

The Gospel Truth

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE
MISSION FIELD WORLDWIDE.

BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ....We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed..." (2 Peter 1:16, 19).

The faith and life of a Christian stand not in fables and fairy tales but in the precise fulfillment of approximately 2000 prophecies that span hundreds of years. The prophets of old accurately foretold of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Coincidence is ruled out by the science of probability. Things prophesied in the Bible happened just as predicted. Unique among all books ever written, the Bible is true, credible, powerful, and it works.

There are some remaining prophecies relating to the end of the world which have yet to be fulfilled. Knowing that the Bible is a reliable docu-

ment, who can ignore the coming events that will transpire? Perilous times are upon this earth. The last of the prophecies are being fulfilled.



*"Don't delay, but
prepare your soul
for eternity."*

The world is growing more wicked and the signs of the time indicate that this world will not last much

longer. These are the last of the last days. Jesus is coming back a second time to usher mankind to the judgment where every man will be judged according to his works (Matthew 16:27). Just as the prophecies were fulfilled with the first coming of Jesus to this earth, so also will the prophecies that tell of His second coming be fulfilled.

People are living as if life will keep on going. They are turning their backs on God and living in sin without fear or regard to eternity. Jesus is coming back as a "thief in the night" (2 Peter 3:10). When it is least expected, the world will end and all will stand before the judgment seat of God to receive eternal punishment or reward (2 Corinthians 5:10). In His long-suffering, God has delayed His judgments because He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

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WHAT THE BIBLE Teaches About...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;

Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;

Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;

1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;

1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;

Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

(Continued from page 1)

When Jesus ascended to heaven following His resurrection, the angel of the Lord spoke to the disciples: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Jesus is coming back. When He comes, there will be no time to repent, no time to pray, and no time to change. You will stand before God just as you are.

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12). Do you hear the words of Christ? "BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY." There isn't much time left for this sinful world. The pattern of God's past judgments of mankind indicate that this world is on borrowed time. Time is short. There is no guarantee of tomorrow. Are you ready to meet to God?

Jesus is coming back and it will be soon. Don't delay, but prepare your soul for eternity. "Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). If you are not saved, turn away from your sin while there is time and opportunity and be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ.

-mws

THE GOSPEL TRUTH

The Gospel Truth periodical is published in the name of the Lord for all people of all lands in the interest of establishing and encouraging them in the truth of God's Word. This publication teaches and promotes the truths of the Bible that have been established since the time of Christ and the apostles.

The Word of God is the singular, acceptable rule of faith. It teaches salvation and deliverance from sin through the atonement of Jesus Christ; a subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit to lead, direct and empower; practical holiness in every area of life; and the unity and oneness of God's people. Acceptable service to God is through a personal relationship of love founded in truth.

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Editorial



"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Revelation 3:11).

For a number of months I have been deeply moved in my spirit that our time here on earth is quickly coming to an end. I do not believe that the Lord will delay His coming much longer. The message of the coming of the Lord stirs within me.

I am reminded of the prophet, Jesus ben Ananias, who walked the streets of Jerusalem crying out of the impending doom of the city before God destroyed it. "Woe, woe to Jerusalem." The people called him crazy and tried to silence him. The city seemed at peace and was experiencing prosperity, but he repeated the cry. "Woe, woe - A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem...." He prophesied for seven years and five months. The prophecy was fulfilled and catastrophe came to Jerusalem.

People may scoff and get weary of the message, but I am willing to be as Ananias. Time is short. The Lord is coming quickly. Hold fast and be true. Live every day as if it were your last, for soon it shall be. The world is waxing worse and worse and the influences of Satan are great on us all. There is still power to live holy and pure through Jesus Christ, but we must stay close to the cross.

This issue of *The Gospel Truth* deals with the second coming of Christ and the end of time. There are many misconceptions and false doctrines that abound on this subject. We must look to the Word of God and rightly divide it. The best tool to combat error is truth. This is a big subject and limited space prevents me from exploring all of the relevant scriptures. Unfortunately, there was not room to write about some of the prophecies from the book of Revelation which have brought so much confusion in 'End Times' teaching. In studying the Word, it is important to take that which is simple and clear and then use that as a guide in understanding the more difficult prophecies and symbolic language of Revelation.

There may be some details that God withheld from us in the Bible, but He gave us enough instruction to make it to Heaven. Millions of people are deluded into false hope of a future kingdom. This then keeps them from seeking the Lord with all of their heart in this life.

Please continue to pray for the Lord's leadership and blessings on the work we are doing with *The Gospel Truth* and *Africa Mission & Beyond*. We are daily dependent upon the Spirit to provide and to lead us in His work.

Time is short. Jesus is coming soon.

Michael W Smith

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LEFT BEHIND?

Like a wild fire, the doctrine of the rapture has swept across the world.

The word 'rapture' is a term which means 'to catch up' or 'to carry off'. Many Christian faiths teach that the righteous will be caught up by the Lord and taken to heaven while the unrighteous will be 'left behind' on the earth for a time of tribulation.

The scripture is used from 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 which reads: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven....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..."

Paul was explicitly addressing the righteous as he told them to "comfort one another with these words." He was not addressing the fate of the ungodly. Jesus said that "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth..." (John 5:28-29).

There will be one universal resurrection and one universal judgment. No one will be left behind, for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

SUBJECT: **ESCHATOLOGY** - *Bible Doctrines concerning the end of time.*

Scripture Reading:

James 5:8 *Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

Summary: Jesus Christ will return a second time to this earth where there will be a universal resurrection of the dead and all people will be ushered to the judgment seat of God. This earth will be destroyed and the righteous will live forever in heaven and the unrighteous in hell.

I. The Second Coming of Christ

- A. John 14:28 Jesus will come again.
- B. Acts 1:9-11 Visibly.
- C. 1 Thessalonians 5:2 As a thief.
- D. Mark 13:32 Time unknown.
- E. Luke 12:40 Unexpectedly.
- F. Revelation 1:7 Every eye shall see him.
- G. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 With a shout.

II. One Universal Resurrection

- A. John 5:28-29 All that are in the graves.
- B. Acts 24:15 Of the just and unjust.
- C. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 Righteous first.
- D. 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 Raised incorruptible.

III. Destruction of This Earth

- A. 2 Peter 3:7-12 The earth burned up.
- B. Matthew 24:35 Shall pass away.
- C. Hebrews 1:10-11 Shall perish.

IV. General Judgment

- A. 2 Corinthians 5:10 All will be judged.
- B. John 12:48 Judged in the last day.

- C. Acts 17:31 World judged by Christ.
- D. 2 Timothy 4:1 Living and dead judged.
- E. Romans 14:10-12 Personal accounting.
- F. Ecclesiastics 12:14 Secrets judged.

V. Judgment Scenes (Judgment, Reward and Punishment)

- A. Matthew 25:31-46
- B. Revelation 20:11-15

VI. Degrees of Punishment

- A. Romans 2:6 According to deeds.
- B. Luke 12:47-48 Degrees.
- C. See also: 2 Peter 2:21; Hebrews 10:29.

VII. Eternal Punishment - Hell

- A. See *Judgment Scenes*.
- B. Psalm 9:17 Hell.
- C. 2 Peter 2:9 Punishment.
- D. 2 Thessalonians 1:9 Everlasting.
- E. Matthew 24:50-51 Weeping.
- F. Revelation 21:8 Fire and brimstone.
- G. Luke 16:23-26 Torment of hell.

VIII. Eternal Reward - Heaven

- A. See *Judgment Scenes*: Everlasting life.
- B. 1 Peter 1:4-5 Inheritance in heaven.
- C. 2 Corinthians 5:1 Made without hands.
- D. Hebrews 11:16 A heavenly country.
- E. Revelation 7:15-17 No hunger or tears.
- F. Revelation 21 & 22 Description

Conclusion

Revelation 22:20 *He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

THE END OF TIME

Companion article for Bible Study

THE SCRIPTURE IS OUR GUIDE

The second coming of Christ and subsequent events are of vital significance. There are many scriptures and prophecies concerning the end of time. "Theory and speculation amount to nothing with respect to future things" (D.S Warner). It is important that the scripture be the guide rather than intellectual and philosophical pursuits in understanding this subject. The scripture points forward to a time that Jesus will return. There will be a universal resurrection of the dead, a general judgment of all people, eternal rewards and punishments dispensed, and this earth will be destroyed.

CHRIST WILL RETURN

Jesus informed his disciples that "I will come again" (John 14:3, 28). The angel of the Lord reaffirmed that truth as Jesus ascended to heaven following the resurrection (Acts 1:11). Jesus will return as a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:2) when no man is expecting Him. Many so-called prophets have tried to give a date for the coming back of the Lord, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32). It is for this reason that every individual should be watchful and stay ready, "... for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." (Luke 12:40).

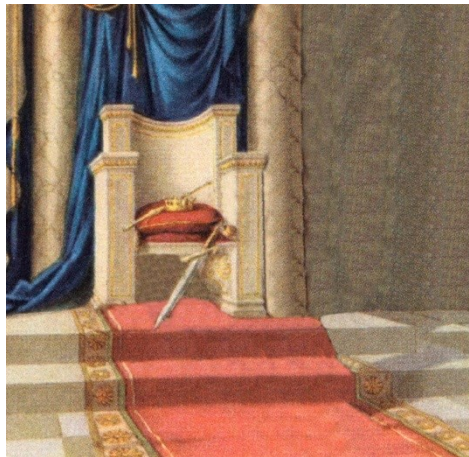
TIME WILL COME TO AN END

It will be a glorious and awful day when Jesus returns and brings an end to this world. The righteous will rejoice and the unrighteous will cry for rocks and mountains to fall on them. Jesus will come breaking through the clouds and "every eye shall see him" (Revelation 1:7).

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God..." (1 Thessalonians 4:16). He shall come "in the glory of his Father with his angels" (Matthew 16:27).

THE DEAD SHALL RISE

When Jesus returns in the sky, there will be a universal resurrection of the dead. "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" (1 Corinthians 15:52). While many teach that only the righteous will be resurrected, the scripture teaches that "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15). "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).



JUDGMENT

*"As I live, saith the Lord,
every knee shall bow to me, and
every tongue shall confess to God.
So then every one of us shall give
account of himself to God."*
Romans 14:11

THIS EARTH WILL BE DESTROYED

God's Word clearly teaches that this world, will be destroyed (Matthew 24:35, Hebrews 1:10-11). "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:7). When Jesus comes back to usher mankind to the judgment, the aerial heavens and this earth will pass away and be burned up. This world will be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat (2 Peter 3:10-12).

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EVERYONE WILL STAND BEFORE GOD

On that last great day, the day of the Lord, Christ will judge the world. He shall "judge the quick [living] and the dead at his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:1). All people of every generation, of every kindred, tongue, and nation shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Each individual of every belief system and religion shall bow down and confess that Jesus is Lord (Romans 14:10-12).

How wonderful and terrible shall this judgment be as everyone gives account of himself to God. All secrets will be revealed and nothing hidden (Ecclesiastics 12:14).

THERE WILL BE ONE FINAL JUDGMENT

A solemn scene of the judgment is portrayed in Matthew 25:31-46 and in Revelation 20:11-15. "And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he

shall separate them one from another" (Matthew 25:32). As all people stand before God, the book of life will be opened (Revelation 20:12) and each individual will be judged by the Word of God (John 12:48) and shall receive reward or punishment "according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

THERE WILL BE DEGREES OF PUNISHMENT

Eternal reward and punishment will be dispensed at the final judgment. Our eternal destiny is based on the choices that we make in life. "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12). God will administer just judgment and will "render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:6). The greater the understanding one has of God and truth, the greater the accountability and punishment if that truth is rejected. "And that servant,

which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke 12:47-48). (See also: 2 Peter 2:21, Hebrews 10:26-29, Matthew 11:20-24).

THE UNRIGHTEOUS WILL GO TO HELL FOR ETERNITY

God has reserved the "unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Peter 2:9).

The punishment of the wicked will be in hell (Psalm 9:17).

Hell is a place of everlasting, eternal destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:9). It is symbolically exemplified in Revelation 21:8 as a "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." At the judgment, Jesus will say to the sinner: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). It will be a place of

"weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 24:51). In the absence of all that is good, there will be no escape from the eternal pain, misery, memories, and everlasting darkness.

THE SAVED WILL ENTER INTO HEAVEN FOREVER

While the unrighteous go away into everlasting punishment, the righteous will inherit life eternal (Matthew 25:45-46). There is "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" (1 Peter 1:4). God hath prepared a heavenly city (Hebrews 11:6) that words of this life could not adequately describe (2 Corinthians 12:4). It is a celestial city of beauty and contains all that is good and right for the reward of the righteous. (See Revelation 21 and 22).

-mws





Question: Will there be a millennial reign?

Answer: This a relevant question as there is much misunderstanding and false teaching concerning the second coming of Christ. The answer to the question is 'no'. THERE WILL NOT BE A MILLENNIAL REIGN.

While denominations have varying beliefs on the subject, the millennial reign theory usually includes a teaching that Christ will return to the earth and set up a 'Millennial Kingdom'. They believe that Jesus, headquartered in Jerusalem, will rule over the nations of the earth for one thousand years before the final judgment. This is contrary to the clear scriptural teachings on the subject of Christ's return and the nature of the Kingdom of God.

THERE IS NO NEED FOR A MILLENNIUM for Christ has already set up His kingdom. Jesus said in John 18:36, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight...." When the Pharisees demanded to know when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus answered by saying, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the

kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-12). The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). Christ's earthly kingdom was established in the hearts of believers at His first coming. God's people are reigning now (Romans 5:17). Christ's work on this earth was finished with His first coming. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

*"According to the scripture,
there is no need for a millennium,
no time for a millennium,*



*and there is no place
for a millennium."*

Those that hold to the millennium theory mistakenly look for Christ to sit on the throne of David in a future age. Clearly, the literal throne of David was destroyed long ago. The throne of David represents sovereign power and kingship. Jesus was born 'King of the Jews' (Matthew 2:2). When He entered into Jerusalem, the multitudes cried, saying, "Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David,

that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest" (Mark 11:9-10).

THERE WILL BE NO TIME FOR A MILLENNIUM when Christ returns. There will be one resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29) on that last day (see John 6:39-40, 44, 54). There will not be a separate resurrection of the righteous and wicked. Christ will judge all people together (Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46) where they will receive their eternal rewards. This will all occur on that 'last day'.

THERE WILL BE NO PLACE FOR A MILLENNIUM after Christ appears. Consider the passage in 2 Peter 3:7,10. "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men....But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The scripture bears out clearly that when Jesus returns, this world will be completely destroyed by fire. This will occur at the day of judgment when the Lord returns as a thief in the night.

According to the scripture, there is no need for a millennium, no time for a millennium, and there is no place for a millennium. The millennium teaching is a deception of the enemy. Many are looking and hoping for another opportunity in a future age. There are no second chances, for this is the day of salvation. Now is the time to enter into the kingdom of God and prepare for eternity.

-mws



DID YOU KNOW?

Scripture: Acts 2:27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. (Parallel scripture: Psalm 16:10).

'Hell' in this passage is translated from the Hebrew word 'Sheol' and from the Greek word 'Hades'. These words mean: *the grave, the state of the dead, or the place of departed souls.*

When Jesus died on the cross he did not go to the devil's hell. His soul ascended to paradise--a place of pleasure and delight.

Jesus told the thief on the cross, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).



**A Word
In Season**

Enter Thou Into the Joy of Thy Lord

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Matthew 25:23 *His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

What wonderful words for the faithful servant of God to hear when standing before the judgment seat of God. "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." All of the struggles, pain, disappointments, frustrations, and trials of this life will seem as nothing when we enter into the beautiful place called 'Heaven' that God has prepared for His people.

The anticipation of Heaven grows brighter and brighter for the saint of God. There is coming a day when there will be no more death, no sorrow, no tears, no sickness, no disabilities, no temptation, and no problems. There is coming a day when there will be glory, beauty, and joy in the presence of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

There will be no need of the sun for the Lamb is the light. The grandeur will surpass that which the human mind can comprehend and that which this earthly body can contain. Hence, the servants of the Lord will have a glorified body on that great resurrection day to be able to experience the fullness of the glory of eternity in Heaven.

Be faithful and steadfast, servant of the Lord. Heaven will surely be worth it all.



HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD

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