

The Sure Word Bible Studies ***Lesson 8***

The Second Coming of Jesus

In the previous lesson we studied the truth about the "*wages of sin,*" death. We saw that the Bible likened the death that comes to all human beings as a "*sleep*" and that one day Christ will return and awaken all His people who "*sleep in the dust of the earth*" in what is known as the "*resurrection of the Just.*" Jesus made this promise:

John 14:2,3 *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also."*

Jesus is coming again! This is exciting to think about, but as we do, remember that Jesus warned us long ago that there are those who would deceive us about this.

Matthew 24:3 - 5 *"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'" And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you."*

Verse 24 *"For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."*

History has shown this to be true from the time of Christ to the present day. And as we get closer to Christ's return, people will become even more susceptible to deception. The Bible tells us -

II Timothy 4:3,4 *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."*

In recent years certain books written depicting the Second Coming of Christ have become best sellers selling millions and millions of copies. The problem is that they are "*fables,*" what we call today novels, and many of the things they depict in these novels simply cannot be supported by the Bible. In these books the scripture is twisted and things read into it does not say in order to make it appear that their deceptive theories are biblical.

For us to be safe, rather than reading novels, we must carefully study the Bible looking at all the texts related to the Second Coming to be clear as to what the truth really is. In this study because of the limits of time and space, we will not be able to

look at all of them but we will examine the key texts regarding the second coming of Christ applying the basic principles of study we learned in lesson one.

We begin with the words of Jesus: *"But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only"* (Matthew 24:36). Though we cannot know the day and hour, we can know when it is near and in what manner Christ will come. There are three key points that the Bible does make clear:

1) The Second Coming of Christ will be literal.

Acts 1:9 - 11 *"Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

When Jesus returned to heaven after His resurrection, it was not a secret or spiritual event that only those of faith could experience, but it was a real and personable event witnessed by all those who were there.

2) The Second Coming of Christ will be a visible.

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."*

Matthew 24:30 *"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."*

This will be a world wide event which no one will miss. These texts are clear and there is no reason for them to be understood symbolically or figuratively.

3) The Second Coming of Christ will be noisy.

Matthew 24:30,31 *"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."*

I Corinthians 15:51 - 53 *"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed--in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."*

I Thessalonians 4:15 - 17 *"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*

There is nothing in the scriptures to imply that Christ's coming will be a silent or secret event known or witnessed only by a few or that His coming will be in two stages separated by a period of tribulation. All the accounts of the Second Coming of Jesus are clearly depicting one and the same event in which there is mention of trumpets sounding, dead being raised and clouds.

The clouds in these passages are the angels who accompany Christ as He returns. The Bible makes this clear:

Psalms 104:3 *"He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, Who makes the clouds His chariot, Who walks on the wings of the wind,"*

This verse tells us that the clouds are the Lord's chariot. A chariot is an ancient mode of travel used by kings. The next verse tells us what the chariot is.

Psalms 68:17 *"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, Even thousands of thousands; The Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the Holy Place."*

The King James Version translates it: *"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels:"* (Psalms 68:17)

The *"twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands"* are the angels of God who will accompany Him when He returns as stated in Matthew 25.

*"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and **all the holy angels with Him**, then He will sit on the throne of His glory."* (Matthew 25:31)

The clouds are God's chariot and God's chariot is thousands and thousands of angels. When Jesus returns He will be accompanied by thousands of glorious angels dressed in glowing white. At a distance they will probably appear as bright, glowing white clouds in the sky.

Today many teach that Jesus *"comes as a thief"* meaning that He will come secretly and no one will see Him but the faithful. Let's examine those texts used to support this in their context.

Matthew 24:42 - 44 *"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into."*

Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

In this passage the expression, "*coming as a thief*," warns that Christ is coming unexpectedly and not secretly.

I Thessalonians 5:2 - 5 *"For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness."*

This passage says that the day of Christ return should not come to believers "*as a thief*," that is, unexpectedly, because believers should know when it is near.

II Peter 3:10 *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."*

This passage makes it clear that Christ's coming, rather than being secret, will be a catastrophic event; The entire world will be aware of it and impacted by it. Note the following texts that support this:

Psalms 50:3 *"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him."*

Isaiah 13:9 - 11 *"Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. "I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible."*

What causes all the commotion and devastation that accompanies Christ's return to this earth? This is something that is often overlooked when studying this subject and yet critical to our understanding of it. As we discussed in a previous lesson, after the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden whenever God visited this planet He had to come veiled in some way. When He traveled with the Israelites in the wilderness He was veiled in a "*cloudy pillar*" (Exodus 33:9). A number of times He appeared to men as the "*Angel of the Lord*" (Exodus 3:2) Many times translators capitalize the word "Angel" implying divinity, Hebrew scholars say the correct translation is "*the Angel that is the Lord*." And of course the New Testament testifies that God appeared veiled in the flesh as Jesus the Son of God.

The reason God must be veiled in our presence we find back in Exodus where the Lord told Moses, "no man can see my face and live" (Exodus 33:20). The expression "see my face" does not mean to simply look at God, but to actually stand face to face in His presence. Note how that presence is described in the Bible:

Exodus 3:2 - 4 *"And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."*

Exodus 24:16,17 *"Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel."*

Hebrews 12:29 *"For our God is a consuming fire."*

The "fire" that is pictured here as accompanying or representing God's presence is not fire as we know it which burns fuel as wood and gasoline (remember the bush Moses saw burning was not consumed). The "fire" that surrounds the presence of God is something we have never seen nor can we explain exactly what it is. But the Prophet Isaiah did ask who can live in it:

Isaiah 33:14 *"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath seized the hypocrites: Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"*

Isaiah then answers the question in the next verse –

Verse 15 *"He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, He who despises the gain of oppressions, Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, And shuts his eyes from seeing evil:"*

According to this, only the righteous person can live in the presence of the "consuming fire," that is, in the actual presence of God. And though the spiritual person may have a righteous nature, the flesh is still corrupt, so when Jesus comes, the Bible tells us that the believers body will be physically changed:

Philippians 3:21 *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body,"*

I Corinthians 15:52,53 *"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."*

The righteous are given new bodies at Christ's coming and are thus enabled to live in the actual presence of God and then they are taken to heaven.

But what will happen to those "left behind" who are not changed? Since *"no man (in his corrupt flesh) can see God and live,"* those left behind unchanged will perish in the presence of the *"consuming fire."*

II Thessalonians 2:8 *"And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming."*

Jesus will not come veiled in the flesh when He comes again, but in *"power and great glory"* (Luke 21:27). He will come as the Almighty God, giving immortality, eternal life to the righteous, but will be a consuming fire to the wicked! But keep in mind that the death and devastation that accompanies Christ's coming is not the willful act of vengeful retaliation, but simply the consequence of His coming in unveiled power and glory to rescue His people from the anti-Christ!

The Second Coming as described in the book of Revelation agrees with this conclusion.

Revelation 19:11 - 15 *"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."*

The *"armies in heaven"* and the *"clouds"* both refer to holy angels who accompany the Lord at His return as we discussed earlier (Matthew 25:31). But notice the wording, *"He treads the winepress," "He strikes the nations",* and He will *"rule with a rod of iron."* These terms are taken from the Old Testament, with each one denoting destruction. The following are examples:

Psalms 2:7 - 9 *"I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "*

Isaiah 11:4 *"But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked."*

These texts imply Christ is ruling over this act of destruction, not ruling over people as a king over a nation. And as seen in the following verse, treading the winepress and crushing the grapes are a metaphor for destruction.

Lamentations 1:15 *"The Lord has trampled underfoot all my mighty men in my midst; He has called an assembly against me To crush my young men; The Lord trampled as in a winepress the virgin daughter of Judah."*

Revelation confirms that those "left behind" will perish in the presence of the Lord.

Revelation 19:16 - 21 *"And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh."*

In this passage the "rest" are those who are "left behind" at the Second Coming. Clearly they perish and become food for the vultures. Jesus also spoke of this -

Luke 17:26 - 37 *"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left." And they answered and said to Him, "where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."*

The "eagles" here are likely vultures, note how they are described in the book of Job.

Job 39:27-30 *"Does the eagle mount up at your command, And make its nest on high? On the rocks it dwells and resides, On the crag of the rock and the stronghold. From there it spies out the prey; Its eyes observe from afar. Its young ones suck up blood; And where the slain are, there it is."*

In Old Testament times God gave Jeremiah visions of the devastation that will take place at the coming of the Lord -

Jeremiah 4:23 - 28 *"I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; And the heavens, they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and forth. I beheld, and indeed there was no man, And all the birds of the heavens had fled. I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, And all its cities were broken down At the presence of the LORD, By His fierce anger. For thus says the LORD: "The whole land shall be desolate; Yet I will not make a full end. For this shall the earth mourn, And the heavens above be black, Because I have spoken. I have purposed and will not relent, Nor will I turn back from it."*

Jeremiah 25:30 - 33 *"Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them: 'The LORD will roar from on high, And utter His voice from His holy habitation; He will roar mightily against His fold. He will give a shout, as those who tread the grapes, Against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise will come to the ends of the earth-- For the LORD has a controversy with the nations; He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword,' says the LORD." Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Behold, disaster shall go forth From nation to nation, And a great whirlwind shall be raised up From the farthest parts of the earth. And at that day the slain of the LORD shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground."*

Clearly this is a picture of total devastation upon the earth as result of the coming of the Lord in power and glory. The earth will be "broken down," the wicked all will be "slain by the brightness of His coming," and the "elect will be gathered by the angels" and taken to heaven as Christ promised.

There are few today who realize how critical it is for those living in the end times to know Jesus and the manner of His return, the reason being that before the actual coming of Christ we can expect there to be a great counterfeit. Remember Jesus' warning:

Matthew 24:24 *"For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."*

And the Bible tells us Satan will be transformed into an angel of light -

II Corinthians 11:14 *"And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light."*

And the Bible also tells us there will be two "comings" -

II Thessalonians 2:8 *"And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His (Christ) coming."*

Verse 9 *"The coming of the lawless one (anti-Christ) is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,"*

Verse 8 is referring to the coming of Christ but verse 9 is referring to the coming of Satan who will physically appear on earth claiming to be Christ. The word "anti-Christ" is the Greek word "antee-Christos." The word "antee" means "in place of." So the anti-Christ is one who comes in place of Christ intending to take His place. Satan is the genuine "anti-Christ," the evil one who wants to be worshipped as God.

II Thessalonians 2:3,4 *"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."*

According to this text we can one day expect "the man of sin," the anti-Christ Satan, to "reveal himself," to physically appear, and claim to be Christ himself. He will probably be quoting scripture, blessing the people, performing great miracles and exhibiting such great demonstrations of power that the world will be convinced that he is the Christ and many will be proclaiming "Christ is come! Christ is come!"

Remember what we read in I Thessalonians 5:3

"For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape."

Those who are deceived by the false Christ will be crying "peace and safety" because the anti-Christ will be able to bring peace as never before to this troubled world. He will be able to bring peace between all the warring nations of the world, he will unite Jews and Muslims, Protestants and Catholics. All the religions of the world will come together and honor him as God. There will at last appear to be complete peace the world over as never before.

However, there will be one group who will not acknowledge the anti-Christ as Christ, they will be proclaiming that he is an imposter! This group will be seen as

blasphemers and demonic and will be condemned to death! (see Rev. 13:15) These are the true followers of Christ who know the truth and whom, now being condemned by the world, Jesus must come and rescue from certain annihilation!

Remember Jesus said *"the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect."* (Matthew 24:44)

With all the world believing the coming of Christ has already occurred, no one is looking for Him, but that is when the true Christ will come and then *"sudden destruction!"*

Those who have been deceived by the fables and false teachings so popular in many churches today, the secret rapture, the seven year tribulation and Christ's thousand year reign over the world, are in danger of being caught up in this great end-time deception. But there is only one way can we be safe from the greatest of all deceptions. Note the words of Jesus in the book of John -

John 17:3 *"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."*

The only way we will be safe from the overwhelming deception of Satan will be knowing the truth about God both from personal experience and from study. The key will be understanding God's great character of love. With all Satan's supernatural power and cunning that is the one thing he cannot counterfeit! And that is what will give him away to those who really know and love God. Only when we know the original, will we be able to spot the counterfeit!

There will be signs of Christ's coming that indicate it is near, *"even at the doors."* Since most of those signs have already occurred we will not look at them, except the main one Jesus mentions in Matthew 24:

Matthew 24:12 - 14 *"And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."*

Gospel means "good news" and the gospel that must go into all the world before the end comes is the good news about God! God is not what his enemies have made him out to be! God is just like Jesus! The world needs to know that, and that is to be the work of the church, but unfortunately it has not done a very good job thus far.

Jesus told His followers, *"Watch therefore: for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming."* (Matthew 24:42)

The key word for us is *"watch."* In the original Greek it means to be in a "state of readiness." That means that we should be doing those things that get us ready and

keep us ready. Those things are Bible study, prayer, opening our hearts to the Holy Spirit that He may help us know the true God and become followers of Jesus Christ. This leads to being involved in Christian witness and service, being actively involved in the body of Christ, the Church. However, because of all the false teaching today, the church we attend and serve should be selected with great care.

The Bible says that God's true church will be "*The pillar and foundation of truth*" (I Timothy 3:15). Therefore we should be careful that the church we attend and support is teaching and proclaiming truth and not distorted doctrine and fables.

In this lesson we have learned that when Jesus comes there will be a resurrection of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked. But this is not the end, in the next lesson we will study what is known as the one thousand year millennium. The book of Revelation talks about this time period in which Satan will be bound, the wicked will be resurrected and judgment. This is another topic that has also been subjected to much deception, but we will find the truth in the Bible.

Response questions:

1. It is clear to me that the Second Coming of Jesus will be –
 - a. literal
 - b. audible
 - c. visibleYes___ No___

2. It is clear that at the Second Coming of Jesus the righteous will be "changed" and taken to heaven. Yes___ No ___

3. I understand that at the Second Coming of Jesus those left behind will be destroyed by the "*brightness of His coming.*" Yes___ No___

4. I want to be ready for the coming of Christ that I may go home with Him. Yes ___ No ___

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