

The Second Coming Of Jesus Christ.

<p> When Jesus Christ was here on earth He taught us that we must be ready at all times for the fact that one day He would personally return, powerfully, effectively and decisively. Furthermore immediately following His final ascent into Heaven angels appeared to the disciples and promised them, 'This same Jesus Who has been taken from you up into Heaven *'will come in the same way as you have seen Him go'* (Acts 1.11). It is quite clear therefore that He was indicating a literal, 'physical' return.

<p> There can indeed be no doubt that in His parables He demonstrated the impact that that the idea should have on our Christian lives. He said, 'Let your sleeves be rolled up and your lights be burning, and you yourselves like men who wait for their Lord, when He will return -- blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He comes, will find watching --' (Luke 12.35-37). His emphasis was on the importance of our being ready for His return because then He will call on us all to account for our stewardship (Luke 12.43-48; 19.12-27; Matthew 25.14-46).

<p> The importance of this truth is such that we must not allow it to be clogged up by our own particular interpretations of prophecy. Our interpretations of prophecy will pass away, but the consequence of whether we have lived in readiness for His return will never pass away. For it is the fact that Jesus Christ came into the world to save us, that He is in process of completing that work within us by His Spirit, and that He is coming again to bring about our final deliverance (whether through 'rapture' or resurrection - 1 Thessalonians 4.14-18) that should be at the very centre of our Christian lives, and anything that takes away from that should be put aside.

<p> It is a sad reflection on modern teaching on the subject that many people are more concerned with what may happen in the end days than they are concerned with being in readiness to meet the Master when He comes. They convince themselves that they are preparing for His coming while they are really immunising themselves against the effectiveness of what He said. They are like people who think that the wedding celebrations would have gone much better if there had not been a bride and bridegroom. The point of teaching concerning the second coming should be that it makes us look forward to the coming of the Bridegroom.

<p> For in that day 'the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout (of command), the sound of a trumpet (proclaiming His coming) and the voice of God (proclaiming that coming), and the dead in Christ will rise first, and then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together in clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so will we ever be with the Lord' (1 Thessalonians 4.16-17). The dead in Christ will already have been perfected (Hebrews 12.23) and those who are caught up will be transformed 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will all be changed' (1 Corinthians 15.52).

<p> There will be no doubt about His coming. It will not be in secret, nor will it be hidden, but 'then will appear the sign of the Son of Man (our Lord Jesus Christ) in Heaven, and then will all the nations of the world mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming in power and great glory, and He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they will gather together those whom He has chosen from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other' (Matthew 24.30-31).

<p> And following that will come the final Judgment which will bring blessing to believers in Jesus Christ as they receive the rewards for what they have done in their bodies, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5.10; 1 Corinthians 3.10-16; Matthew 25.31-48; Romans 14.11; Revelation 20.11-15), and a curse on the those who have not believed, 'because they did not believe in the Name of the only Son of God' (John 3.18; Matthew 25.31-48; Revelation 20.11-15).

<p> 'Be ready therefore, for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man will come' (Matthew 24.44).