

"ONE SHALL BE TAKEN AND THE OTHER LEFT"

"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left." Matthew 24:40-41.

"I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." Luke 17:34-36.

Christ is the theme of the entire Bible. The theme of the Old Testament is Christ is coming. The theme of the Gospels is that Christ has come. The theme of the Acts, the Epistles and the Revelation is that Christ is coming again.

The return of Christ is one of the grandest and most inspiring themes in the Bible. It is the world's greatest future event. It is a doctrine that has been subjected to much ignorance, indifference, prejudice and perversion.

I. The Certainty of His Return.

1. It was purposed in the mind of God.
2. It was prompted by the love of God.
3. It was prophesied by the prophets of God.
They used the choicest words and noblest phrases and clauses when they sought to portray the Second Coming of Christ.

4. It was promised by the Son of God.

"I will come again." Note:

The Person—"I"

The Power—"I will"

The Promise—"I will come."

The Prospect—"I will come again."

The People—"And receive you"

The Place—"That where I am"

The Purpose—"Ye may be also."

5. It was proclaimed by the Spirit of God.

- (1) Through messengers from heaven.

"And while they looked stedfastly 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.

- (2) Through the apostles.

Paul: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." I Thessalonians 4:16.

Jude: "The Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints." Jude 14.

John: "Behold! He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." Revelation 1:7.

- (3) Through the Lord's Supper.

"For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." I Corinthians 11:26.

The Lord's Supper is not only a commemoration of the past and a proclamation of the present, but also an anticipation of the future—"till He come."

II. The Reasons for His Return.

1. To gather the saints unto Himself.
"I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3.
2. To raise up the bodies of the righteous dead.
"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." I Thessalonians 4:16.

What a glorious hope to all believers who mourn the loss of loved ones! If Christ did not return, the bodies of the redeemed would never come out of the graves, and death would be triumphant throughout all the countless ages of eternity.

3. To translate the living saints.
"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." I Thessalonians 4:17.
4. To judge the works of the saints.
5. To reward His own.
6. To reveal His glory.

III. The Manner of His Return.

1. Personally.
"The Lord Himself shall descend."
2. Bodily.
"In like manner as ye have seen Him go."
3. Visibly.
"In like manner as ye have seen Him go." "Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him."
4. Suddenly.
"As lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west."
5. Unexpectedly.
"As a thief in the night." Naturally, a thief is not expected when he comes.
6. Gloriously.
"The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels."

IV. The Time of His Return.

1. In the future.
2. No one knows.
"Ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels that are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

He does not want us to know the exact time, but it is His desire that we shall be ready at any time. The fact of His return is certain, and that is sufficient for our comfort. The time is uncertain, and that is sufficient for our dedication of life to the Lord.

V. The Challenge of His Return.

The return of our Lord Jesus Christ is a wonderful incentive to preparedness. This is true because of what is going to take place when He returns. The first resurrection will be concurrent with the coming of the Saviour. "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." When Christ comes He will bring with Him the spirits of those who have died in the Lord. At His shout of authority the land and the seas will give up the dust of those who, while on earth, belonged to Him. And when the spirit and the body, divorced by the last enemy, which was death, meet in the presence of the Lord, He will so wed them together that neither Satan nor men will ever again divide them asunder. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." I Corinthians 15:52-54. What a day that will be when the incorruptible bodies and the everlasting spirits of those who have died in the Lord are reunited! No wonder the Word of God says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." Revelation 20:6.

Next in order will be the transformation of all the living saints. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." I Corinthians 15:51. In other words, millions will never die.

"Oh, joy! oh, delight! should we go without dying,
No sickness, no sadness, no dread and no crying;
Caught up through the clouds with the Lord into glory,
When Jesus receives 'His own.'"

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." I John 3:2.

When the bodies of the saints are raised and "fashioned like unto His glorious body," and the children of God who have lived to see that day shall be changed to be like Him, they shall be snatched away from all danger and caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. This word "together" suggests the blissful reunion which our lonely hearts long for and anticipate. All of God's children will share in this rapture, and they will never be separated. This will be a wonderful time of communion--the communion of each with the other, and of all with their Lord.

It is obvious to all that this will be a time of separation. Up to that time all the living will have lived together, the good and the bad, the righteous and the unrighteous, the believers and the unbelievers. Then, suddenly, all of those who belong to Christ will be taken away, while all of those who are not His will be left behind to await the judgment. Among those who will be left behind will be false teachers, unregenerate church members and all unbelievers. When Christ comes for His own, all who are not Christians will be left.

Even the closest associates will be separated when Christ comes. Two men will be working in the same field; one shall be taken and the other left. Two humble women, with the same occupation and interests, will be grinding at the same mill; one shall

be taken and the other left. Two men with the same home discipline and educational advantages may be sleeping in the same bed; one shall be taken and the other left. Some members of the family will be taken by the Lord and others left. Why is this the case? Because some have made preparation for this great event by accepting Christ as their Saviour, and others have failed to do so. All Christians will be taken. All who are not Christians will be left. All the saved will be caught up to meet the Lord. All others will be left. And there is no hope for those who shall be left behind. They may cry for mercy, but the door of mercy will be shut. They will be separated forever from all who have known Christ as their Saviour.

Are you ready for His coming? Are those whom you love ready? If not, get ready now by accepting Christ as your Saviour.