

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

“In the midst of the pessimism, gloom, and frustration of this present hour, there is one bright beacon light of hope, and that is the promise of Jesus Christ: ‘If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again’ (John 14:3).”

—BILLY GRAHAM*

Since the time of the first Christians, the return of Christ has been the hope of every believer. Every generation has wondered, “Will it be soon?”

The return of Christ is mentioned by every New Testament writer, and these writers refer to it more than 300 times in twenty different books.

THE PROMISE OF HIS RETURN

1. Read John 14:2-3. What did Jesus promise his disciples? (Note the three parts of the promise.)

* From *World Aflame* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 202.

2. After Jesus ascended, how did the two angels describe his promised return? *Acts 1:9-11*

3. What does Jesus say about his return in the following verses?

Matthew 16:27

Matthew 24:27

Mark 13:26-27

Luke 12:40

4. How does Paul refer to the return of Christ in each chapter of his first letter to the Thessalonians?

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

1 Thessalonians 2:19

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

1 Thessalonians 5:2-6

**CONDITIONS
PRECEDING
HIS RETURN**

5. In Matthew 24 and 25 Jesus gives many details and warnings about his return. The following questions are taken from chapter 24.

a. What events will take place on the earth before he comes again? *Verses 6-7*

b. In spite of widespread evil, what will true Christians be doing? *Verses 12-14*

c. How should you respond if someone told you Christ had returned and was performing great miracles in some city? *Verses 23-26*

d. What signs will be seen in the skies? *Verse 29*

e. Who knows the exact time of Christ's return? *Verse 36*

f. What will people be doing? (Compare verses 37-39 with Genesis 6:5, 11-13.)

6. What will characterize people living in the last days?

1 Timothy 4:1-2

2 Timothy 3:1-5

7. What ideas will be popular in the last days?

2 Peter 3:3-4

1 Thessalonians 5:3

Do you see any of these teachings in the world today? Explain.

**EVENTS AT
HIS RETURN**

There are many different ideas concerning the order of events at Christ's return. This study seeks to identify the major events, but not to establish their order.

8. Read *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*.

a. List the events that will take place when Christ comes. *Verses 16-17*

b. How long will you be with him? *Verse 17*

c. What should you do with these truths? *Verse 18*

9. At Christ's coming, what will happen to believers?

1 Corinthians 15:22-23

Philippians 3:20-21

Colossians 3:4

1 John 3:2

10. From 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, compare your earthly and heavenly body.

EARTHLY

HEAVENLY

11. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

a. What will Christ's return mean for unbelievers?

b. For believers?

12. What else will happen to believers at Christ's return?

2 Corinthians 5:10

1 Corinthians 4:5

The judgment of believers' works has nothing to do with eternal salvation. It is a time of reward for service, or loss of reward. For the judgment of unbelievers, read Revelation 20:12-15.

**WHAT HIS
RETURN MEANS
TO YOU**

13. What will it be like in the presence of God? *Revelation 21:4*

Who will be there? *Revelation 5:9*

14. What attitudes should you have toward Christ's return?

2 Timothy 4:8

James 5:7-8

1 Peter 1:13

15. Compare 2 Peter 3:10-12 with 1 John 3:2-3, and write a short paragraph on the effect Christ's return should have on you.

16. Choose one of the passages you used in questions 14 or 15 and make the following personal application:

a. What is the general command?

b. How does this apply to you?

c. What specific action are you going to take as a result of this command?

