

Study Guide #25: The Second Coming of Jesus

Introduction

Until the 19th century, there was relatively little controversy concerning the subject of the Second Coming of Jesus. Since then, new liberal and conservative ideas have distorted the traditional understanding of this doctrine. This Study Guide concerns the overview of the Second Coming of Jesus. For how the Christian understanding of this doctrine has changed, and the Biblical evidence regarding that change, see Explorer III, Study Guide #2.

Question #1: What do Christians mean when they talk about the Second Coming of Jesus?

Answer: In John 14:3, Jesus promised His followers that **“I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, you may be also”** (NKJV). His 1st mission to earth was to guarantee the reality of the plan of salvation. His 2nd mission will be to implement the literal and physical salvation of His followers. This relationship between the 1st and 2nd comings of Jesus is noted in Hebrews 9:26, 28: **“He [Christ] has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself...To those who eagerly wait for Him he will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation”** (NKJV). No wonder the New Testament proclaims the Second Coming of Jesus as **“the blessed hope”** (Titus 2:13, NKJV).

Question #2: Is Jesus’ Second Coming a *spiritual* coming in which His followers change the world?

Answer: No. Jesus returned to heaven in the presence of His apostles by simply rising physically into the sky. As He was doing this, 2 angels told the apostles that **“This same Jesus...will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven”** (Acts 1:11, NKJV). That means that the 2nd Coming of Jesus will be personal—**“this same Jesus”**—and literal.

Question #3: How else will Jesus come?



Answer: Not only will the 2nd Coming of Jesus be personal and literal, but it will also be visible. Revelation 1:7 declares that **“He [Jesus] is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him”** (NKJV). Jesus said that **“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”** (Matthew 24:30, NKJV). It will be a brilliant event because Jesus compared it **“as lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west”**

(Matthew 24:27, NKJV). This latter statement especially rules out seeing Him only on television; everyone will thus see Him return with the naked eye. This could be done on a spherical planet simply by Jesus and His angelic hosts remaining in the sky long enough for the earth to make at least 1 rotation. Or perhaps His coming will be so glorious that it will curve or stretch light all around the globe simultaneously.

Question #4: Will Jesus' return the second time also be audible?

Answer: Yes. When He appears, He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet (Matthew 24:31). I Thessalonians 4:16 mentions 3 different sounds associated with the 2nd Coming of Jesus: (1) **“a shout;”** (2) **“the voice of an archangel;”** and (3) **“the trumpet of God”** (all NKJV). His coming will also be glorious, according to Matthew 16:27 and Titus 2:13, indicating brilliant light.

Question #5: Why is it so important to know *how* Jesus will return?

Answer: Jesus warned us there would be false Christs who will even work miracles in an attempt to deceive people (Matthew 24:24). Apparently, many of them will appear in different places on earth. II Thessalonians 2, when seen in its context, teaches that Satan himself will cap off those false Christs by making his grand counterfeit of the 2nd Coming of Jesus. In describing the return of Jesus, verses 1 and 8 use the Greek word “Parousia,” translated as **“coming”** (NKJV). “Parousia” means “an arrival and consequential presence” and is often used in the New Testament in connection with the 2nd Coming of Jesus. This particular passage speaks of the coming of **“the man of sin [lawlessness]”** (v. 3, NKJV), which all scholars agree is the end-time Antichrist. Then in verse 9, it’s predicted that the **“coming [Parousia] of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders”** (NKJV). Just as Jesus has His “Parousia,” so will the ultimate Antichrist, Satan himself. [NOTE: Some have objected to this being Satan because the text says his coming is **“according to the working of Satan”** (v. 9, NKJV), but not Satan himself. But who else would Satan permit to do this other than himself? Moreover, when law enforcement officials identify a criminal as having an M. O. (Method of Operation), it doesn’t necessarily mean that he’s copying someone else’s M. O.]



Question #6: What will happen at the Second Coming of Jesus?

Answer: Five important events will occur when Jesus returns in glory. Here we list 3 of them; under Question #7 we list the other 2 events. *One* is that all of the saved who had died before the 2nd Coming of Jesus will be resurrected (I Corinthians 15:20-23; I Thessalonians 4:16). A *second* thing that will happen is that both the living and the newly resurrected saved will instantly receive glorified bodies, which means that any deformities or illnesses will be completely gone, and they will have immortal bodies (I Corinthians 15:42-53; Philippians 3:20-21). *Finally*, all of the saved will then be raptured to heaven to be with Jesus (I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Matthew 24:30-31 and John 14:1-3). [NOTE: This latter event proves that Jesus won’t touch the surface of the earth when He returns. Therefore, when Satan attempts to impersonate Jesus’

2nd Coming, and walks on the earth to rally the world against God and His loyal people, you can know that it's not Jesus.]

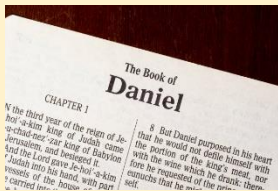
Question #7: What are the two negative events that occur at Jesus' return?

Answer: The living wicked will be destroyed just as the wicked were destroyed in the global Flood in Noah's day (Luke 17:26-30; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 14:14-20; 19:15). The wicked who had died before the return of Jesus will remain dead until after the millennium (Revelation 20:4-5). At the same time, the earth's surface will also be destroyed, for **"every mountain and island"** will be **"moved out of its place"** (Revelation 6:14, NKJV).

Question #8: Can we know *when* Jesus will return?

Answer: Jesus said that **"of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven"** (Matthew 24:36, NKJV). This is why Christians should *not* engage in time-setting for the 2nd Coming of Jesus. At the same time, the Bible *does* give us at least 7 general indications when the time is nearing:

- *First*, Daniel 12:4 says that the book of Daniel will be unsealed and more fully understood in **"the time of the end"** (NKJV), a period of time that culminates in a resurrection (Daniel 11:40-12:3, NKJV). Historically speaking, the early 19th century was a time of unprecedented flurry of activity in studying and understanding that prophetic book. An American Protestant Christian revival movement called the Second Great Awakening led into the Second Advent movement, which specialized in Daniel's prophecies. This history suggests that we have been living in **"the time of the end"** at least since the early 19th century.



- *Second*, the Scriptures tell us that before Jesus returns, **"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"** (Matthew 24:14, NKJV). Although there are still people groups in remote areas who have not yet heard the name of Jesus, the modern communications revolution involving radio, television, satellites, smartphones, tablets, and the Internet have carried the gospel to more parts of the world than ever possible before. In many under-developed countries, even in the more remote jungle villages, people have smartphones that give them access to news and to the gospel. These communication devices also make it possible for some crisis or series of crises to galvanize the world's attention like never before. Perhaps an international crisis, manmade or natural, will be used to focus the entire world's attention on the final spiritual crisis so that Jesus will then come to rescue His people.
- *Third*, a great wave of spiritual sensationalism is another sign of the nearness of Christ's coming, with miracles and other supernatural signs used by Satan to deceive the whole world (Matthew 24:11-12; Revelation 13:11-18; 16:13; 19:20). The charismatic movement is fulfilling this today.
- *Fourth*, a significant spiritual decline among professed Christians themselves is expected just before the return of Jesus (II Timothy 3:1-5). While that was in progress even in the 1st century, it

has certainly intensified in our day. Since at least the 19th century, Higher Criticism, based on the naturalism (natural explanations for everything, *excluding* supernatural explanations) of the Enlightenment movement, has increasingly criticized the Bible and attempted to undermine its accuracy and authority. And that's a movement with Christianity! The Bible has always had its critics, but these have been increasingly within Christianity itself.

- *Fifth*, rapidly increasing wickedness is a sign of the soon return of Jesus, for Jesus Himself spoke of the love of many waxing cold (Matthew 24:12). Since the 20th century, Western civilization and its global copycats reveals that the entertainment world, from music to novels, magazines, Hollywood, and parts of the Internet, glorifies sexual expression of all kinds, to say nothing of its glorification of violence and vulgar and profane language. To those who say the world isn't getting worse, but we only know more about it because of the communications revolution, just consider that only a generation or two ago, parents could allow their children to play and wander the streets in *most* areas of the United States in relative safety. But today, parents who do that can be sued for parental malpractice.
- *Sixth*, increasingly destructive wars are expected the closer we get to the return of Jesus. See Matthew 24:7; Mark 13:8; and Luke 21:10. Although wars have existed throughout history, Jesus warned that their existence was only **“the beginning of sorrows”** (Matthew 24:6-8, NKJV). The Greek word for **“sorrows”** means “birth pangs.” His point was that just as birth pangs increase in frequency and intensity the closer a woman comes to actual childbirth, so these wars will increase in frequency and intensity the closer we come to the 2nd Coming of Jesus. Since the dawn of the 20th century, the world has seen 2 devastating world wars and the ability of the world to annihilate itself in a nuclear holocaust.
- *Seventh*, increasingly destructive natural disasters are also expected the closer we get to the return of Jesus. See Matthew 24:7; Mark 13:8; and Luke 21:11. Jesus gave this prediction in the same context He did of wars in terms of “birth pangs” increasing in frequency and intensity. Since official records have been kept (beginning in the 19th century), there's empirical evidence that natural disasters have gradually and consistently been increasing in frequency and intensity. Even secular people are beginning in growing numbers to sense that something is qualitatively different and more dangerous in the world today.

