

WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE WHEN JESUS COMES AGAIN?

By Dale DuVerney

I can still remember the day my daughter, Darion, came to me to ask what it will be like when Jesus comes again. She asked: “If the world is going to be burned up, are we going to get burned up too?” She asked, “If Jesus burns up the world, where are we going to live?” She had several other questions which sparked a great conversation about the second coming of Christ.

There are many, many differing views regarding the second coming of Christ – misunderstandings regarding the second coming of Christ. I have had lots of questions from adults about the same question – I hope to present the Scriptures in a way that will encourage and edify all of us tonight. I hope in this article to challenge all of us to consider what the Bible says about the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We do not want to base our opinions on what men say (Doctrines like the rapture, a “refurbished earth or premillennialism). We want to go to the Lord for the answers to the questions which press on our hearts. Therefore, our lesson will be in question format with the answer following!

IS JESUS COMING AGAIN?

We have the testimony of Jesus Himself! “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. 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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3). Jesus said that he was going away to prepare us a place, not coming to establish a place on earth. That rules out the false doctrines of a refurbished earth and premillennialism. Jesus said that he was coming back for us! Paul revealed that Jesus was coming back to deliver us up to God (1 Corinthians 15:24).

We also have the testimony of the apostle Peter! Notice: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3-5). It is interesting that Peter spoke of the promised place as being reserved! Forty years after the Lord uttered His words, the apostle said that it is reserved for us! It is still reserved for His children. It will be revealed at the “last time,” the final time!

There is also the testimony of the angels! While the apostles watched Jesus, He “was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:9-11). In fact, Peter tells us that the angels have a keen interest in the welfare and eternal destiny of man: “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into” (1 Peter 1:10-12).

We even have the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit! “. . . but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” (Hebrews 9:26-28). Jesus’ first appearance was to put away sin through the sacrifice of his own body and blood. The second coming shall be to award salvation to those who are looking for Him. Are you looking for Him? (Cf. 2 Peter 3:9-15).

WHEN JESUS COMES, HOW WILL WE KNOW IT?

We must state, that no man knows the hour in which the Lord will return. "I can stand in front of the Lord and say I gave it my best shot," failed-prophet Edgar Whisenant said after Sept. 1, 1989, came and went without any evidence of a rapture. After running up a 0-for-2 record in rapture predicting, the retired NASA engineer who lives in a one-room shack outside Little Rock, Arkansas, says his job is now done. His book predicting a 1988 rapture, *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Could Be in 1988* sold 4.3 million copies. In contrast, his book *On Borrowed Time* predicted the rapture soon after the previous book's failure, sold only 30,000 copies. How could so many believers fall for this age old problem of date setting that Jesus clearly warned about in Matthew 24:36? When the Lord does come...

There will be an announcement! "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God..." (1 Thess. 4:16). Notice the announcement: "with a shout, with the voice of an archangel." I do not know what the voice of an arch angel sounds like, but I am sure that it will be loud! Interesting enough, when dignitaries are announced, it is often with the most dignified and formal of announcements – here it is said that Jesus' announcer is an archangel! Notice another important point, His coming shall be announced with a trumpet: "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:31). Paul wrote: "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1Co 15:51-52). Truly, what a glorious day that will be!

There will also be an appearance! "The Lord Himself will descend. . ." No angel, no emissary, but the Lord Himself! Paul said: "the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels. . ." (1 Thess. 1:7). The Jehovah's witnesses for years have taught that Jesus came secretly/invisibly in 1914 and set in motion the preparatory events of the impending "Armageddon" conflict. However, in our own text we find no such secret coming – Jesus second coming will be a visible thing! In Revelation, John wrote: "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7).

Lastly, there will be an ascension! Paul wrote to those who were discouraged, not knowing what the second coming meant to those who had already passed on: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). There will be both night and day when the Lord Jesus comes, thus some will be sleeping, and some awake, but all the faithful shall be taken! (Cf. Also Luke 17:34-36).

WHEN JESUS COMES, WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO THIS EARTH?

This earth will give up its dead! Those who have died shall be raised up: "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28-29). Some have questioned the how of the resurrection. Listed to God answer that question:

But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body... Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be change - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will 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 has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (1 Cor. 15:35-55).

John wrote of his vision: "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works" (Rev. 20:11-13).

This earth will be destroyed! (2 Peter 3:9-10; Rev. 21:1). The apostle Peter wrote about the second coming and what would happen: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2 Peter 3:9-10). In case someone wonders, "Where shall we live?" John saw what occurs following the destruction: "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea" (Rev. 21:1).

ARE YOU WAITING FOR HIS RETURN?

Jesus said we should watch for His return: "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:42). Again, He said: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matthew 25:13).

Our absent Lord has given special commendation to those who not only WAIT for His return, but also earnestly WATCH for Him. The difference between these terms is illustrated by the story of a fishing vessel returning home after many days at sea. As they neared the shore, the sailors gazed eagerly toward the dock where a group of their loved ones had gathered. The skipper looked through his binoculars and identified some of them: "I see Bill's Mary, and there is Tom's Margaret and David's Anne." One man became concerned because his wife was not there. Later, he left the boat with a heavy heart and hurried up the hill to his cottage. As he opened the door, she ran to meet him saying, "I have been waiting for you!" He replied with a gentle rebuke, "Yes, but the other men's wives were watching for them!"

John was waiting and watching: "He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20). **ARE YOU WATCHING FOR OUR LORD? ARE YOU READY TO MEET HIM?**

Quite Suddenly

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, . . . we shall be changed" (I Cor. 15:52).

Quite suddenly—it may be at the turning of a lane,
Where I stand to watch a skylark soar from out the swelling grain,
That the trump of God shall thrill me, with its call so loud and clear,
And I'm called away to meet Him, whom of all I hold most dear.

Quite suddenly—it may be as I tread the busy street,
Strong to endure life's stress and strain, its every call to meet,
That through the roar of traffic, a trumpet, silvery clear,
Shall stir my startled senses, and proclaim His coming near.

Quite suddenly—it may be as I lie in dreamless sleep—
God's gift to many a sorrowing heart, with no more tears to weep—
That a call shall break my slumber, and a Voice sound in my ear,
"Rise up, My love, and come away, behold the Bridegroom's here."