

542 Will Jesus Come a Second Time?

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God's Answers to Life's Questions

Jesus promised in John 14:1-3, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also." What is going to happen when Jesus comes again? Will He come soon? What will He do with us? Is there a judgment? Won't most people be saved? Jesus has promised to come again. What will that mean for you?

Peter said in his second letter, chapter 3, verses 3-10, "Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." We can surely believe that one day Jesus Christ will return to this earth and will judge us all.

Some people doubt that Jesus will come again. They live their lives as secular people never thinking about their souls and the account that they must one day give to God. We are living in such a secular world that even the courts wish to take out the phrase "under God" from our pledge of allegiance. Some, no doubt, are mocking even today, questioning whether Jesus will ever come again. But when He arrives, no one will be scoffing. People scoffed at Jesus when He was on the cross, and people scoffed that Jesus would rise from the dead. But when the stone was rolled back and the grave clothes were lying by themselves, no one was mocking!

Whatever Jesus has predicted has always proved true. He predicted the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24; and in 70 AD Titus and the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem, fulfilling every prophecy to the last detail. Jesus also predicted the end time in Matthew 24:35-36, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone." Jesus said He did not know when He would return—in fact, no one knows but the Father. Some people think they know, but Jesus said no one knows!

That's what Peter and Paul mean when they say that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night (2 Pet. 3:10 and 1 Thessalonians 5:2). Now, if Jesus, Peter and Paul said no one knows when it will happen, we think it strange when so many people are sure they do know. In every generation since the first century, there has always been someone who had figured out some scheme whereby they knew the day and the hour when Jesus would return. I remember years ago getting a book through the mail, "88 Reasons why Jesus Is Coming in 1988." Well those 88 reasons proved to be speculation!

I have another book in my library by a self-proclaimed prophet who predicted the end of all the kingdoms of the world in 1914. He had an elaborate scheme, but his prediction proved to be false. Jesus did not return in 1914. You see, no one knows when Jesus will come

again. But we do know that when he comes, everyone will know about it. The apostle John said in 96 AD in Revelation 1:7, "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen." When Jesus comes again, you'll know it!

This passage was written more than 60 years after the crucifixion of Jesus, but the soldiers who pierced him would see Him coming in the clouds. Likely those soldiers were dead. What John is saying is that even those who are in the tomb will rise from the dead to see Jesus at His return! Not only will people see Jesus when He comes again, they will hear about it. Paul told the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, "the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord." Jesus will come with the shout of the archangel and the trumpet of God. When he comes, the dead in Christ will rise first; but they will not be the only ones to rise on that day. Jesus said in John 5:28-29 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment." When Jesus comes again, everyone will rise!

Jesus said this resurrection of both the good and bad will happen in the same hour, when all will hear His voice. Now once the resurrection takes place, then we will all rise to meet the Lord in the air (as Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 4:17), and that's where we will be with Him always. Once men leave this earth, this earth and its works will be burned up with intense heat (2 Peter 3:10). Those who set their hopes on this life and this world need to know that this is not where they will spend eternity. We will all one day be taken from this earth to stand before the throne of Christ. We will be judged in that day.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." The Lord Jesus will judge each of us according to our deeds, how we lived, how we talked, how we treated people, how we thought. The Lord will reward His servants but will condemn those who did not live according to His will. The Bible teaches clearly that each one of us will stand on his own before the Lord. No one will escape judgment. This is why it is so important for each one to consider how he/she is living before the Lord.

John in Revelation 20:11-12 describes the scene before the throne of God, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds." The throne is white, because Jesus is righteous and will judge us righteously and fairly. He knows our hearts and our lives.

He will judge us from the things written in the books. Of course, those books refer to the things written in the Bible itself. Even though the courts of our nation would not let the Bible be read in our schools, there is a higher court, an eternal court, which at the end of time will be in session to judge all people of all places of all time. That court of Jesus is the final court, which will settle your eternity. There is no appeal. If you are found guilty, there is only one sentence. That sentence leads to a lake of fire. Those who enter that place will

never leave. That is the worst thing that can ever happen to anyone.

Your eternal destiny and my eternal destiny will be determined by whether we have obeyed the Lord and have rejected Him. Jesus said in John 12:48, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." Many people treat the Lord as if the only thing He ever did was make suggestions that we could take or leave. But when Jesus comes again, He will come as a judge. My friend, we need His grace; otherwise we shall learn for real that the wages of sin is truly death (Rom. 6:23)

Jesus Christ Himself said in Matthew 25:31-33, "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left." Not everyone will be saved; many will be lost. Many people think surely the Lord is too good to condemn anyone, but the truth is that the Lord is too good not to condemn those who live evil lives and will not repent of their sins.

Jesus said in Matthew 25:46 about those who would not help others in need, "These [the goats on his left] will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." When people lead selfish, immoral lifestyles and are not willing to change their ways, God with great sadness, leaves them to the way have chosen. God doesn't want to condemn anybody. Peter said in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." God wants you to be saved, but you have to repent for yourself.

God has done everything He could all through the years to encourage all of us to do what is right. He sent Jesus to show us what godly living is all about. Jesus died for our sins on the cross to demonstrate God's love for us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The Holy Spirit inspired the apostles and prophets to give us the Bible to teach us the truth about how to live and how to please God. Jesus purchased the church with His own blood so that we might have the strength of brothers and sisters in Christ. God can do all these things, but He won't twist your arm to make you repent. You have to do that.

You have to decide whether or not you want to be among the sheep or the goats. You have to decide whether you will obey the gospel or reject the words of Jesus. You have to decide whether you love God or love the flesh. You have to decide whether you will be part of His family, the church, or you will run with the world. There is no neutral ground, no third group. You cannot serve two masters; friendship with the world is hostility with God (James 4:4). The grace of God is a marvelous thing, but I don't know of any Biblical promise of salvation to those who will not repent of sin or obey the gospel.

Don't face God unprepared. Obey the gospel by believing with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, repent of every sin and decide to do God's will in everything, confess the name of Jesus before others, and be baptized (immersed) in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you are baptized, the Lord will add you to His family the church; and you will become an heir of heaven if you remain faithful to the Lord. I hope you will not wait another day but obey the Lord today.

Peter said in 2 Peter 3:10-11, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?" Indeed, if we are to be judged by the word of God, doesn't it make sense for us to live a life that conforms to His will? My friend, are you close to God? Are you reading your Bible? Are you going to church regularly?

Are you willing to confess your sins to God? Have you given up those secret sins? Are you kind to others? Do you watch your tongue? Can you forgive others when they offend you? When a person lives in sin, the second coming of Jesus is not something he wants to think about; but when a person is right with the Lord, the second coming is wonderful appearing of someone we love and serve. Do you look forward to seeing Jesus come in the clouds? Peter said, "beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless" (2 Pet. 3:14). _

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