

2. Are there evidences that the influence of the papacy is increasing? Explain.

3. What dangers does spiritism present to those who believe the Bible teaching concerning the unconscious state of the dead?

4. Describe the preparation God's people should make for the persecution ahead.

5. Although the seven last plagues fall on those who have the mark of the beast, God's people will also pass through a time of trouble during the plagues. The following comment refers to that time. What tentative conclusions would you draw from it?

"If the blood of Christ's faithful witnesses were shed at this time, it would not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed sown to yield a harvest for God. Their fidelity would not be a testimony to convince others of the truth; for the obdurate heart has beaten back the waves of mercy until they return no more. If the righteous were now left to fall a prey to their enemies, it would be a triumph for the prince of darkness."—*The Great Controversy*, page 634:1.

Christ's Second Advent

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28. Only in this New Testament passage is the return of Christ qualified by the adjective "second." In John 14:3 Jesus promised that He would "come again," and in Acts 1:11 the angels said He would "so come" as the disciples had seen Him leave. Since the day Jesus ascended up from the Mount of Olives, Christians have believed in and watched for His return.¹

I. Christ's Return Predicted

Both the Old and New Testaments predict the second advent of Christ. In the Old Testament it is not spoken of as "second" or as a coming "again." However, in the light of New Testament descriptions of the second coming, it is usually possible to distinguish in Old Testament prophecy between what we today recognize as the first and second advents. In both Testaments Christ's coming at the beginning of the millennium and again at the end are often linked in a single description. At this point we will consider some New Testament predictions. At the close of the chapter will be mentioned Old Testament predictions that can be more clearly understood after the manner of the second advent has been described in New Testament terms.² °Summarize the testimony from each of the following:

¹ "Christ had ascended to heaven in the form of humanity. The disciples had beheld the cloud receive Him. The same Jesus who had walked and talked and prayed with them; who had broken bread with them; who had been with them in their boats on the lake; and who had that very day toiled with them up the ascent of Olivet,—the same Jesus had now gone to share His Father's throne. And the angels had assured them that the very One whom they had seen go up into heaven, would come again even as He had ascended."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 832:2.

² "Paul was a believer in the second coming of Christ; so clearly and forcibly did he present the truths concerning this event, that upon the minds of many who heard there was made an impression which never wore away."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 228:3.

Further testimony from Jesus

- *Matthew 16:27 Matthew 26:64
*Matthew 24:30, 36-39 *Revelation 22:7, 12, 20

Testimony from Paul

- *1 Thessalonians 4:16 *Hebrews 9:28
2 Timothy 4:8

Testimony from Peter

- *1 Peter 1:13 *2 Peter 1:16
1 Peter 5:4

Testimony from James

- *James 5:7, 8

Testimony from John

- *1 John 2:28 *Revelation 1:7
1 John 3:2

Note the various expressions used in the texts above indicating that Christ's return was anticipated.

II. The Manner of the Second Advent

In each section below are listed texts giving some statement regarding the phase of the subject mentioned in the heading. Some texts are used more than once because they contain statements on more than one phase.³

"Peter kept alive in his heart the hope of Christ's return, and he assured the church of the certain fulfillment of the Saviour's promise, . . . 'I will come again.'"—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 536:1.

³ 1. Visible. "This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known—witnessed by the whole world."—*The Great Controversy*, page 625:2.

2. Personal. "Not until the personal advent of Christ can His people receive the kingdom."—*The Great Controversy*, page 322:2.

3. Glorious. "No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor."—*The Great Controversy*, page 641:0.

4. Effect on righteous. "At His coming the righteous dead will be raised, and the righteous living will be changed."—*The Great Controversy*, page 322:1.

5. Effect on the wicked. "In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and by the awful outpouring of God's unmingled wrath, fall the wicked inhabitants of the earth—priests, rulers, and people, rich and poor, high and low."—*The Great Controversy*, page 657:0.

6. Effect on the earth. "The whole earth appears like a desolate wilderness."—*The Great Controversy*, page 657:2.

^oIn each case make a summary statement including the pertinent thoughts from the texts under the heading.

1. A visible coming
*Matthew 24:27, 30 *Revelation 1:7
Acts 1:9-11
2. A personal coming
*John 14:3 Acts 1:11
3. A glorious coming
Matthew 24:30 *Luke 9:26
4. Experience of the righteous
*1 Thessalonians 4: *1 Corinthians 15:22,
13-17 23, 51-57
5. Experience of the wicked
Matthew 25:31-46 *Revelation 6:14-17
*2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8
6. Effect on the earth
Revelation 6:14 *Revelation 16:17-20

III. Watching for the Second Advent

Reference to watching for Christ's return implies more than simply being awake to fulfilling signs and aware of the nearness of the end. We are told to watch because awareness of the coming event should lead us to prepare for it. Linked with the prophecies are invitations and admonitions. Unless we accept the invitations and heed the admonitions, the prophecies cannot serve their appointed purpose for us.⁴ ^oNote the invitations, the admonitions, and the assurances of the following:

- *Matthew 24:42-51 1 Corinthians 1:7, 8 *1 Thessalonians 5:23

IV. Old Testament Predictions

Notice the similarity of the Old Testament prophecies to those in the New Testament. A number of Old Testament prophecies that had an application in ancient times are cited or alluded to by New Testament writers as applying also to events related to the second advent. ^oFind a

⁴ See *Early Writings*, pages 111-114.

New Testament passage drawn from or similar to each of the following: Recall, for example, Isaiah 34:5, 9, 10, as presented in chapter 49.

*Psalm 50:3-5

*Isaiah 25:8-10

*Isaiah 66:15, 16

TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Some people believe that Christ has already come the second time. How would you show them the error of this belief?
2. What is the place of the second advent in the plan of salvation? Remember that there are other events to take place later involving both the saved and the lost.
3. Many who believe in the second advent say that the righteous will be taken away in a “secret rapture.” What do they mean by this? How would you answer their claims?
4. How are we to understand the words of Jesus, given more than 1850 years ago, “Surely I come quickly”? Revelation 22:20.
5. What are the implications of the phrase “love His appearing”? 2 Timothy 4:8.

The Millennium

Immediately following the portrayal of Christ’s second advent (Revelation 19:11-21) is the description of Satan’s confinement for a thousand years. The length of this time period is introduced only in Revelation 20, where in verses 1-7 it is mentioned six times. The term “millennium” is commonly used to refer to this period. It is not a Biblical term; it simply means “thousand years.” It can refer to any thousand-year period, but “*the millennium*” almost invariably refers to the time period mentioned in Revelation 20. We must understand the relation of the millennium to the second advent and to the final destruction of rebellious sinners if we are to have a clear picture of how God’s kingdom will be established.

I. The Second Advent and the Millennium

The second advent precedes the millennium. It is the event by which conditions are created that continue through the millennium.¹ Note the following points:

(1) The narrative of Revelation 19 and 20 is continuous. In Revelation 16:13 are mentioned three powers opposing Christ and gathering the kingdoms for a final struggle against Him. These are “the dragon,” “the beast,” and “the false prophet.” When the beast and the kings of earth are gathered to do battle with Christ (Revelation 19:19), the beast and the false prophet are taken and cast alive into a lake burning with fire and brimstone. Revelation 19:20, 21. Revelation 20 continues by telling what happens to the third member of the opposing trio—he is cast into the bottomless pit, where he is kept for a thousand years.

¹ “At the coming of Christ the wicked are blotted from the face of the whole earth—consumed with the spirit of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His glory. Christ takes His people to the City of God, and the earth is emptied of its inhabitants.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 657:1.

“The revelator foretells the banishment of Satan and the condition of chaos and desolation to which the earth is to be reduced, and he declares that this condition will exist for a thousand years.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 658:2.