

The Signs of Christ's Coming and the Believers' Attitude toward Christ's Coming

Message Two

The Coming of Christ and the Rapture of the Saints

Scripture Reading: 2 Thes. 2:1; Rev. 12:5-6; 14:1; 10:1; Matt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7; 1 Thes. 4:15-17; Rev. 14:14-16; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 4:5; Rev. 19:7-9; Matt. 25:30

I. The coming of Christ (2 Thes. 2:1) has a secret aspect and an open aspect:

The Greek word for "coming" is *parousia*, meaning presence. The Lord's *parousia* will begin with the rapture of the overcomers to God's throne in heaven (Rev. 12:5-6); this is His coming secretly. At the end of the great tribulation, He will come down to the air (Rev. 10:1) and continue for a period of time before ending with the appearing of His *parousia* (Matt. 24:30); this is His coming openly.

- A. In the secret aspect of His coming, Christ will come as a thief to those who love Him, taking them away as treasures (Matt. 24:43). This will begin with the rapture of the man-child to the throne of God (Rev. 12:5; 14:1).
- B. The secret aspect of Christ's coming will continue from the beginning of the great tribulation when He descends to the air and stays hidden there. (Rev. 10:1)
- C. In the open aspect of His coming, Christ will come with power and great glory and will be seen by all the tribes of the land (Rev. 1:7). He will sit on the clouds, rapturing the majority of the believers including those left on the earth during the great tribulation and those who died in previous generations and are now resurrected (1 Thes. 4:15-17, Matt. 25:1-12, Rev. 14:14-16).
- D. The open aspect of Christ's coming will end when He comes from the air on the clouds and descends on the Mount of Olives, completing His *parousia* (Matt. 24:27, 30). He will lead the overcoming saints in the war against Antichrist and his army at Armageddon. (Rev. 19:11-21; 17:13-14; 16:12-16; Zech. 14:3, 5; 2 Thes. 2:8)

II. The rapture of the saints:

- A. The rapture of the overcomers:
 1. The overcoming saints who were martyred throughout the generations will be resurrected and raptured to the throne of God. (Rev. 12:5)
 2. The firstfruits who are still living in this age will be raptured to Mount Zion in the heavens. (Rev. 14:1-5)
 3. The rest of the overcomers still living in this age will be raptured to stand before Christ. (Rev. 3:10; Luke 21:36; Matt. 24:39-42)
- B. The rapture of the majority of the believers:
 1. The majority of the believers who died in previous generations will be raptured to the air, including those who are martyred during the great tribulation. (Rev. 20:4, 6; 15:2)
 2. The believers in this age who have passed through the great tribulation and are still living will be raptured together with them to the air to meet the Lord. (1 Thes. 4:15-17; Rev. 14:14-16)
 3. They will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 4:5; Matt. 25:19) to determine whether they will participate in the marriage dinner of the Lamb as a

reward (Rev. 19:7-9; Matt. 22:2-14; 25:10), or they will be punished and so will be weeping and gnashing their teeth in darkness.

III. The judgment seat of Christ: (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 4:5; Matt. 25:19; Luke 19:15; Rom. 14:10, 12)

- A. This will take place when the resurrected believers, including the ten resurrected virgins (Matt. 25:1-12), are taken up to the air together with the living, remaining believers. (1 Thes. 4:15-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-52)
- B. The believers will be judged according to their living and work: Overcomers will be rewarded by being called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb to be the bride of Christ (Rev. 19:7-9) and to be co-kings with Him; the defeated ones will be punished whereby they will lose the enjoyment of the kingdom and will be weeping and gnashing their teeth in the outer darkness. (Matt. 25:30)
- C. The rewarded overcomers will constitute the New Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom (cf. Rev. 2:7) which will be the heavenly part of the millennial kingdom and the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens during the millennium (cf. Matt. 13:43). There, overcomers of both the New Testament and the Old Testament will be enjoying God's eternal life together as a feast (Matt. 8:11; 19:29) and will be reigning as kings (Rev. 20:4-6).

IV. The destroyer of Antichrist:

- A. At the end of the great tribulation, Christ will come with the overcomers whom He has taken to be His bride-army to war against Antichrist and the kings under him with their armies at Armageddon. (Rev. 16:16; 19:19-20)
- B. There, Christ will tread the winepress of God's fury (Rev. 14:19), and the blood will rise up to the bridles of the horses (Rev. 14:20), causing His garment to be dipped in blood (Rev. 19:13).
- C. Christ will nullify Antichrist by the manifestation of His coming (2 Thes. 2:8). Antichrist and the false prophet will both be cast alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone (Rev. 19:20).

V. Delivering the children of Israel:

- A. Christ will appear to the children of Israel like lightning. (Matt. 24:27)
- B. At that time, Antichrist will lead a great army to besiege the Israelites and Jerusalem. At a critical juncture, Christ will come on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matt. 24:30). In that day, His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mountain will be split at its middle toward the east and toward the west into a very great valley, so that half of the mountain will remove to the north and half of it to the south. The Israelites will flee into the valley of the mountain. (Zech. 14:4-5a)
- C. The Israelites will then look upon Him (Zech. 12:10), and He will become their Saviour, causing the entire house of Israel to be saved (Rom. 11:25-26).
 - 1. They will be saved as a result of calling upon the name of the Lord, having the Holy Spirit poured out on them. (Zech. 12:10; Acts 2:18-21)
 - 2. They will obtain in their inward parts the law of life, a new heart, a new spirit, and the Spirit of God according to the new covenant that God will make with them. (Jer. 31:31, 33; Ezek. 36:26-27)
 - 3. Their salvation of being born again will be the same as that of the New Testament believers. However, they will be saved after the rapture of the church and will not be counted with the church. Neither can they enter into the heavenly part of the millennial kingdom to be kings together with

the overcomers from the New Testament and the Old Testament. They can only enter into the earthly part of the millennial kingdom to be the priests.

- D. They will be the priests in the earthly part of the millennial kingdom to teach the people of the nations to serve God. (Zech. 8:20-23)
- E. At the end of the millennial kingdom, they will enter into the new heaven and new earth together with all those who have been redeemed by God from both the New Testament and the Old Testament to participate in the New Jerusalem. (Rev. 21:12)

VI. Judging the nations:

- A. Christ will sit on God's throne of glory and judge the living nations, separating the people like a shepherd separating the sheep from the goats.
- B. The "sheep" who obey the eternal gospel (Rev. 14:6-7) and deal kindly with the afflicted believers will be blessed and counted as the righteous who fear God. They will inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for them since the foundation of the world and will enter into the earthly part of the millennial kingdom as its people. (Matt. 25:31-34)
- C. But the disobedient "goats" will be cursed and will suffer eternal perdition. (Matt. 25:31-46)

VII. Ushering in the millennial kingdom (Rev. 11:15; 12:10a) and the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21).