

THE LORD'S RETURN

Message 5

The Two Aspects of His Coming

Scripture Reading: Matt. 24:42-44; Rev. 3:3b, 10; 14:4; Matt. 25:19-21; 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:26, 30; 24:15, 21; Rev. 12:5, 7-10; 13:3, 7; 2 Thes. 2:3-4, 7; Rev. 6:12-17; Matt. 24:27, 30; Zech. 14:4; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Zech. 12:8-9; Rev. 20:1-3; Matt. 25:31-32; Rev. 11:15; Luke 21:34-36; Phil. 3:20; Titus 2:13; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8

I. The “secret” aspect of the Lord’s coming (parousia) is toward His watchful believers, the overcomers—Matt. 24:3, 37-42; Rev. 12:5; 14:4:

- A. Christ will come secretly, as a thief, to those who love Him and will take them away as His treasures before the great tribulation—Matt. 24:43; Rev. 3:3, 10:
 - 1. We do not know on what day the Lord will come—Matt. 24:42.
 - 2. We must be watchful and ready for the Lord’s coming—vv. 42-44.
- B. Christ will come as a farmer to reap the firstfruits who ripen earlier—Rev. 14:4.
- C. Christ will come as a judge to reward or discipline the believers—Matt. 25:19-21:
 - 1. We will stand before the judgment seat of Christ—Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10.
 - 2. If we are faithful, we will receive a reward—Matt. 25:21; 1 Cor. 3:13-15.
 - 3. If we are slothful, we will receive discipline—Matt. 25:26, 30.

II. The great tribulation will occur in the last three and half years of this age—Matt. 24:21:

- A. The rapture of the overcomers will begin a war in heaven—Rev. 12:5, 7-8.
- B. Through the fighting of the overcomers, Satan will be defeated and cast out of heaven to the earth—12:9-10.
- C. After Satan is cast down to the earth, the Antichrist will be slain and resuscitated, thereby imitating the resurrection of Christ—13:3:
 - 1. Antichrist will be “the man of lawlessness” and will change laws, destroy and corrupt many to an extraordinary degree, blaspheme God, and deceive men—2 Thes. 2:3.
 - 2. The lawlessness that will characterize Antichrist is “the mystery of lawlessness” that is working today among the nations and in human society—v. 7.
- D. Antichrist will set up his image as an idol in the temple of God at the beginning of the great tribulation—v. 4; Matt. 24:15, 21.
- E. Antichrist will make war with the saints and will overcome them—Rev. 13:7; 15:2; 20:4.
- F. The great tribulation will be a time of unprecedented calamities and plagues—6:12-17.

III. The “open” aspect of the Lord’s coming is toward the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles—Matt. 24:27-30:

- A. Christ will come openly, like a flash of lightning, after the great tribulation—vv. 27, 29.
- B. Christ will set His feet on the Mount of Olives, the same mount from which He ascended into heaven—Zech. 14:4; Acts 1:11.
- C. Christ will come down from the clouds to the earth with power and great glory for all to see—Rev. 1:7; Zech. 12:10; Matt. 24:27, 30.
- D. In His second coming, Christ will defeat Antichrist, save the Jews, bind Satan and cast him into the abyss, and judge the nations—Rev. 19:17-21; Zech. 12:8-10; Rev. 20:1-3; Matt. 25:31-32.
- E. On the last day of the great tribulation, the kingdom of the world will become “the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ”—Rev. 11:15.

IV. The Lord’s appearing, His coming back, is a warning, an encouragement, and an incentive to us:

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- A. We must watch and be ready for the Lord's coming—Matt. 24:42-44.
- B. We must beseech (pray) to prevail (overcome) that we may escape the great tribulation and stand before the Son of Man—Luke 21:34-36.
- C. We should eagerly await the Lord's coming—Phil. 3:20; Titus 2:13.
- D. We should love the Lord's appearing and look forward to it with earnest expectation and joy—2 Tim. 4:8.
- E. We should take the Lord's appearing as our incentive and goal—2 Tim. 4:1.