

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #108
1/07/09

“The Lord's Final Words: Part 5”
Revelation 22:12

Revelation 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

IMMINENCY

“Imminency” concerns **Jesus' Second Coming** when He comes to judge men regarding their response to **His First Coming**. With the second time in this brief passage, and the fourth time in His Revelation (Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:11), when Jesus says **“Behold, I come quickly,”** He emphasizes the **“imminency”** of His return one more time. Obviously, Jesus wanted us to recognize the vital importance of the **imminence** of His coming for this is not the last time He tells us. **He speaks of it one more time in 22:20.** It is clear that it is a vitally important matter and has been a consistent and frequent theme of our Lord's teaching, both while He was here on this earth, and now in His Revelation of Himself to us through John. In these final few words He could have addressed many subjects that man considers to be important, but He focused on this one. His repeated focus on **the imminency of His Second Coming** demands our attention and stands in stark contrast to the events related to **His First Coming**.

To see this more clearly, consider the following about His First Coming when He came through Mary's womb at Bethlehem, incarnating Himself in a human body so that He could die on the cross and pay for man's sins.

The timing and circumstances of His First Coming were clearly described beforehand. Though most of mankind, including the spiritual leaders of the Jews, did not recognize Him when He entered our world through Mary's womb, those who devotedly studied God's Word and followed its teachings were not caught by surprise. They were aware of when, where, how, and why He would come.

God gave more than three hundred details in advance so that all men might recognize Him when He came the first time. Even with the proliferation of advance information, **few men expected or recognized Him when He came and few men accepted His gift of forgiveness.** Among the details God provided in advance were:

1. The date of His coming was provided by God (Daniel 9:24-2)
2. The place of His coming (Micah 5:2)
3. The manner of His arrival (Isaiah 7:14)

Jesus first came to offer Himself to helpless, hopeless sinners as their Savior and Lord; **conquered** death, the deserved penalty of their sins; **redeemed** them from Satan's possession; and **gave** to them the gift of eternal forgiveness and life. It is to hold men accountable for their response to **His First Coming** that Jesus will come again.

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To better understand the factors related to **His Second Coming**, consider the fact that though there are more than three hundred prophecies about **Jesus' First Coming**, there are even more which tell us about **His Second Coming**; for the Bible is saturated with such prophecies and information. We take note of the following information which God has provided about Jesus' Second Coming which has two phases:

1) **The first phase** is when He suddenly comes to rapture His own: those who constitute His spiritual body, the church.

The rapture is frequently described in the Scriptures, perhaps most fully in 2 Thessalonians 4:13-17, and is called *“the blessed hope.”* It is the next significant event on God's calendar and is the event in which the Lord suddenly removes those belonging to Him from this earth just prior to the public exposure of the Anti-Christ and the beginning of the seven-year tribulation period. John being raptured up into the Lord's presence in heaven in Revelation 4:1 is a picture of the rapture of the church. The church is never seen or heard from again on this earth because John's experience is a picture of the church being removed from the earth. Therefore, the church has no role whatsoever in the events associated with the tribulation period and is not seen again until Revelation 19:7-9 where God tells us about the marriage supper of the Lamb (Jesus) to His bride (the church). Note the particulars of this first phase of **Jesus' Second Coming**:

Purpose: God's purpose for this phase is singular — to remove His saints from this wicked earth. The removal of the saints from the earth leaves only the wicked to be exposed to the seductive activity of Satan and the judgments of God.

Timing: The timing is not known to anyone; therefore all of God's saints are told to live with an urgent expectancy for it will happen suddenly without warning. In 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 we read about the **“suddenness”** of Jesus' coming at the Rapture: *“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.”*

Consequences: For both the raptured saints and the wicked who are left on the earth, there are serious, non-reversible, eternal consequences resulting from the choices each person has made regarding Jesus Christ.

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1) For the raptured saints, the rapture produces some wonderful consequences:

First, the raptured saint is **“changed,”** given his resurrected body (1 Cor. 15:52-55).

Second, the raptured saint appears before the **Bema Seat of Christ** to give an account of his stewardship and receive rewards for his faithful service to the Lord (Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 4:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Third, the raptured saint receives the eternal, heavenly dwelling the Lord has prepared for him (John 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4) and will spend eternity in the intimate presence and uninhibited fellowship of the Lord (Revelation 21:3).

Fourth, the raptured saint will spend an eternity in God's heaven where time will be no more, nor pain, nor tears, nor suffering, nor death, nor sin, temptation, nor war (Revelation 21:4).

2) For those who have chosen to reject Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, choosing instead to belong to and serve Satan and are left here on this earth, the rapture results in some horrible consequences.

First, all who have rejected Jesus as Lord and Savior are warned that, when the rapture occurs, the events of judgment will proceed on a predetermined schedule with the particulars and results of such already predetermined.

Second, the wicked's choice to reject Jesus as Lord and Savior, not only determines his eternal destiny, but also damns his nature and character, resulting in him becoming more and more like the devil (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Rev. 9:20-21; 16:8-11; 22:11), reproducing Satan's nature and hatred of God as well as reaping his damnation.

Third, the rapture, removing God's saints from this wicked world, exposes the wicked to the full, unrestrained wages of sin, with all of its awful, depraved characteristics, particularly as seen in Revelation thirteen when Anti-Christ is allowed to manifest himself, without restraint, in this wicked world.

Fourth, the rapture exposes those left behind as the direct objects of the fullness of God's wrath, without any mixture of grace and mercy, which is poured out in the tribulation period as described in the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

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2) **The second phase of Jesus' Second Coming is the Victorious Coming of Jesus Christ as Lord and King of Kings** to render a final, complete and eternal judgment upon all who have rejected Him as their Lord.

Purpose: To present Himself as **“King of Kings, Lord of Lords,”** asserting the fullness of His sovereign authority over all things as He brings an end to evil and to the existence of this wicked and sin perverted world, judging it and giving it's **due**, **then** ushering in: (1) His Millennial Kingdom upon this earth; followed by (2) His **“new heaven and new earth.”**

This is graphically presented in Revelation 19:11-21 where Jesus is seen coming as **the** victorious King to vanquish, judge and punish Satan and his evil followers. Those who follow Satan will be utterly destroyed by our Lord at His coming with their flesh becoming a great feast for wild beasts and ravenous birds. At this time, Satan's leaders in his rebellion against God (**the beast and the false prophet**) will be cast into the **“lake of fire burning with brimstone.”** One thousand years later, at the conclusion of **the Millennial Kingdom**, God will **“cast the devil”** into the **“lake of fire burning with brimstone”** to join them for an eternity of suffering and punishment. Then, following that event, the Lord will summon all who have rejected Him as their Lord and Savior to rise from their graves and appear before Him as He sits upon His **“great white throne”** where He will judge them according to their rejection of Him, casting them into the same eternal **“lake of fire burning with brimstone”** (Revelation 20:10-21). This will conclude the events associated with our **Lord's Second Coming**, for the next chapter of Revelation begins God's description of the **“new heaven and new earth”** (Revelation 21:1).

Timing: This second phase of **the Lord's Second Coming** follows the first phase by at least seven years **and will occur** at the completion of the great tribulation.

Consequences: All who have rejected Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will be resurrected with bodies designed to experience eternal suffering and pain to its fullest extent (John 5:28-29), **and will appear** before Christ as He sits upon His **“great white throne of Judgment”**. He will then **cast** each of the wicked into the **“lake of fire burning with brimstone”** for eternity (Rev. 20:11-15).

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At the same time, Jesus, Who created this world, will cause it to disappear and no longer exist. There will then be no more time, materiality or space as we know it in this world (Rev. 20:11).

The above reasons are but a summary of why the Lord so emphatically focuses on this subject in this last chapter in the Bible. It is why He so emphasizes in His last words to mankind, **“Behold, I come quickly!”**

As the Lord's Revelation of Himself moves towards a conclusion **He brings** the history of this world and man to a final conclusion when time shall be no more and man will no longer be able to respond to Him, Jesus makes sure that all who read His Revelation are faced with the solemn seriousness of the situation. If any person, reading these words from our Lord fails to take them with the greatest sense of seriousness and urgency, it will be the greatest act of foolishness exercised by any man.