

The Second Coming of Christ

SEEING THE GLORIOUS HOPE OF THE GOSPEL IN A STUDY OF LAST THINGS

Jesus will one day return personally, bodily, and with great glory and power to consummate his kingdom.

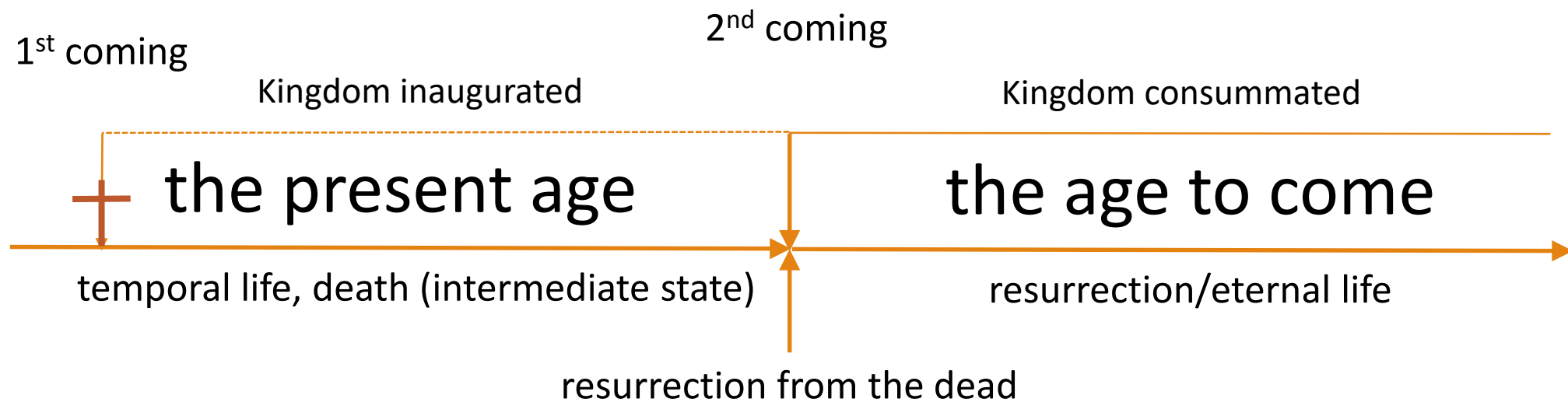
Christians are to look forward to Jesus' return

Tit 2:13 ...waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Revelation 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Why?

Jesus' return is the dividing point of the ages



Jesus will literally return

The Bible teaches that Jesus will return personally and bodily.

1 Thes. 4:16-17 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

Acts 1:11 and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Jesus will come with power and glory

Could Jesus be on earth now, doing ministry and gradually expanding his reach and recognition and finally declaring himself to be the Messiah?

Matt 25:31 ¶ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

Jesus' return will be instantaneous and universal

Matt 24:23-27 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Rev 1:7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

When will Jesus return?

1 Thes 5:1-4 1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

Luke 17:28-30 28 Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, 29 but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— 30 so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

Luke 12:39-40 39 But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. 40 You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

When will Jesus return?

Matthew 24

3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things [the destruction of the temple] be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?”

36 “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

The timing of Jesus' coming is unknown to all but God. People will be caught off guard, but believers will be prepared.

Is Jesus' return imminent?

James 5:8-9 8 You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.
9 Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.

Hebrews 10:37 For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay."

Phil 4:5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.

Rev 1:3 ¶ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Rev 3:11 I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

These passages cannot teach that Jesus was about to come in the day in which they were written because he hasn't come!

Rather, they teach us a sense of expectation and preparation, recognizing that the day could be tomorrow.

Jesus may not return immediately

Luke 19:11 As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. [Jesus tells the parable of the ten servants each entrusted with a mina (an amount money).]

2 Pet 3:4-10 [Scoffers] will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” ...8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief...

Jesus' return will proceed without delay on his timetable, which is not one we have access to.

Signs will precede the Second Coming

Matt 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Matt 24:29-30 29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, 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.”

How can we always be looking for Christ's return if certain signs must precede it?

- We won't be able to tell exactly when they've been fulfilled (Col. 1:6,23, cmp. Matt. 24:29, for example).
- The signs do not exclusively refer to the end-time.
- They are not intended to help us set a date or construct a timetable. (Should we seek to know more than Jesus did?)
- They are "birth pangs" that point to the revealing of the sons of God.

What about the rapture?

Popular view:

1. Christ will return and will catch up his people to meet him in the air.
2. Then they will return with him to heaven while God's wrath is poured out on the earth during the seven-year Great Tribulation.
3. After seven years, Christ will return again in glory, accompanied by the church, to destroy his enemies and to set up his millennial kingdom.

Proof texts:

1 Thes 4:16-17 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

1 Cor 15:51-52 51 ¶ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.



Is the rapture biblical?

Matthew 13:

- The righteous and the wicked are to grow together until the final harvest (Matt. 13:30).
- Then the wicked (the tares) will be taken out first.
- The righteous will remain and will shine in the kingdom established by Christ (vv. 41-43).

Christ is to remain in heaven until the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21).

Second Coming vs. Rapture

Matt 24:30-31 about the second coming seven years after the rapture?

30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, 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. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Similarities:

- clouds
- angels
- trumpets
- gathering of the elect

How can the *last trumpet* sound at the rapture and then another trumpet call seven years later?

Is the rapture biblical?

The rapture is said to be “secret” (in contrast to the Second Coming), but 1 Thes 4:16-17 is one of the loudest passages in the Bible:

16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

How can this be so if the rapture is known to occur seven years before the second coming?

There is nothing unbiblical about the notion that believers will go through great tribulation before Christ returns (John 16:33, Rom. 8:35-37).

Biblical View of the Rapture

The biblical view is that we will be caught up to meet Christ in the air, and then we will accompany him as he descends to the earth at his coming.

It will be a throng of admiring subjects welcoming the king as he returns to his realm.

Christ's return should be our focus

Christ will bring great blessings to those who are his.

- Christ's glory -- Titus 2:13
- Deliverance from affliction and vengeance on enemies -- II Thes. 1:6-8
- Redemption of our bodies -- I Cor. 15:51-52
- Deliverance from sin and death -- Heb. 9:26-28, I Cor. 15:51-55

Christ is only returning for those who love his appearing:

1 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Heb 9:28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Conclusion and Preview

- We look forward to Christ's glorious return where he will conquer his enemies and comfort and rule his people in perfect wisdom and power forever.
- Preview: Revelation speaks of a period in which Christ reigns for 1000 years. What does this mean? How does this fit into the two-age structure? What should we think of different millennial views?