



# A Traveler's Guide to the Afterlife

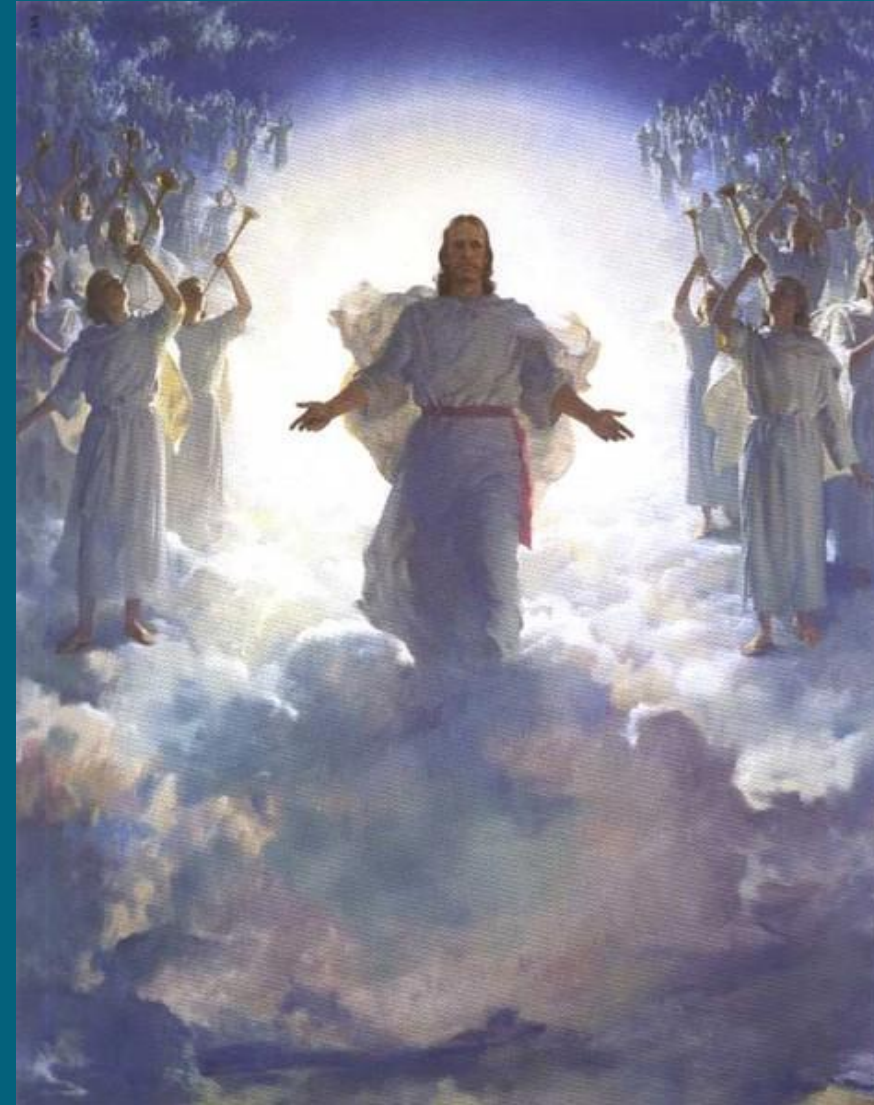
*A Bible Literacy Study Guide on the Eternal Destiny of the Individual*  
Dr. Timothy Gordon

## The Second Coming of Christ

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# The Afterlife

Hades (NT)

Paradise

New Heaven & New Earth  
(Rev. 21:27)



**Body Dies**  
(Eccl. 12:7)

**Spirit** →

← **Spirit**

Paradise

Lazarus, Jesus, thief on cross, OT righteous dead



Eph. 4:8-9

1 Thess. 4:13-18

2nd Coming & Resurrection

Mt. 25:46

**Great Gulf**  
(Luke 16:26)

Jn. 5:28-29

**Judgment**  
2 Cor. 5:10

2nd Coming & Resurrection

Mt. 25:41

Tartarus

rich man, angels who sinned, OT wicked dead



Sheol (OT)

Hell  
(Rev. 21:8)

# The Second Coming Defined



- Christ's future return to the earth at the end of the present age.
- Although the Bible explicitly speaks of Christ's appearance as a "second time," the phrase "second coming" occurs nowhere in the New Testament.
- In the New Testament alone it is referred to over 300 times.
- The night before His crucifixion, Jesus told His apostles that He would return (John 14:3).
- When Jesus ascended into heaven, two angels appeared to His followers, saying that He would return in the same manner as they had seen Him go (Acts 1:11).
- The New Testament is filled with expectancy of His coming, even as Christians should be today.

# The Second Coming Defined



- Various opinions exist about what is meant by the Second Coming.
  - Some regard it as the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.
  - Others regard it as the coming of Christ into the heart at conversion.
  - Christ's coming for the believer at the time of death is still another view.
- Careful examination of the New Testament, however, makes it clear that the Second Coming will be a climactic historical event.
- The Lord will return in the same manner in which He left.
- The time of the Second Coming is unknown. In fact, Jesus stated that only the Father knew the time. Therefore, the return of the Lord should be a matter of constant expectancy.
- As He came the first time, in the "fullness of time" (Gal 4:4), so will the Second Coming be.

# Significant Scriptures



- Matthew 24:36, 44—36 "But concerning *that day* and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the *Son of Man is coming* at an hour you do not expect.
- Mark 8:38—For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he *comes* in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."
- 1 Thessalonians 5:2—For you yourselves are fully aware that *the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night*.
- Hebrews 9:28—so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will *appear a second time*, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

# Significant Scriptures



- 2 Peter 3:10-12—10 But *the day of the Lord will come like a thief*, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the *coming of the day of God*, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!
- Revelation 1:7—Behold, he is *coming with the clouds*, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

# 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18



- 13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.
- 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.
- 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the *coming of the Lord*, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.
- 16 For the *Lord himself will descend from heaven* with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
- 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.
- 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.



# Terms for the Second Coming

## Parousia



- *Parousia*. The most frequently used term is *parousia*, literally, "being by."
- It means "presence, coming, or arrival."
- It is used in 1 Thess 4:15 to designate his coming to raise the righteous dead and catch believers up to be with him.
- It will not be a secret event; it will be a glorious outshining.
- Paul prays for God to strengthen the hearts of the believers, so that they may be "unblamable in holiness before God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints" (1 Thess 3:13).

# Terms for the Second Coming Apocalypse



- *Apocalypse*. This word means, literally, "*revelation*."
- Paul speaks of waiting for "the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:7).
- It appears from 2 Thess 1:6-7 and 1 Peter 4:13 that this will be a time of relief from great trial and will produce great rejoicing on the part of believers.

# Terms for the Second Coming Epiphany



- *Epiphany*. This word means "*manifestation*."
- This will be a coming of Christ at the end of the time.
- Believers place their hope in this and keep the commandments of Christ, waiting for the rewards to be received at that time (1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 4:8).
- It is the completion of their salvation (Titus 2:13-14).

# Certainty of the Second Coming



- **Proclaimed by angels at his ascension...**
  - Cf. **Acts 1:9-11**, the "two men . . . in white apparel"
  - Who said that "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, *will so come in like manner* as you saw Him go into heaven."
- **Proclaimed by the apostles...**
  - Peter, in his second recorded sermon - **Acts 3:19-21**
  - Paul, in writing to...
    - The Corinthians - **1 Cor 11:26; 15:22-23**
    - The Thessalonians - **1 Thess 1:9-10; 2:19; 3:13**
    - The young evangelist, Timothy - **2 Tim 4:1**
  - The writer to the Hebrews - **Heb 9:27-28**

# Manner of the Second Coming



- **Jesus will come in person...**
  - "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come..." - **Acts 1:11**
  - "the Lord himself will descend from heaven..." - **1 Thess 4:15-17**
- **Jesus will come "with the clouds"...**
  - "This same Jesus...will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" - **Acts 1:11** (referring to **verse 9**: "He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight")
  - "...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." - **1 Thess 4:17**
  - "Behold, He is coming with clouds..." - **Rev 1:7**
- **Jesus will come without warning...**
  - "...the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." - **1 Thess 5:2**
  - "For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes..." - **1 Thess 5:3**
  - "...the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" - **2 Pet 3:10**

# Purpose of the Second Coming To Raise the Dead



- "...for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth..." - **Jn 5:28-29**
  - o Note that there is but one resurrection, including both the good and evil, that will occur at one time ("the hour")
  - o As Paul said, "...there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." - **Acts 24:15**
- Those who are alive at the Lord's coming . . . .
  - o Will be "changed" in "the twinkling of an eye", being clothed with immortality and incorruption - **1 Cor 15:50-54**
  - o Then "caught up...to meet the Lord in the air." - **1 Thess 4:16-18**

# Purpose of the Second Coming

## To Deliver Up the Kingdom of God



- Contrary to the view that Jesus has yet to establish His kingdom on earth, He has been ruling over His kingdom since He first ascended to heaven!
  - In fulfillment of the prophecy that God would raise up the Christ to sit on the "throne of David", Jesus was raised from the dead and made "Lord" - **Acts 2:30-36**
  - All authority in heaven and earth has been given unto Him - **Matt 28:18**
    - He is far above all principality, power, might, and dominion, with all things placed under His feet - **Eph 1: 20-22**
    - At the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers are made subject to Him - **1 Pet 3:22**
  - Christians are said to be "in" His kingdom
    - Having been "delivered...from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love" - **Col 1:13**
    - They are "in the kingdom...of Jesus Christ" - **Rev 1:9**
  - Christ will continue to reign "till He has put all enemies under His feet" - **1 Cor 15:25**

# Purpose of the Second Coming To Deliver Up the Kingdom of God



- Note that His reign will be concurrent with the fact enemies are still present
- As prophesied by the Psalmist: "Rule in the midst of Your enemies!" - **Psa 110:1-2**
- o Thus Christ is NOW "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of Lords" - **1 Tim 6:15**; cf. **Rev 19:16** f. And He will reign "till He has put all enemies under His feet" - **1 Cor 15:25**
  - The last enemy that will be destroyed is death itself - cf. **1 Cor 15:26**
  - Which we have seen will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord when He will raise the dead - **1 Cor 15:51-54**
- So when Jesus comes, it will not be to "set up" His kingdom, but to "deliver up" His kingdom!
  - o As Paul clearly told the Corinthians - **1 Cor 15:23-26**
  - o As taught by Jesus in His Parable of the Tares, His kingdom will last until "the end of this age", after which "the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (i.e., the heavenly kingdom) - cf. **Matt 13:36-43**



# Purpose of the Second Coming To Judge the World and Punish Evil



- God has appointed "a day" in which He will judge the world - **2 Pet 3:7**
  - The one appointed to be the Judge is Jesus Christ - **Acts 17: 31; 2 Cor 5:10**
  - The standard by which He will judge will be the words He has spoken - **Jn 12:48**
- It will be a day of perdition (utter destruction) of ungodly men - **2 Pet 3:7**
  - Those who know not God and have not obeyed the gospel will be punished with "everlasting destruction" - **2 Thess 1:7-10**
  - Those whose names are not in the "Book of Life" will be cast into the "lake of fire" - **Rev 20:11-15**

# Purpose of the Second Coming

## To Usher in the New Heavens and New Earth



- As taught by Peter - **2 Pet 3:10-14**
  - This will follow the "passing away" of the present heavens and earth (**10-12**)
  - It is in fulfillment of God's promise (**13**; cf. **Isa 65: 17-19; 66:22-23**)
  - It is something we are to "look for" and "hasten" (**12-14**)
  - It will be a realm where righteousness dwells, therefore the need for us to be found "in peace, without spot and blameless" when Christ returns (**13-14**)
- As taught by John - **Rev 21:1-22:5**
  - It will follow after the first heaven and first earth have "passed away" (**1**; cf. **20:11**)
  - It will be the place where the "New Jerusalem" will abide when it "comes down out of heaven" (**2**; cf. **3:10c; 21:10**)
  - God will dwell with us in this "New Jerusalem" that has "come down out of heaven" (**3-27; 22:1-5**)

# Preparation for the Second Coming



- Much of Jesus' teaching and many of His parables were associated with preparation for His coming.
- Three responses are particularly related to this impending event.
  - *Watchfulness is urged.*
    - No one knows the time of Jesus' coming.
    - It is essential that one be alert to the possibility at any time (Matt 24:42).
    - He will come at an hour that one is not expecting (vs. 44).
  - *Waiting is the precaution against the opposite error, believing that it must necessarily be soon.*
    - So the five foolish virgins apparently were not prepared for a long wait (Matt 25:1-13).
    - Peter tells of scoffers who in the last days, because such a long time has elapsed, will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation" (2 Peter 3:3-4).

# Preparation for the Second Coming



- o *The follower of the Lord is to be working in view of the certain fact of his return.*
  - The parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30). makes this especially clear.
  - It is clear that watchful waiting is not to be idleness.
  - Paul's words to the Thessalonians (2 Thess 3:6-13) underscore this.

# Time of the Second Coming



- Though the second coming of Christ is plainly taught in a variety of ways throughout the New Testament it is also made clear that when it comes it will be sudden and unexpected.
- That day "will come like a thief in the night" (Matt. 24:42-43; Luke 12:39-40; 1 Thess 5:2,4; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 16:15).
- So also the risen Lord tells the church at Sardis to wake up lest he come to them "like a thief" (Rev 3:3).
- People will be saying "Peace and safety" when destruction suddenly comes (1 Thess 5:3).
- Believers are exhorted that they "continue in him, so that when he appears [at the parousia] we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28).

# Time of the Second Coming



- Though many believe there will be "signs" that herald the coming, it cannot be calculated and people will still be surprised when Jesus comes.
- Sometimes it is said that this will happen soon: "For in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay'" (Heb 10:37).
  - We should understand "a very little while" in the perspective of eternity. In terms of one short human life the delay is already considerable, but the biblical writer is not thinking in those terms. His "very little while" speaks of what is certain, rather than of what is soon in human terms.
  - That the second coming will be soon is stressed in Revelation (22:7,12,20).
  - But it will be "soon" in God's time, not in ours.

# Views on the Second Coming

## Historic Premillennialism



- ***Statement of the View:***
  - o Premillennialists hold that the return of Christ will be preceded by certain signs, then followed by a period of peace and righteousness in which Christ will reign on earth in person as King.
  - o Historic premillennialists understand the return of Christ and the Rapture as one the same event. They see unity.
  - o Therefore they stand apart from the dispensational premillennialist who sees these as two events separated by the seven-year Tribulation.
  - o Premillennialism was the dominant eschatological interpretation in the first three centuries of the Christian church. Early fathers Papias, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others held to this view.
- ***Proponents:*** George E. Ladd, J. Barton Payne, Alexander Reese, Millard Erickson

# Views on the Second Coming

## Dispensational Premillennialism



- ***Statement of the View:***
  - o Adherents of this school are represented by those who generally hold to the concept of two stages in the coming of Christ.
  - o He will come *for* his church (Rapture) and then *with* his church (revelation).
  - o The events are separated by a seven-year Tribulation.
  - o There is a consistent distinction between Israel and the church throughout history.
  - o The 7 dispensations of scripture which represent all of human history have been titled as 1) freedom, 2) conscience, 3) civil government, 4) patriarchal rule, 5) Mosaic law, 6) grace and 7) Messianic rule.
- ***Proponents:*** J. N. Darby, C. I. Scofield, Lewis Sperry Chafer, John Walvoord, Charles Feinberg, Herman Hoyt, Harry Ironside, Alva McClain, Eric Sauer, Charles Ryrie, Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye



# Views on the Second Coming

## Postmillennialism



- ***Statement of the View:***

- o Postmillennialists believe that the kingdom of God is now extended through teaching, preaching, evangelization and missionary activities.
- o The world is to be Christianized, and the result will be a long period of peace and prosperity called the Millennium.
- o This will be followed by Christ's return.
- o This position is seemingly gaining more adherents in contemporary circles, such as the Christian Reconstruction Institute for Christian Studies.
- o The Leading proponent of traditional postmillennialism was Loraine Boettner.

- ***Proponents:*** Augustine, Loraine Boettner, A. Hodge, Charles Hodge, W.G.T. Shedd, A.H. Strong, B.B. Warfield, Joachim of Fiore, Daniel Whitby, James Snowden, Kenneth Gentry, David Chilton

# Views on the Second Coming

## Amillennialism



- *Statement of the View:*
  - o The Bible predicts a continuous parallel growth of good and evil in the world between the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ.
  - o The kingdom of God is now present in the world through his Word, his Spirit, his church.
  - o This position has also been called “realized millennialism.”
  - o The Revelation and other apocalyptic literature of the Bible is interpreted symbolically rather than literally.
  - o The thousand-year reign of Revelation 20 is thus a symbolic period for the total and complete reign of Christ.
- *Proponents:* Oswald Allis, Louis Berkhof, G. Berkouwer, William Hendriksen, Abraham Kuyper, Leon Morris, Anthony Hoekema, other Reformed theologians, and the Roman Catholic Church.

# The Day of the Lord



- It is eminently the day of Christ, the day of His coming in the glory of His father.
- Sometimes it is called "that day" (Matt 7:22; 1 Thess 5:4; 2 Tim 4:8), and again it is called "the day" without any qualification whatever, as if it were the only day worth counting in all the history of the world and of the race (1 Cor 3:13).
- The motif of the Day of the Lord will be both a day of calamity as well as a day of salvation.

# The Day of the Lord

## *The Day of the Lord as Calamity*



- It is also true that it still remains a "day of wrath". (Rom 2:5-6), a "great day" (Rev 6:17; Jude 6), a "day of God" (2 Peter 3:12), a "day of judgment" (Matt 10:15; 2 Peter 3:7; Rom 2:16).
- To the unbeliever, it as a day of terror; to the believer, as a day of joy.
- For on that day Christ will raise the dead, especially His own dead, the bodies of those that believed in Him - "that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day" (John 6:39).

# The Day of the Lord

## *The Day of the Lord as Salvation*



- The New Testament idea is pervaded with the elements of hope and joy and victory.
- In that day He comes to His own (Matt 16:27), and therefore it is called "the day of our Lord Jesus" (2 Cor 1:14), "the day of Jesus Christ" or "of Christ" (Phil 1:6,10), the day when there "shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (Matt 24:30).
- Paul's writings are especially suffused with this longing for the "parousia," the day of Christ's glorious manifestation.

# Second Coming Summary



- The certainty of the second coming has been proclaimed by Jesus, angels, and the apostles.
- Jesus will come in person with the clouds and without warning.
- The purposes of the second coming will be to raise the dead, deliver up the kingdom to God, judge the world, punish evil, destroy and to usher in the new heavens and new earth.
- In preparation for the second coming, Christians are to be watchful, waiting, and working.
- The time of the second coming will be like a thief in the night with God alone knowing the day which He has fixed.
- The second coming will be universal and every eye will see Jesus' coming.
- The Day of the Lord will be a day of terror for unbelievers and a day of rejoicing for believers.

# Questions for Discussion



1. What events does the Bible teach will occur at Jesus' second coming?
2. When does the Bible teach that the second coming will occur?
3. What does the Bible say about how Christians should live in anticipation of the second coming?
4. Discuss the nature of the Day of the Lord.
5. Discuss the purposes of the second coming.

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