terms – everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46). A place of “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 25:30). It is described in such terms that none wants to go there.
- g. In summary, these are some point to consider when our Lord does return. But before we finish, I want to observe some things for us to consider when we think about our Lord coming back.

II. Some things we DO know about His second coming:

- a. **We do not know when it will happen** – This is emphasized in several places.
 - i. Matthew 24:36-37 – Jesus noted that none knows when He will return.
 - ii. 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 2 Peter 3:10 both note that He will come as a thief in the night.
- b. **It can happen at anytime** – related to the previous point. There are some who contend that conditions are not yet ready for His return. I say there is plenty of reason to know that He could return at any time.
 - i. Things will be progressing as usual – no spectacular events that specifically warn us it is time.
 - ii. Matthew 24:37-39 notes that people were ‘eating and drinking as in the days of Noah.
 - iii. 2 Peter 3:3-5 speaks of scoffers mocking His delay.
- c. **When He returns there will be no second chances. That will be the end.**

- i. Many would have you believe that when the Lord returns, some will have another opportunity to obey Him (e.g. premillennialism). Other's teach a second change punishment (purgatory). These are NOT taught in scripture.
- ii. Hebrews 9:27 clearly says, after man dies, we face the judgment.
- iii. Luke 16:19-31 in the parable of "the rich man and Lazarus", we find when the rich man awoke in torments he could NOT change places. He was "done" and His destiny was sealed.
- iv. John 5:28-29 speaks of a resurrection and then eternal placement. NO second chance.
- v. That is why, in this life, we need to make sure that we are ready to stand before Him.

For most of us, this lesson serves as review. But it is a fundamental doctrine that we need to clearly understand AND it needs to be presented from time to time to remind us.

Ultimately, the premise of all this is to understand that since we do not know when he will return, we need to always be ready. Live as if today is your last day (note: Tonight's lesson will touch on this as we examine 1 Peter 4:7ff). If you are NOT a Christian, realize you do not know how much time you have – obey the gospel today. If you are a Christian, make sure of your salvation. If there is anyway we can help, we stand ready. Are YOU ready for the Lord to return? Think about it!