Four Certainties About the Second Coming of Christ

The Bible affirms with absolute certainty that Jesus Christ *will* return—Jesus Himself promised it (John 14:1-3), and angels proclaimed it (Acts 1:9-11). While this event is certain, the exact time remains completely unknown (Matt. 24:36-44; 1 Thess. 5:2), so His people must always be prepared (2 Pet. 3:10-14). How glorious His coming will be, when "every eye will see Him" (Rev. 1:7)! Consider what will happen.

At the second coming, every dead person will be raised at the same time. Scripture emphasizes repeatedly that it is the body that is raised, not the soul, for the soul never ceases to exist (Jas. 2:26; Ecc. 12:7). Jesus taught that "all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth" in the same hour—both the righteous and the wicked (John 5:28-29). There will not be days or even years separating their resurrections. This great moment will occur at "the last trumpet" on "the last day" (1 Cor. 15:52; John 6:40). The righteous will rise to life, receiving glorified, incorruptible bodies, while the unrighteous will be raised to condemnation. What a scene that will be when every grave on earth gives up its dead!

At the second coming, the earth and everything in it will be destroyed. Immediately after the removal of all the living and all the resurrected dead from the earth, God will bring the material universe to a fiery end (2 Pet. 3:10-12; Matt. 24:35). The heavens will pass away with a great noise, the elements will melt with fervent heat, and the earth will be completely burned up. Scripture nowhere allows for Jesus to reign on a literal earth for a thousand years, nor does it teach that this planet will become the eternal home of the saved. Instead, this earth and everything in it will be dissolved.

At the second coming, every person who has ever lived will be judged. All nations will be gathered before Christ, the appointed Judge (Matt. 25:31-32; Acts 17:31). Every individual—small and great, righteous and wicked—will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give account (2 Cor. 5:10). God's Word will be the standard of judgment (John 12:48), and every thought, word, deed and secret will be revealed (Matt. 12:36-37; Rom. 2:6, 16; Rev. 20:12).

At the second coming, eternal destinies will be rewarded. The unrighteous "will go away into eternal punishment," and the righteous "into eternal life" (Matt. 25:46; cf. 2 Thess. 1:7-9). Eternity begins the moment Christ returns. Every person will consciously abide in the eternal bliss of God's presence or in the eternal damnation away from His presence.

What a thrilling day that will be! Since Jesus is surely coming, and no one knows when, now is the time to obey Him, serve Him and eagerly wait for His appearing.

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