



## WHEN JESUS COMES

### QUEST LESSON E-9

The Problem: Two young men were walking along a busy sidewalk in a large city. They stopped at an intersection to wait for the red light to turn green, so that they could cross the street. One of the young men stepped off the sidewalk onto the edge of the road. Just as he did, a car, traveling quite rapidly, came around the corner so close to the curbing that anyone not on the sidewalk was bound to be hit. The other young man took in the scene very quickly. He grabbed his friend and rapidly dragged him back to safety. The whole crowd waiting there for the lights to change gasped in relief as the young man narrowly missed being killed. Suppose his friend had not been willing to act promptly. Suppose he had adopted the attitude that another person's safety was none of his business. The result would have been tragic.

The Bible teaches that Jesus is coming again soon! For us to remain silent while people rush on heedless of the danger right ahead of them would be unforgivable disregard for human life. We want to let you know, and the rest of the world also, that you can escape eternal ruin by making the right decisions at this time. The burden of this lesson is to warn the world that there is still hope for humanity by accepting Jesus as the means of salvation. Please accept our sincerity and look into the things that we must tell you. Your eternal destiny is at stake!

Our previous studies have led us step by step to this discussion of the second coming of Jesus. At the end of the seven last plagues (Lesson E-8) Jesus will come to bring human history to an end. There are many questions that immediately come to mind as we consider the coming of the Lord. What kind of event will it be? There are many genuine Christians who believe that initially Christ will come secretly and, without any public display at all, take the saints to heaven. They think that later He will return in a public way. Some people think that the lost will have a second chance after the second advent of Jesus. Others are convinced that there is no second chance. What does the Bible teach concerning these things?

This raises the important question, what will Jesus do when He comes? What happens to the living believers and unbelievers? What happens to the dead believers and unbelievers? Will Jesus come right onto the earth as He did during His first advent? Will He then establish His Kingdom on earth? Or are the believers taken to heaven at that time? That is an especially important question, because there are religious leaders in our world today claiming to be Christ. On what basis can we test their claim? What do the Scriptures say about claims of this kind, and what does a study of the second coming of Jesus have to reveal concerning their validity?

Our previous lessons have made it possible for us to identify more exactly where we are in the stream of human history. Now we can bring together some of the main strands of our Bible study and spell out the signs that everyone should look for as evidence that Jesus is coming very soon. What are these signs? We shall spend some time examining how the Bible answers that question.

Finally, there is the most important question of all. Are you ready to meet Jesus when He comes? How do you get ready? We have discovered some very important answers to that question in our immediately preceding studies. We will summarize these so that no one can be in doubt. And we shall discover some other things that the Word of God teaches regarding our part in making ready to meet the Lord.

#### Objectives

First, we shall discover in the Word of God that the second coming of Jesus will involve world-wide cataclysm.

Second, we note that some of the dead will be raised just before Jesus comes, so that they can see Him coming in the clouds of heaven.

Third, we ask, what does Jesus do when He comes?

Fourth, we study prophetic signs that Jesus' coming is near.

Fifth, we shall address the most important question of all, are you ready to meet Jesus?

#### I. The Second Advent Of Jesus Will Involve World-Wide Cataclysm

It is important for us to know what the Bible says about the nature of the second coming of Jesus. Is it secret or public? Is there a secret coming before the main advent?

##### The Word

1. What kind of event is the second coming of Jesus, secret or public? 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.
2. What happens in the world of nature as Jesus is coming? 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 16:18-21.
3. How many people on earth will see Him coming? Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:27, 29-31.

Explanation: The Lord comes with great noise, according to the New Testament. There is a "shout" (1 Thessalonians 4:16), and the sound of a heavenly trumpet (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). The upheaval in nature will be the most devastating worldwide cataclysm in history. There will be the most terrible universal earthquake, accompanied by the fiercest hurricane and hailstorm our world has ever seen. Everyone on earth will know that all things earthly are coming to an end. All will see the glory of Christ in the sky as He descends. Not one living soul will be unaware that He is coming in the glory of His Father, accompanied by all the holy angels (Matthew 25:31; 16:27). All nations of earth will see His coming, and the unbelievers will be overwhelmed with terror. Only God's faithful people will be able to bear the glory of His presence.

Relevance: Nowhere in Scripture is there a secret coming of Jesus spoken of. His appearing will be a more glorious heavenly display than could possibly be imagined. The glory of one angel was sufficient to strike down the soldiers at the tomb of Jesus the morning He rose from the dead (Matthew 28:2-4). But He will come the second time with all heaven's angels, and with the unsurpassed glory of the Father. We are not invited to look for a secret rapture, but a great cosmic event. Heaven will come to earth in a manner that cannot be ignored.

#### II. Some Of The Dead Will Be Raised To See Jesus Coming

Just before Jesus appears there will be a partial resurrection of some people whom He particular wants to see the advent.

##### The Word

4. What did Jesus say at His trial to the Jewish High Priest and the members of his council? Matthew 26:63- 64; compare Revelation 1:7.
5. Who are raised in this partial resurrection to see Jesus coming? Daniel 12:2.

Explanation: Jesus assured Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin that they would be raised to see Him coming in the clouds of heaven. Revelation 1:7 indicates that all those who took part in his unjust trial and crucifixion will be raised from the dead to witness His second advent. And Daniel 12:1 suggests that some righteous people, who died with faith in Jesus, will also be raised to see this great event. That is a wonderfully kind act on God's part. He wants to give a special reward to some of the faithful saints, because they believed and taught the Bible truth about His advent. He wants them to see the fulfillment of their hopes. Most of the faithful dead will be raised as soon as Jesus has arrived. But some of them will be given the privilege of seeing the actual coming.

Relevance: Think of the terror to be faced by those who crucified Jesus! They persecuted God Himself, spat in His face, and treated Him worse than a common criminal. There is retribution for that sin. God will raise them to see the glory of the one they despised. What a scene of contrasts this will be! Some will rejoice with unspeakable joy. Others will shrink in terror from a scene that they did not believe could take place.

### III. What Does Jesus Do When He Comes?

The Bible discussion of this issue answers many questions that people have. Nothing is taught more simply or clearly in the Scriptures than what Jesus does when He comes.

#### The Word

6. What happens to the living unbelievers, including those who will be raised in the partial resurrection? Revelation 6:14-17; 14:19-20; 19:19-20; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.
7. What happens to those who died unbelievers before the second advent? Revelation 20:5 (first part).
8. What happens to the millions who died believers? Matthew 24:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.
9. What happens to the living believers, including those who have just been raised in the partial resurrection? 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.
10. What happens to Satan and his demons? Revelation 20:1.
11. Will Jesus actually land on earth when He comes the second time? 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
12. Where does Jesus take the saved ones? John 14:1-3; Revelation 7:13-17.

Explanation: When Jesus has arrived with the hosts of His angels, He remains in the sky above the earth. He does not come down and walk on earth as He did when He came the first time. Those who have not believed in Him and followed His truth as it is taught in the Scriptures will be destroyed by the glory of His presence. Those who crucified Him, who were raised just before His appearing, will be put to death again with the hosts of the lost who have received the mark of the beast. Those who had previously died in sin will remain in their graves for another 1,000 years. They are not raised at the second coming of Jesus.

When the heavenly trumpet sounds, the many who through the ages of human history died believing in Jesus Christ are raised from their graves and caught up into the sky to meet Jesus. Then the living believers are caught up to be with them. They are not brought back to this earth again. They are taken to heaven to be with Christ and the angels for 1,000 years. We will consider the significance of that 1,000 years in a later study.

Satan and his demons are bound to this desolate earth ("the bottomless pit" Revelation 20:1). The earth has been divested of its inhabitants. All the saved are in heaven.

All the lost are in their graves. The earth is in a state of total destruction and chaos similar to what it was before creation week (Genesis 1:2). In fact, the same Greek word is used in Revelation 20:1 as in the Greek version of Genesis 1:2 (abussos meaning "abyss," "depth"). Satan has claimed this world as his possession (Matthew 4:8-9). Now the Lord hands it over to him for 1,000 years. But he and his demons will have no one to tempt and nothing to do, except squabble with one another.

In the heavenly Kingdom, the saved of all ages have the privilege of rejoicing with Christ within His temple. Before the throne of God there will be a thrilling ceremony of rejoicing (Revelation 7:15; 14:3; 15:2-4). All heaven will join with them as they sing praises to the Lord for their deliverance. The sealed saints, who were living on the earth when Jesus arrived, have a very special reason for praise to God. By the grace of Christ, they have overcome the beast and his image, and refused his mark. They have allowed the Holy Spirit to give them the character of Jesus, and they have kept holy His seventh-day Sabbath as the sign of their allegiance to Him. They have passed through the terrible time of trouble (Daniel 12:1; Revelation 7:14) after the close of probation and have suffered the persecution heaped upon them by Satan and wicked people. But they have stood firm, allowing the Lord to live out His life through them (Galatians 2:20), and overcoming all sin through His mighty power (Revelation 3:5; 7:14; 19:7-8). Now they give glory to the Lord for His

wonderful saving grace. The peace and happiness of heaven, including an eternity with Christ, have been worth every bit of their suffering. They can exclaim with Paul that the sufferings of earth were not "worthy to be compared with the glory which" is "revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Relevance: These great events are to occur in the near future. On which side do you plan to be? Will you join us in preparing spiritually for Jesus' coming? Now is the time to surrender your heart to Him and receive the assurance of eternal life in his Kingdom.

#### IV. Prophetic Signs That Jesus' Coming Is Near

The prophecies that we have studied in the immediately preceding lessons establish that we are living today very near to the end of time. In this lesson we will draw together some of the major indications that Christ is coming soon.

##### The Word

13. According to the book of Daniel, where are we in the stream of time? Daniel 7:9-10, 21-22, 26; 8:14.
14. What developing religious union points to the nearness of the end? Revelation 13:11-14.
15. Towards the end, what efforts will evil spirits make to deceive and destroy mankind? Revelation 16:13-14.
16. What extreme religious claims will be made by many as the end draws near? Matthew 24:5, 24.
17. What should be our attitude if reports are circulated that Christ has returned and is in a certain locality? Why? Matthew 24:26-27.
18. What problems in society will be especially serious just before Jesus comes? 2 Timothy 3:1-7.
19. What international problems will exist as the advent draws near? Matthew 24:6-7; Revelation 11:18.
20. What will be the end of the warring nations of earth? Revelation 17:14; 19:15.

Explanation: The prophetic messages of the book of Daniel establish without doubt that we are living in the days of the heavenly pre-advent, investigative judgment. (See Lesson E-7). Daniel predicted that this judgment would take place a short time before the second advent of Jesus. During this same time, according to the book of Revelation, there will develop in the United States a union between apostate Protestantism and the Papacy. (See Lesson E5). This religious union will eventually link up with pagan, spiritist forces and work miracles as a means of deceiving the peoples of earth. The image to the beast (Protestantism emulating the medieval Papacy) will pressure the government of the United States (and other countries) to pass laws that are acceptable to Papal religion. Are we seeing any movements in the U.S. and other countries to bring Protestant churches closer to the Roman Catholic Church? Ecumenism is very popular in our world today. Is Roman Catholicism in favor today among all classes of society, as it was not a few years ago? Are we seeing any attempts on the part of Protestantism to provide pressure for the government to pass laws favorable to religion? Indeed we are! In fact, the religious movements within American, and some other countries, are a remarkable development towards the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Revelation.

There are religious leaders in various parts of the world today claiming to be the Christ. Jesus' prediction that this kind of claim would be very prevalent just before His advent is being fulfilled (Matthew 24:5, 24). He warned us not to expect to find Him in some localized part of the world. He made it very clear that His coming would be as observable to all as the lightning. It will be a great cosmic event that every soul on earth will see.

The social problems in our big cities, the international tensions and wars, the earthquakes and pestilences in various places are all a fulfillment of the Bible predictions that these things would multiply in number and extent as the end draws near.

Relevance: The nearness of Jesus' coming simply emphasizes the need for us to look into our hearts to be sure that we are ready to meet Him. Is He living within us by the Holy Spirit? Are we studying the Bible and praying daily? Are we growing "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?" (2 Peter 3:18). Are we keeping holy His seventh-day Sabbath, as He urged that we should near the end of time? (Matthew 24:20).

## V. Are You Ready To Meet The Lord?

This is the important question? Let us briefly remind ourselves of why it is so vital.

### The Word

21. What essential qualification for heaven does God give believers in the last days? Revelation 7:3; 14:1.
22. What kind of victory must last-day believers receive? Revelation 15:2.
23. How can we have this victory? 1 John 5:45 Matthew 24:42; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.
24. How important is worship with fellow believers as we come near to the end? Hebrews 10:25.

Explanation: The book of Revelation teaches that we are living in the sealing time (Revelation 7:1-3), when the Lord wishes to place his last-day eternal seal upon those who are receiving His character by the Holy Spirit and keeping holy His seventh-day Sabbath. (See Lesson E~4). If we wish to be among those taken to heaven when Jesus comes, we must receive His divine seal. This is the sign that, because His character has been given to us, we have victory over sin and are being loyal to His commandments (Revelation 12:17).

Then we are given victory over the beast, its image, and its mark (Revelation 15:2). We will not be deceived by false, last-day religious movements. By faith in Jesus, we will be able to discern error when we see and hear it. By watching, praying and Bible study, we will always be in a state of readiness to meet our Lord.

A very important part of getting ready to meet Jesus is fellowship with other Christians who believe as we do. The Bible urges that we meet together for worship and sharing (Hebrews 10:25). We are to support one another's faith, to encourage one another, and bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). Jesus wants His followers to be loving, caring people. Their love for other believers, as well as those who do not believe, is to demonstrate the value of their faith. When we are bound together in the love of Christ, then we are ready for heaven! (John 17:21-23).

Relevance: Are you making ready to meet the Lord? Jesus gently pleads that you will open the door of your heart and let Him rule in your life (Revelation 3:20). There is a heaven to win, and a world of sin to shun; only Christ can make that possible for you. He is just as concerned about you as He was about Peter, and Nicodemus, and Mary Magdalene so long ago. And He can do for you what He did for them. He can provide transformation of life, peace of mind, hope for the future. Won't you receive Him just now, and resolve to follow His plan for your life?

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. True or False
  - a. Jesus comes the second time secretly.
  - b. Those who crucified Him will be raised to see Him coming.
  - c. Jesus will not land on earth when He comes the second time.
  - d. Any believer can be a Christ.
2. Discuss: Why does a loving God destroy unbelievers at the second coming of Jesus? Why does He not give them another chance?