

Basic Christianity

Part 11 – Christ’s Second Coming

I recall a story. A couple’s car was stolen. A couple of days later, the car was returned with a bottle of wine and a note in the front seat: “Sorry we had to steal your car. It was a family emergency. Please accept our apologies. Here are two tickets to the theatre production on Friday night and a bottle of wine. Have a great time.” The couple were thrilled. And they did have a great time – till they got home. They’d been robbed. The whole thing had been planned by the thieves to make sure the owners wouldn’t be home when they struck.

Wouldn’t it be nice if the thieves telephoned you first? “Hullo, this is John from around the corner. Are you going to be home tonight?” “No, I don’t think so.” “Really? Well that suits me fine. I thought I’d pop around about town and help myself to some of your jewellery.”

If you knew when the thief was coming, you’d be waiting.

You wouldn’t be taken by surprise.

Today we’re talking about Jesus’ Second Coming.

1. Jesus will return when we least expect Him.

Mat 24:42-44 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. (43) 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. (44) Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Mat 25:13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

What does that mean?

Lots of people are saying, “Jesus can’t come back yet. The Gospel first has to be preached to every creature, there’s got to be the rise of the Antichrist, there’s got to be this and that ...”

And because we’ve all got our little theories, we don’t live in expectation of the imminent return of Christ.

Jesus said, (Luke 12:40) “Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Who was He talking to?

Verse 22: Then He said to His disciples ...

It’s the church that won’t be expecting Him.

If you think He can’t return tonight, that’s a good reason why He could.

Even people who study end times often get side-tracked with theories.

Who is the Antichrist? What is the mark of the beast?

One guy spent years researching a book called *88 Reasons Why Jesus Will Return September 1988*.

I don’t want to give you the wrong idea, but in one sense who cares?

The main point of what Jesus said wasn’t to work out when, but to be ready at all times – and just because you have a theory about what 666 means, that doesn’t make you ready.

1 Thess 5:2-6 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. (3) For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labour pains upon a

pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. (4) But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. (5) You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. (6) Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

So if we don't know when He's coming back, how can we be ready?

Jesus is saying: Always be prepared.

How can we be ready when He returns? By **always** being ready!

This comes down to a heart attitude – keeping our hearts right before Him.

Prov 4:23 Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.

If your heart is right, you'll automatically be doing what He wants when He returns.

2. Jesus is returning to establishing His rulership.

Jesus taught us that Satan is the ruler of this world. (John 14:30)

That doesn't mean he is the ruler of earth, but the world system – the me-first way of doing things that pervades everything on this planet.

We should not be surprised that in this world there is sickness, wars, lies, crime, fighting, hatred, corruption, injustice.

Because Satan reproduces his nature wherever he rules.

When Hitler ruled Germany, he reproduced the kind of person he was. So he produced leaders like Himmler, Göring and Hess. There were concentration camps, Nazism, the Gestapo and gas chambers. If you look at the kinds of countries that people like Saddam Hussein and Kim Jong Il rule over. The kind of people they are, dramatically affects their subjects.

Satan is the same – he produces a world system that has his stamp on it.

But when Jesus returns He will establish **His** rulership and **His** authority.

This is what it's going to be like.

Rev 21:3-4 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (4) And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Heaven is going to be such a wonderful place that Paul quotes Isaiah, (1 Cor 2:9) But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

One day everyone will recognise who Jesus really is – Almighty God.

Phil 2:9-11 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, (10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, (11) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

That will happen no matter what religion a person is on this planet.

So for many, bowing the knee before Jesus will be by compulsion.

Whereas for those who love Him in this life, it will be a delight.

God wants us to let Him have control now – let Him rule in our lives now – so that when He returns, we'll be ready.

3. Jesus is returning to give out just recompense.

That includes both reward and punishment.

Matt 25:31-46

One of the wonders of God's grace is that it has a system of rewards.

Even though we deserve nothing, we will be rewarded for doing what is our privilege to do.

Luke 17:10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, "We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do."

Anything we do is worthless compared to what Jesus has done for us.

But despite that, God promises to reward us.

So when the going gets tough, we need to remember that when Jesus returns, He's coming for those who love Him, and will reward them.

I've had some awful jobs over the years.

What kept me at it? Pay time!

We've got to keep our eyes on the reward.

4. Jesus is returning for a spotless church.

Eph 5:25-27

Imagine a bride turning up to her wedding in a beautiful white dress with stains all down the front. Shouldn't a bride be wearing something that's without spot or blemish?

Of course, because she wants to look good for her husband.

The church is the Bride of Christ, and you and I should want to look good for Him.

Is 64:6 But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Sin dresses us in filthy rags, but God's grace covers us in righteousness.

Is 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

What will you be wearing when He returns?

Filthy rags? Or the robe of righteousness?