



The Return of Christ and the Final Kingdom

Introduction

The return of Jesus Christ stands as the blessed hope of all believers and the climax of God's **redemptive plan**. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture points toward this moment when the King of kings will return to establish righteousness, defeat evil, and renew creation. The **Second Coming** is not merely an event in prophecy; it is the fulfillment of every promise, covenant, and purpose of God throughout history.

For the believer, Christ's return is a source of comfort, motivation, and joy. For the unbelieving world, it will be a time of **judgment** and awe. The Bible presents the return of Christ as a visible, personal, and triumphant event. He will not return in humility as at His first coming, but in glory and power to reign forever.

Understanding the return of Christ and the establishment of His final **kingdom** gives meaning to history, direction to faith, and hope to the Church in every generation.

The Promise of His Return

Jesus Himself promised His return. Before His crucifixion, He comforted His disciples, saying, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). This assurance forms the foundation of Christian hope.

After His resurrection, as the disciples watched Him ascend into heaven, two angels declared, "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). His return, therefore, will be personal, physical, and unmistakable.

Throughout Scripture, the Second Coming is tied to God's faithfulness. Just as the prophecies of Christ's first coming were fulfilled in detail, so His return will occur exactly as promised.

The Signs of His Coming

Jesus taught that recognizable signs would precede His return. In Matthew 24, He described wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and an increase in



lawlessness. He also warned that false prophets and messiahs would arise, deceiving many.

These **signs** are not meant to cause fear but to remind believers that history is moving toward a divine conclusion. Christ compared them to birth pains, indicators that the kingdom is drawing near. He urged His followers, “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).

The prophetic writings expand upon these themes, describing global unrest, the rise of **Antichrist**, and widespread spiritual deception. Yet amid the turmoil, God’s purposes remain sovereign and sure.

The Rapture and the Resurrection

The Apostle Paul revealed that the Lord’s return would unfold in two distinct phases: first, for His Church, and later with His Church. The first phase, known as the **Rapture**, precedes the seven-year Tribulation, also referred to as the **Seventieth Week of Daniel** (Daniel 9:24–27). This event marks the moment when Christ gathers His redeemed people to Himself before divine wrath is poured out upon the earth.

Paul declared, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: 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” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). The phrase *caught up* (**harpazō**) describes the sudden removal of believers into Christ’s presence. This is not symbolic but a literal, bodily translation of the Church to heaven.

The Rapture before the seventieth week aligns with God’s consistent pattern of removing the righteous before judgment—Noah entering the ark before the flood and Lot leaving Sodom before destruction. Paul wrote that believers “wait for his Son from heaven... which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10). The Church, as the bride of Christ, is not appointed to endure God’s wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

Once raptured, believers will appear before Christ at the **Bema Seat Judgment**, not to determine salvation but to evaluate faithfulness and reward. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body” (2 Corinthians 5:10). This is a time of examination and reward, when crowns are



granted for righteousness, endurance, and devotion. Works of lasting value will endure, while those without eternal worth will be consumed as wood, hay, and stubble (1 Corinthians 3:13–15).

While the redeemed stand before Christ in heaven, the prophetic seventieth week unfolds on earth. This **Tribulation** period will witness the rise of Antichrist, divine judgments, and the refining of Israel in preparation for her national redemption. Meanwhile, the Church, now glorified, is pictured in heaven rejoicing before the throne, clothed in fine linen, which represents the righteous acts of the saints (Revelation 19:8).

At the close of this seven-year period comes the second phase of His return: the glorious appearing of Christ with His saints. John writes, “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True... and the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean” (Revelation 19:11–14). The armies accompanying Him are the glorified believers who were raptured before the Tribulation and rewarded at the Bema.

This climactic return marks the culmination of the nations’ rebellion. Christ defeats the Antichrist, binds Satan, and establishes His millennial reign of righteousness (Revelation 20:1–6). Thus, the Rapture begins the final sequence of end-time events, and His visible return concludes it with judgment and kingdom glory.

The Rapture and the Resurrection reveal the mercy, precision, and majesty of God’s prophetic plan: the Church is delivered before wrath, rewarded in heaven, and returns in triumph with her King. It is the blessed hope of believers and the prelude to the everlasting reign of Christ.

The Judgment and the Defeat of Evil

At Christ’s return, the powers of evil will be confronted and overthrown. Revelation describes a climactic battle in which “the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet” (Revelation 19:20). Satan will be bound for a **thousand years**, symbolizing the end of his influence over the nations (Revelation 20:2).

Christ will sit in judgment, separating the righteous from the wicked, referred to as the **Sheep and Goat Judgment** (Matthew 25:31–46). The judgment is not arbitrary but righteous, based on the truth of God’s Word. Every hidden thing will be revealed, and every injustice will be made right. The unbelieving world will face condemnation, while the redeemed will receive reward and eternal inheritance.



This final judgment vindicates God's holiness and demonstrates His perfect justice. Evil, which has corrupted creation since the fall, will be utterly destroyed.

The Millennial Reign

Following the defeat of evil, Christ will establish His kingdom on earth. Revelation 20 describes this as a **thousand-year reign** in which righteousness and peace will prevail. The saints will reign with Him, fulfilling promises made to Israel and the Church.

During this period, creation itself will be renewed. Isaiah prophesied a time when "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb" (Isaiah 11:6), and the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The curse of sin will be lifted, and humanity will experience the blessings of divine rule.

The **millennial** kingdom fulfills God's promises (**unconditional covenants**) to Abraham, David, and the prophets, demonstrating that His word never fails.

The Great White Throne Judgment

After the millennium, Satan will be released briefly to test the nations once more, leading a final rebellion that will be swiftly crushed. Then comes the **Great White Throne Judgment**, where all the dead who rejected God will stand before Him. "And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20:12).

This judgment confirms the reality of accountability before a holy God. Those whose names are not found in the **Book of Life** will be cast into the **lake of fire**, which is the second death (Revelation 20:14-15).

Though sobering, this passage assures believers that evil will not endure. The universe will be purified, and righteousness will reign forever.

The New Heaven and the New Earth

After judgment, God will make all things new. John writes, "And I saw a **new heaven** and a **new earth**: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Revelation 21:1). The New Jerusalem, radiant with glory, descends from heaven as the dwelling place of God with His people.



In this **eternal kingdom**, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying” (Revelation 21:4). The curse will be gone, and perfect fellowship with God will be restored. The tree of life, lost in Eden, reappears, symbolizing everlasting life and communion with God.

The redeemed will serve and worship God forever in a creation free from sin and death. Heaven and earth, once separated, will be united in the fullness of God’s glory.

Theological Themes

The return of Christ and the final kingdom highlight several central truths:

- **God’s faithfulness:** Every promise will be fulfilled, confirming His eternal reliability.
- **Christ’s victory:** The cross and resurrection guarantee the final defeat of evil.
- **Divine justice:** The judgment restores moral order to the universe.
- **Eternal hope:** Believers will dwell with God in everlasting joy and peace.
- **New creation:** The restoration of all things reveals God’s ultimate purpose—to dwell with His people in holiness and love.

These truths invite both awe and anticipation. The story of redemption does not end in tragedy but triumph.

Living in Expectation

The certainty of Christ’s return calls believers to live in readiness. Jesus warned, “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matthew 24:42). The hope of His coming purifies the heart and motivates obedience.

To live in expectation means to walk faithfully, serve diligently, and proclaim the gospel boldly. The early Church greeted one another with the word “Maranatha,” meaning “Our Lord, come.” Their lives were oriented toward the hope of His appearing.

Today, believers are called to the same **expectancy**, not with fear, but with joyful anticipation. The promise of His return strengthens perseverance and deepens faith.

Conclusion

The return of Christ and the establishment of His final kingdom form the glorious culmination of God’s plan for creation. What began in a garden will end in a city, the



dwelling place of God with His redeemed. Every wrong will be made right, every tear wiped away, and every promise fulfilled.

For the believer, the second coming is not a distant doctrine but a living hope. It assures us that history is not aimless but directed by the sovereign hand of God. Christ, the Alpha and Omega, will reign forever, and His people will share in His glory.

As Scripture declares, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).