

Last Day Events

07. The Second Advent

Manner, Object, And Nearness Of The Event

“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 unto Myself; that where I am there you may be also.” John 14:1-3.

“Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kingdoms of the earth shall wail because of Him.” Revelation 1:7.

JESUS was soon to leave His disciples and ascend to the Father, and in His words of instruction and consolation He was preparing their minds for that event which would, prove a grief to them. His presence constituted their joy. His absence would be their sorrow. “Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.” Matthew 9:15. The real friends of our Lord will ever desire His tangible presence. Worldly professors, whose affections are placed upon the things of this life, will enjoy His absence quite as well. And while a worldly church may treat with indifference the Bible doctrine of the soon return of the Lord, or reject, or even scoff at it, those who truly love their divine Master will receive the word relative to His coming with all gladness.

He Will Appear

He will appear the second time. Paul speaks directly upon this point: “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Hebrews 9:28. Again He says: “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:13. Another apostle testifies to this point thus: “Beloved, now are we the son: 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.” 1 John 3: 2.

Personal And Visible

The Second Advent of Christ will be personal and visible. This proposition is sustained by a large amount of testimony from the highest authority.

1. The Son of God Himself, when addressing His disciples upon the subject of His Second Advent, pointed forward to the generation that should witness the signs of that event in the sun, moon, and stars, and said, “They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Matthew 24: 30. See also Mark 13:26; 14: 62; Luke 21:27; John 14:3.

2. Holy angels at His ascension made a most definite and decisive declaration relative to His personal and visible Second Advent. When Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives, His disciples looked steadfastly toward heaven to catch the last glimpse of their Lord as He was taken up from them. And as a cloud was receiving Him from their sight, “behold, two men [angels] stood by them in white apparel, which also said, You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.” Acts 1: 10, 11. The doctrine of the personal and visible appearing of our divine Lord here rests upon the veracity of the two holy ones in white, who testified that the same Jesus would return again from heaven in like manner as He ascended up to heaven. And in agreement with these words of assurance are those of the Revelation: “Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him.” Revelation 1:7.

3. Paul testifies to the personal and visible Second Advent of Christ in language not to be misunderstood. “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. 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.” 1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17. See also Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:2.

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Resurrection Of The Just

At the second coming of Christ, the voice of the archangel will be heard, the righteous dead will be raised; and the living righteous will be changed to immortality. It is then that victory over death and the grave is triumphantly shouted by all who receive the gift of eternal life at the last trump. "Behold, I show 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 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. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Corinthians 15:51-55.

Again the apostle sets forth the hope and joy of the true church of Jesus Christ in all ages, while passing through persecutions and great tribulation, and while her members have been falling under the power of death and the grave, in these consoling words: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. [God brought Christ from the dead, and will also bring from the dead, with Christ, all the righteous dead.] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep. 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. 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

When this visible union of the Redeemer and the redeemed shall take place, then the church will be no more separated from her adorable Lord, but; with all the endowments of immortality, will ever be with Him.

Destruction Of The Wicked

Christ's explanation of the parable of the tares of the field proves the destruction of all wicked men who shall be living at the time of His second coming: "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire." Matthew 13: 38-42: That will be a clean work. When all things that offend, and they which do iniquity, shall be gathered out of the earth, there cannot be one sinner left in it.

The prophet describes the day of the destruction of the wicked, and the desolation of the earth, in these, fearful words: "Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." Isaiah 13:9, "Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty, and makes it waste, and turns it upside down, and scatters abroad the inhabitants thereof." Isaiah 24:1. "The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled; for the Lord has spoken this word." Verse 3.

Prominence Of The Doctrine In The Scriptures

The second coming of Christ is a subject of great importance to the church. This is evident from the amount of testimony relative to it, in connection with the resurrection of the just and the judgment, found both in the Old and the New Testament. The inspired writers, in their threatenings against the ungodly, in their words of hope and encouragement for the saints, and in their exhortations to repentance and holy living, hold up the great fact of the second coming of the Son of man as that which should alarm and arouse, and also comfort the people of God.

Before Adam passed from the stage of life, Enoch, the seventh in the line of his descendants, proclaimed this doctrine in the ears of the impenitent. "Behold," said he, "the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all:" Jude 1:14, 15. And as we pass from book to book through the Bible, we find that the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles have made the same use of the doctrine;

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and in the very last book John describes a coming day, when all classes and ranks of men, because they have not prepared for the coming of Christ, will call for rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the overwhelming glory of His presence, as He appears in the clouds of heaven. Revelation 6:14-17.

Christ's coming is also held prominently forth in the sacred writings as the time when the righteous will be rewarded. "When the chief Shepherd shall appear," says Peter, "you shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away." 1 Peter 5:4. And Paul looks forward to the day of Christ's appearing as the time when not only he, but all who love the appearing of their Lord, shall receive the crown of righteousness which is laid up for such. 2 Timothy 4:8.

Most frequently, however, is this great doctrine used as an incentive to repentance, watchfulness, prayer, and holy living. "Watch" is the emphatic injunction of the Son of God in connection with the numerous declarations of His second coming in the Gospels.

Paul exhorts to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this, present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." Titus 2:12, 13.

James says: "Be you also patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draws nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the judge stands before the door." James 5: 8, 9.

Peter says: "But the end of all things is at hand; be you therefore sober, and watch unto, prayer." 1 Peter 4: 7. And again: "What manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God." 2 Peter 3:11, 12.

Such is the use which holy men, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, have made of the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. Then has not the spirit of the gospel been lost by those who openly contend against so prominent and weighty and precious a doctrine, or who even pass it by in silence?

Absurd Applications

But the doctrine of the second appearing of Christ, made so very prominent in the Scriptures, is lost sight of by those who receive theories not found- in the Scriptures. Thus the fulfillment of all the threatening of God's Word relative to the swift-approaching day of wrath, and the revelation of the Son of God in flaming fire, to destroy the inhabitants of the earth, as they were once destroyed by water, are put far into the distant future, if not completely lost sight of, by the unscriptural doctrine of the world's conversion and the temporal millennium.

The second personal appearing of Jesus Christ is most absurdly applied to several different things. Some teach that death is the second coming of Christ. This is not only a violation of plain Scripture declarations, but of the laws of language. There can be but a single Second Advent of Christ, while this misty sentiment makes as many appearing of Jesus as there are deaths. The early disciples did not receive the idea that death was the second coming of Christ.

Peter, seeing the beloved John, "said to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus said unto him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow you Me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" John 21:21-23. So far were the disciples from holding that death was the second coming of Christ, that when they understood their Lord to intimate that John might remain until His return, they at once concluded that he would not die.

And what foggy theology is this, that makes death the second appearing of Christ! He is coming as the Life giver and the believer's best Friend. Death is the life taker, and man's last enemy. 1 Corinthians 15:26. Christ is coming to give life to the just, and to "destroy him that has the power of death, that is, the devil." Hebrews 2: 14.

Again, conversion is said to be the second coming of Christ. And there are as many second comings of Christ as there are conversions. There can be but one second appearing of Jesus Christ. And again, the manifestations of the Holy Spirit are said to be the Second Advent of Christ. Hence men talk of the spiritual coming of Christ, and His spiritual reign for one thousand years. But here, also, they are involved in the difficulty of a plurality of second comings of Christ; for in this case they would have Christ appear at each gracious manifestation of the Holy Spirit. There can be but a single Second Advent of Christ.

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Lo, Here! Lo, There!

How forcible, then, are these words of Christ when applied to the subject before us: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not." Matthew 24: 23. No one need fail to see who the men are that are crying, "Lo, here is Christ," and, "Lo, He is there!" The Lord continues in verses 25, 26: "Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert, go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers, believe it not."

And why not receive such mystical teachings? The reason is given in the next verse: "For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Our Lord has not only pointed out false prophets, and warned us against their mystical teachings, but He has in contrast set before us the manner of His second coming in the plainest terms. The vivid lightning, flashing out of the distant east, and shining even to the west, lights up the whole heavens. This, probably, is the most appropriate figure that our Lord could employ to illustrate the flaming glory that will attend His Second Advent when He shall come attended by all the holy angels.

What Said The Scriptures?

Can anything be learned from the Bible relative to the period of the Second Advent? is a question unsettled in many minds. This is a grave inquiry, and, from the nature of the subject, is worthy of close investigation and a candid answer. How did Christ Himself treat the subject? When the disciples inquired, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world?" He did not reprove them for prying into that which was purposely hidden from all men. No; He answered them in the most definite manner. He even stated that there should be signs of that event, and added: "When you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." The simple fact that the Lord mentions signs of His Second Advent is the best proof possible that His people were not to remain ignorant of the relative nearness of the event. Add to this evidence His declaration that when these signs should be seen, His people should know that it was near, even at the doors, and the case becomes an exceedingly strong one.

The prophecies, especially those of Daniel and John, clearly point to the period of the second coming of Christ, but do not reveal the definite date of that event. Some of the prophetic periods reach to the time of the end. Others extend still further down very near the end itself. But none of the chronological prophetic periods reach to the second appearing of Christ.

Definite Time Hidden

While God has revealed the period of the Second Advent of Christ, yet the definite date of that event is purposely hidden from man. "But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven; but My Father only." Many hastily conclude from this text that nothing whatever may be ascertained relative to the period of the Second Advent. But in taking this position, they greatly err, in that they make this class of texts prove too much, even for their unbelief, and at the same time they array these declarations against others uttered by the Savior, the most plain and pointed.

After stating that the sun should be darkened, and that the moon should not give her light, and that the stars should fall from heaven, the Lord gives the following forcible parable, and makes the most distinct application of it to this subject. He says: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh. So likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Matthew 24: 32, 33. No language can be more direct. No proof can be more complete. With all the certainty with which we know that summer is nigh when we see the buds and leaves shoot forth from the trees in spring, may we know that Christ is at the door.

Says Campbell: "MacKnight argues that the term know is here used as a causative, in the Hebrew sense, of the Conjugation *hiphil*, [Hebrew Word] that is, to make known. His [Christ's] answer is just equivalent to saying, The Father will make it known when it pleases Him; but He has not authorized man, angels, nor the Son, to make it known. Just in this sense Paul uses the term know: 1 Corinthians 2:2: "I came to you making known the testimony of God; for I determined to make known nothing among you but a crucified Christ."

Albert Barnes, in his notes on the Gospels, says: "Others have said that the verb rendered knows means sometimes to make known, or to reveal, and that the passage means, 'That day and hour none makes

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known, neither the angels, nor the Son, but the Father. It is true the word has sometimes that meaning, as 1 Corinthians 2: 2.”

The present is emphatically the waiting, watching time. It is the especial period of the patience of the saints. Revelation 14:12. In definite time we would find relief from the state of suspense to which our present position subjects us. The Lord appeals to us thus: “Watch you therefore; for you know, not when the Master of the house comes, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” Mark 13:35-37.

Evidences Of The End

By most people, the evidences of the soon coming of Christ are considered insufficient to base faith upon. But the testimony and acts of Noah condemned the people destroyed by the flood. The evidence then was, sufficient, otherwise the world would not have been condemned. But a hundred times more convincing evidences come pouring in upon us that the day of the Lord is near; and hastens greatly. We follow down the numerous prophetic chains of Daniel and of the Revelation, and we find ourselves in every instance standing just before the day of wrath. We see the signs spoken of by the prophets, by Christ, and in the epistles, fulfilling or fulfilled. And at the right time, and in the right manner, to fulfill certain prophecies, a solemn message arises in different parts of the world: Blow you the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord-comes, for it is nigh at hand.” Joel 2:1. Wherever we look, we see prophecy fulfilling. While the knowledge of God and the spirit of holiness are departing, spiritual wickedness, like a flood, covers the land.

But these evidences are considered insufficient to rest faith upon. Well, what kind of evidence would the unbelieving have? “When the signs of the end,” says the skeptic, “are fulfilled, they will be so plain that no one can doubt.” But if the signs are of such a nature, and are fulfilled in such a manner as to compel all to believe in the coming of Christ, how can it be as it was in the days of Noah? Men were not then compelled to believe. But eight believing souls were saved, while all the world besides sank in their unbelief beneath the waters of the flood. God has never revealed His truth to man in a manner to compel him to believe. Those who have wished to doubt His word have found a wide field in which to doubt, and a broad road to perdition; while those who have wished to believe have ever found everlasting rock upon which to rest their faith.

Just before the end, the world will be hardened in sin, and indifferent to the claims of God. Men will be careless about hearing warnings of danger, and blinded by cares, pleasures, and riches. An unbelieving and infidel generation will be eating, drinking, marrying, building, planting, and sowing. It is right to eat and drink to sustain nature; but the sin is in excess and gluttony. The marriage covenant is holy; but God’s glory is seldom thought of. Building, planting, and sowing, necessary for convenient shelter, food, and clothing, are right; but the world has gone wholly after these things, so that men have no disposition to think of God, heaven, Christ’s coming, and the judgment. This world is their god, and all their energies of body and mind are devoted to its service. And the evil day is put far away:

“Where is the promise of His coming?” is murmured from the impious lips of a thousand last-day scoffers. But the scene will speedily change. “For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them.” The scoffing of the haughty scoffer will soon be turned to wailing and howling. “The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low.” Isaiah 2: 11, 12. “And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.” Jeremiah 25:33.

The doctrine of the second appearing of Christ has been held by the church ever since her Lord ascended to the Father to prepare mansions for her reception. It is the event that consummates her hopes, terminates the period of her toils and sorrows, and introduces her eternal- repose. What sublime scenes will then open before the, waiting children of God! The blazing heavens will reveal the Son of God in His glory, surrounded by all the holy angels. The trumpet will sound, and the just will come forth from the grave, immortal. And all-Redeemer and redeemed, attended by the heavenly host-will move upward to the mansions prepared for them in the Father’s house.

To those who really love their absent Lord, the theme of. His soon return to bestow immortality upon the dead and living righteous is fraught with unspeakable blessedness. This event, with all its grand results; has always, been the hope of the church. Paul could look over eighteen long centuries, and speak of

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it as “that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:13. And Peter exhorts: “Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.” 2 Peter 3:12. And Paul again, after speaking of the descent of the Lord from heaven, the resurrection of the dead in Christ, and their ascent with the living righteous to meet the Lord in the air, says, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

08. The Next Universal Empire

Its Establishment, Nature, and Endurance Foretold by Prophecy

By George Teasdale

THE stream of time flows on. Its past is carefully explored by man in search of treasures of wisdom with which to enrich the present. The present is diligently exploited that nothing may pass unperceived or unappreciated. But who can proceed into the mysterious future and reveal that which is to be?

Only the present belongs to man. With the past he is slightly acquainted. The future is known to Him alone with whom time is not a stream, but an ocean, all the shores of which lie within the compass of His vision.

False Gods and the True

Addressing the idols of the heathen, Isaiah says, “Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods.” The sacred books of the great heathen systems contain no such wonderful and copious prophecies as are found in the Scriptures.

Of Jehovah there is abundant evidence that He knows the end from the beginning. With Him, “That which has been is now; and that which is to be has already been.” Ecclesiastes 3:15. Only divine omniscience can link the past with the future, and read them both in the present. God alone can foretell the events, great and small, that mark the history of this world, and affect the interests of the Church.

The Future Illuminated

Confidence in God’s predictive declarations concerning events still future in fact, confidence in the Bible is engendered and developed by a knowledge of prophecies already fulfilled. For this reason their study serves an important purpose in Christian growth. The “more sure word of prophecy” more sure than the evidence of the senses-is a “light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.” It is a light that illuminates the darkness of the future-a darkness which no human eye can penetrate-revealing to the Christian events that would otherwise remain unknown. For this reason Inspiration declares to the Christian, “But you, brethren, are not in darkness [as to the future], that that .day [the day of Christ’s coming] should overtake you-as a thief. You are all children of the light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”

Neither the Old Testament nor the New is wanting in numerous prophecies, of still future import, or in prophecies that have been} only partially, and are now being wholly, fulfilled. The second chapter of Daniel contains a wonderful prediction that reaches down to our day, and also into the future, revealing international events soon to take place, which are of the greatest import to man. Prophecy penetrates the present cloud hanging over Europe and the world, portraying in beautiful and inspiring vision the nature of the next universal empire that is to control the destiny of the human race. Past the din and smoke of strife and battle, and the ebb and flow of human misery and woe, prophecy describes a land of peace and everlasting joy, for which the weary sojourner is urged and encouraged to diligently prepare.

Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel

When Nebuchadnezzar first besieged Jerusalem, in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, 607 BC, he carried to Babylon some of the vessels of the temple of God in Jerusalem, and put them in the temple of his own god in Babylon. Also he took “certain of the children of Israel, and of the king’s seed, and of the princes” with him to Babylon. These were carefully selected and taken that they