

The Second Coming of Jesus

by Bryan Gibson

Here's the mistake many make when studying this subject, in particular the events surrounding His second coming. They start with highly figurative passages, like those in the Book of Revelation, propose some theory heavily based on speculation, and then try to fit every other passage in the New Testament into their theory. There is a better way. Start with the plain statements of Scripture, get a clear understanding of them, and then proceed to the more difficult passages. Make sure then that your understanding of the more difficult passages does not conflict with the plain statements.

Here's what we find when we study those plain statements:

It is foolish to make predictions about the time of His return, because He will come as "a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). Understanding that a thief does not warn us ahead of time (Luke 12:39), we need to heed the following admonition: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matthew 25:13).

His coming, or appearance in the clouds, will be obvious to everyone, because it will be signaled by a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

At the time of His return, which is described as the "last day," there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the righteous and the unrighteous (Acts 24:15; John 6:39-40, 44, 54; 12:48). Jesus will speak and "ALL who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth..." (John 5:28-29).

The righteous who have died will meet Jesus in the air, followed by the righteous who are still alive (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). This will of course involve a separation of the righteous from the unrighteous (Matthew 25:32-33; 13:49).

The righteous, who will be given spiritual or incorruptible bodies (1 Corinthians 15:35-54), will then go to heaven to "always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17; see also John 12:16; 14:3; 17:24).

The unrighteous, on the other hand, will be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8), an eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). They will be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

"The heavens will pass away with a great noise...both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10). The saved will dwell in a "new heaven and a new earth" (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1).