



CHAPTER IV

Christ's Second Coming

1. When Christ went away, what assurance did he give his disciples?

"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 ye may be also." John 14: 2, 3.

2. How did he go away?

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." Acts 1: 9.

Manner of His Coming

3. What will be the manner of his coming?

"While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1: 10, 11.

4. How will we know him when he returns?

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Rev. 1: 7.

NOTE.—Christ is a literal, personal being; and his coming will be literal and personal. He went away in a cloud of glory; he will return in the same manner. When he comes, every eye shall see him. Some have been deceived into believing that his coming takes place at death; but such an idea is preposterous, and is nowhere hinted at in all the Bible.

A Day of Wrath and Destruction to the Wicked

5. Why will all kindreds of the earth wail when they see him coming?

"The heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face

of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 6: 14-17.

6. What happens to them at this time?

"Then sudden destruction cometh upon them, . . . and they shall not escape." 1 Thess. 5: 3.

7. How unexpected will this day of wrath be to the wicked?

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them." 1 Thess. 5: 1-3.

8. Does his coming overtake the righteous as a thief in the night?

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." Verse 4.

9. Why does it not overtake this class as a thief?

"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness." Verse 5.

NOTE.—There will be two classes living when Christ returns. One will be saying, Peace and safety. They are not expecting his coming, but are putting the evil day afar off. As a result, it will come to them like a thief in the night. They will be taken wholly by surprise. It will be to them as the flood was to the antediluvian world in the days of Noah. The result will be the same—sudden and unexpected destruction. See Luke 17: 26-30.

The other class Paul calls the "brethren." They are "the children of light." Christ's coming will not be to them as a thief in the night, for they will be expecting and looking for him.

A Day of Salvation and Joy to the Righteous

10. Will those who are looking for him be destroyed at his coming?

"Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9: 28.

11. How will this company greet him as they behold him returning in the clouds of glory?

"Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isa. 25: 9.

NOTE.—The wicked will cry out in despair when they see Christ coming. To them it is a day of wrath. But the righteous, who are looking for his coming, and have made preparation to meet him, will hail his coming with joy. To them it means salvation. To them it is the realization of that blessed hope.

Reader, which class do you desire to be among? Are you among the children of light to-day? If the cry should suddenly be raised, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him," would it cause your heart to leap for joy, or would it strike terror to your soul? These are questions of vital importance to every one in this day and age. This same Jesus who left the earth over eighteen hundred years ago, is soon to return to earth again; not now to endure the insults and abuse of wicked men, but to mete out justice to those

who have despised his mercy, and to reward those who love him and keep his commandments.

A Day of Reception

12. What is the purpose of Christ's return to this earth?

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3.

13. Will those who are living when Christ comes be taken to heaven before those who have died?

"This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede [R. V.] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:15-17.

NOTE.—These texts help to show the all-important place the second coming of Christ has in the plan of redemption. First, notice the purpose of his coming,—to receive them unto himself, that where he is there they may be also. So if Christ never comes, then his disciples, with the rest of the righteous, will never be with him. Second, if he never comes, the dead will never be raised; for they are raised at his coming. Third, notice that one does not precede another to meet him, but they are all caught up to meet him together when Christ descends from heaven with a shout. They do not go straggling along to heaven, one after another as they die. No, no!

Christ is now preparing mansions for them, and when all is made ready, he will return to the earth to receive his people; and all, in one grand, happy throng, will accompany Christ to the mansions in glory.

14. How does Paul characterize Christ's coming?

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13.

A Day of Reward

15. What did Paul expect to receive at that day?

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

16. At what time will the righteous receive their reward?

"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12. Again, "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Luke 14:13, 14.

NOTE.—Rewards will not be given to the righteous until the resurrection of the just, which takes place at the second coming of Christ. This is why Paul speaks of it as "that blessed hope," and simply serves to magnify the importance of that glorious event. The unscriptural doctrine of rewards and punishments at death has done much to blind the minds

of the people to the importance of this event; for if a man goes to heaven or hell when he dies, what is the use of Christ's coming back here to reward or punish him? This would not be consistent with reason. The facts are, dear reader, that this event is the realization of the Christian's hope; for Paul declares that if the dead are not raised, which occurs at his coming, and will not occur unless he does come, then our preaching is vain. We are yet in our sins, and those who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished. I Cor. 15: 13-18. This being so, we can easily see why it is that the coming of Christ was kept so prominently before the minds of the early Christian church by the apostles. And when the church to-day comes to realize its importance as did the early church, they will cry out, as did the beloved disciple, "Come, Lord Jesus."

The Splendor of the Event

17. In whose glory will Christ come?

"The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels." Matt. 16:27.

18. When Christ comes, how many of the angels will accompany him?

"The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him." Matt. 25:31.

19. What description does the prophet Daniel give of God as he sits upon the throne of judgment?

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him." Dan. 7:9, 10.

20. What description does John give of Christ's appearance?

"His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters." Rev. 1:14, 15. Daniel describes him as follows: "His body was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." Dan. 10:6.

21. What is the appearance of an angel?

"The angel of the Lord descended from heaven. . . His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." Matt. 28:2, 3.

22. When Christ comes in his Father's glory, and his own glory, and the glory of all the holy angels, what will it be like?

"To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire." 2 Thess. 1:7, 8.

NOTE.—Christ is represented as coming in the clouds; but these are not mere clouds of mist such as float in our sky, but clouds of glory, caused by the shining splendor of that glorious host which accompanies him. Its splendor will outshine the sun, and to the wicked it will be as a consuming fire. "Our God shall come," says the prophet, "and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people." Ps. 50:3, 4. Nothing can equal the splendor of

this glorious event. And as that cloud of shining beings nears the earth, then it is that the voice of Christ is heard calling forth the sleeping saints. At his bidding they come forth clad in immortality. The living righteous are changed from mortality to immortality in the twinkling of an eye; and together with the resurrected saints they are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Angels gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other; little children are borne by the angels to their mothers' arms; friends long separated by death are again united, nevermore to part; and all together, one glad, glorious, triumphant throng, they ascend to the city of God. For, says the prophet, "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. 35:10. Dear reader, do you not want to be among this company? The Saviour is soon coming. Get ready! get ready! get ready!



CHAPTER V

Signs of Christ's Coming

1. Can we know the day and hour of our Lord's coming?

"Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Matt. 24:36.

We are to Know When He is Near

2. While we cannot know the exact day and hour, yet what may we know when certain events occur?

"Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Matt. 24:32, 33.

3. When the things take place which are to constitute signs of his coming, how near may we know it to be?

"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Verse 34.