

Christ's Second Coming

Ekkehardt Mueller

The idea of the end of the world or the invasion of planet earth by extraterrestrial beings has repeatedly been the topic of popular films. Already in 1974 a film about the second coming of Christ in the form of a documentary frightened hundreds of Canadians. Obviously many viewers regarded the broadcast as reality. In the film, which most of the time played in a TV station, reports about earthquakes, floods, and other disasters followed each other. The TV station received numerous calls from terrified viewers who in spite of the announcement that the film was pure fiction wanted to know whether or not the portrayed events were true.

Scripture tells us that indeed there will be an invasion, but it will be the second coming of Jesus Christ—John 14:1-3. It is important to know about it and to be prepared.

I. How Does Jesus Come Again?

Jesus pointed us to five characteristics of His second coming—Matt 24:30-31:

- (1) He will come personally and visibly for all those who live (Rev 1:7).
- (2) He will come on the clouds.
- (3) He will come with power and great glory.
- (4) He will come audibly.
- (5) He will come with his angels.

Furthermore, at Jesus' second coming the first resurrection will take place—1 Cor 15:22-23. These characteristics are given so that we may not be deceived by an imitation—Matt 24:23-26; 2 Thess 2:8-9.

II. Why Does Jesus Come Again?

Many people may not want Jesus to come back again. They are doing well, and they enjoy life. Others can hardly wait for Christ's return.

- (1) Jesus will come again because he has promised he would (John 14:1-3).
- (2) He will come again to complete the plan of salvation which includes our resurrection, our being with God, and eternal life on a new earth—John 5:25-29; Rev 21:1-5. This will bring earth's history to an end and will mark the transition to eternity.
- (3) He will come again to bring His reward—Rev 22:12 and to judge the nations—1 Tim 4:1, 8; Matt 25:31-46. The "reward" cannot be earned, but has two dimensions:
 - (a) Final salvation—1 Thess 4:15-17
 - (b) Destruction—1 Thess 5:1-3; Luke 17:26-30; Rev 6:15-17This will result in a separation between people, including the Christian community, families, and marriages—Matt 24:40-41; 25:31-33.

III. When Does Jesus Come Again?

- (1) Only God knows the time—Matt 24:36, 44.
- (2) Nevertheless people have set various dates:
 - (a) Among Catholic Christians were Apollinaris the Younger suggesting A.D. 490, Hippolyt A.D. 500, and others who suggested the years 1000, 1010, 1260, 1651 etc.
 - (b) Among Protestants were M. Luther (but for a short period only), A. Bengel, M. Stiefel. The latter suggested October 10, 1533, 8:00 am as the time of Christ's second coming..
 - (c) The Millerite Movement came up with October 22, 1844.
 - (d) Other denominations/Christians suggested various dates in the 20th century (e.g., 1914, 1975).
- (3) The other extreme is not to count on Jesus' second coming at all or to postpone it in one's mind indefinitely—Matt 24:48.

IV. Being Ready

- (1) It is important to be ready all the time—Matt 24:42-44. We are ready, when our life belongs to Jesus and we live with him constantly. Martin Luther talked about expecting the day of the Second Coming with joy. And he continued: Whoever is not ready and does not desire the day, does not understand the Lord's prayer nor can he wholeheartedly pray it.
- (2) God's children are looking forward to Jesus' return, because only then is salvation complete—Rev 22:20. Are you looking forward to it?

The teaching of Christ's second coming is one of the doctrines most frequently expressed in the New Testament. It wants to shape the way we are living our lives today.