

## **Is Christ Really Returning? Matthew 24-25**

### **Introduction:**

For decades, you've probably heard on multiple occasions about the subject of prophecy – that which has yet to be fulfilled. Most of it centers on Christ's return and millennial reign on earth, also known as the Second Coming. Today, people continue to mock and ridicule those who would dare claim that Christ will be coming back (2 Peter 3:3-4). The Bible informs us that people will not be anticipating this event, it will not even cross their mind (2 Peter 3:10). Still, there are those who do not believe Jesus will be returning, but doubting His return doesn't make it any less a reality. Many doubted His first coming, but those prophecies came true and were fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.

As we have seen over the past few weeks, it is contradictory for one to state that they believe that Jesus was a good, moral man, but then deny His claims of being the Son of God, and other claims He made such as there being literal places like heaven and hell. Just like heaven and hell, Jesus spoke about His return to earth after His ascension to heaven with certainty. It will be clear that if one chooses not to believe in Christ's Second Coming, then they must of necessity believe that Christ was a liar. Why is this? Because Jesus Christ revealed that He would come back. In God's Word, it was recorded that He would return to this earth for a second time.

### **The Focus:**

- **Every person must understand the reality of Christ's Second Coming. What did Jesus declare regarding His return?**
  - **Christ will return in glory with the angelic host.**
  - **Christ's return will be visible to all.**
  - **Christ will return in judgment.**

In Matthew, it is recorded that Jesus declared that He would depart for a time, but He would return to the earth in great power and glory (Matthew 24:30; 25:31). After the crucifixion, Christ ascended as the rejected King, exiled to heaven, but one day He will return as the victorious, reigning King (Acts 1:9, 11; 3:20-21). Right now, Christ is exalted in heaven (Acts 2:33; Philippians 2:9), but one day He will be exalted throughout all the heavens and the earth (Philippians 2:10-11).

Another truth recorded in Matthew is that Christ's return will be visible to all – believers and non-believers. Speaking to an unbelieving, Jewish high priest regarding His return, Jesus said, "You will see me with power at my return." (Matthew 26:64) Speaking to the disciples about the end of days, Jesus said that the peoples of the earth will see Him coming in the clouds of heaven with power and glory (Matthew 24:30). So there is no confusion, it is important to distinguish between Christ's return to the earth and the rapture of the Church, the body of Christ.

Studying God's Word, they are not the same event. When Christ raptures the Church out from this earth, it is a secret return that happens before you can blink an eye, but when He returns to the earth in power and great glory, every eye will behold Him (1 Corinthians 15:52; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:26-27; Revelation 1:7). God's Word indicates that His return will last about three days

(Isaiah 63; Habakkuk 3). The unbelieving world does not look for or anticipate the return of Christ, nor will they right before it happens. They will scoff at the idea just as so many do today.

Another part of Christ's return that is unlike His first coming, Jesus will be coming to judge His enemies (Matthew 25:32-33, 46; 13:40-43). When Christ returns, He will make all of the wrong done, right. The ungodly who reject Christ's love will be judged and punished according to what they have done (Matthew 24:32-33, 46). The first time Jesus came to this earth, He came as a Lamb to make peace through the blood of His cross. He came meek and lowly riding on a donkey into Jerusalem. But when He comes again, He will return to earth as a roaring Lion on a white horse to make war with the ungodly and bring judgment (Revelation 19:11-12; Joel 3:16).

When Jesus returns, He will be unleashing His vengeance upon all the injustices of this world (Isaiah 30:27, 30; Romans 12:19). On the character and integrity of Christ, you can be sure that He is coming back to reconcile all things. He promised that He would one day judge and destroy the ungodly. He promised He would bring peace and righteousness to this earth and He will fulfill it. His Word is completely trustworthy and reliable (Revelation 19:11).

### **Response to the Sermon:**

As a believer, your response to Pastor Dan's message should be to embrace and fulfill the vocation of your ambassadorship. We are representatives of Christ while He is exiled in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:20). Today, Christ desires to offer peace to all His enemies because of the work He accomplished through His sinless life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection (2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Colossians 1:20). But to do that, Christ needs people to tell others this good news, that's why He commissioned Paul, whom we follow (Romans 10:14-15; Acts 26:17-18; Romans 15:15-16; 1 Corinthians 11:1). Our reaction to this message is to tell others of Christ's great love that He displayed for them on the cross, but also the reality of Christ's return where He will come to judge and make war (Revelation 19:11). We must engage with others, informing them of the truth. We must ask them to consider and accept Jesus' offer of grace and peace.

### **Bible Study Thoughts & Questions:**

Studying human history, we understand the nature of mankind's heart toward God (Genesis 6:5; Job 21:14-15; 22:15-17; Romans 1:21). Therefore, it is nothing new for people to be skeptical or to have unbelief toward God and the things of God (2 Peter 3:3-4). If people are going to become followers of Christ, it will be because they were persuaded with the truth of God (John 17:17).

1. If we are going to see non-believers become believers, what must we do to help them in their discovery of the truth (1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2:13)? Why is this so important for us to do? If it is so important, why do we neglect to take the opportunity to communicate with God?
2. The encounter of Christ and the Samaritan woman at the well is a great story of conversion. Read John 4:3-42. What are some things that you observe regarding the

woman's response and how Christ engaged in conversation with her? What is one thing that you identified that you want to implement in your witness to others?

### **Application Questions:**

Today, Jesus is the exiled King who is waiting in heaven (Acts 3:20-21). However, Christ will be returning one day, and when He does, He will come to establish His kingdom. As students of God's Word, we understand that this return is going to be an intense, bloody battle (Revelation 16:14-21). Jesus Christ will not be coming to make peace, but rather, to engage in war with God's enemies (Isaiah 63:1-5). Paul too speaks of this day (2 Thessalonians 1:3-12).

1. As ambassadors of Christ, we must understand that while on earth, we are in foreign, hostile territory, fighting against the powers of darkness (Ephesians 6:12). Paul desired that every believer would be counted worthy, or deserving, of the kingdom, but how did he say that God would measure this in our lives (2 Thessalonians 1:5, 11)?
2. Knowing the end of those that reject God's truth (2 Thessalonians 1:8-10), what should be our response in this time of grace (Colossians 1:28-29; 2 Thessalonians 1:11)? Why does this matter?
3. God's plan is always the best. So whether we suffer persecution or have great success, what is it all for (2 Thessalonians 1:12)? Why is this an important truth to remember as we travel through this life on earth? How should this shape our thinking and actions?

### **Prayer:**

- Pray that every believer would be an ambassador that seeks to impact the lives of others, seeing them reconciled into a relationship with God (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).
- Pray that on your journey with Christ that you would be counted worthy of the vocation you have been given and as a citizen of heaven (2 Thessalonians 1:5, 11).
- Pray that all we do would be for the glory of God (2 Thessalonians 1:12).
- Pray that your witness helps people understand the reality of Christ's return.