

Lesson 18 – The Return of Christ

Key Verse: John 14:2–3

“In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”

Overview

Over the past two thousand years many people have tried to predict the return of Christ. For example, Edgar Whisenant published a book titled *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be* in 1988. When that didn't happen, he wrote a follow-up book titled *The Final Shout: Rapture Report 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993*. These predictions have gone all the way back to sixth century and they still continue today. Many Christians have debated the signs of the end times as they seek an answer to the question, “When will Jesus return?” Although we will never be able to predict the date of Christ's return, the Bible teaches a lot about the return of Christ.

The Rapture and the Second Coming

Rapture

1. John 14:3. What will Jesus do for believers in the future? _____

2. 1 Thessalonians 4:16. According to this verse, how will Christ return? _____

3. 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Where will the dead and living who are in Christ meet Him? _____
4. 1 Corinthians 15:50–54. What will happen to the dead and the living? _____

5. 1 John 2:28. What does this verse reveal about Christ? _____
6. 1 John 3:2. What does John say about Christ? _____

Second Coming

7. Matthew 24:29–31. When will Christ’s second coming be? _____
8. Acts 1:11. What does this verse reveal about Christ’s return? _____

9. Zechariah 14:4. Where will Christ return to? _____
10. Zechariah 12:10. What will Israel do when Jesus returns? _____
11. Revelation 19:11–16. What does this passage speak of? _____

**“Although no one can know the time of Christ’s return, all believers should respond as John did in Revelation 22:20 when he heard Christ say, ‘Surely I am coming soon.’
John’s response was ‘Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!’”
—Wayne Grudem, *Christian Beliefs*, pg. 120**

Three Views of the End Times

- Revelation 20:1–6. How long will believers reign with Christ? _____

1. **Amillennial View:** *The millennium is now, and when it ends, Jesus will return.*

This view describes Revelation 20:1–6 as the present church age, not a future time. Those who hold this view believe that many or all of the previously mentioned signs occurred early on in church history and that Christ could return at any moment. They take Revelation 20:4 to mean Christians who have already died are today reigning with Christ in a spiritual sense. The “thousand years” in Revelation 20 are a figure of speech for a long period of time—namely, the entire church age from Pentecost to Christ’s return. It is called “amillennial” (no-millennium) because they don’t believe Revelation 20:4–5 teaches a future thousand-year reign either before or after Christ’s return.

2. **Postmillennial View:** *The millennium will come gradually, and Jesus will return after the millennium.*

This view describes the return of Christ happening after the thousand years mentioned in Revelation 20:4–5. The church will grow and have a greater and greater influence on society and society will begin to function more and more in line with God’s standards. Gradually, a “millennial age” of peace and righteousness will come about on earth, but this is not necessarily a literal one thousand years. At the end of this millennial age, Jesus will return. There will be only one resurrection of both believers and unbelievers. This view is called “postmillennial” (after the millennium) because Christ’s return and reign will occur *after* a future millennium.

3. **Premillennial View:** *The millennium is future and will come suddenly, and Jesus will return before the millennium.*

This view describes the return of Christ before the events of Revelation 20:1–10. It is called “premillennial” because it holds that Christ will return *before* the millennium. This view also holds that prior to Jesus’ return there will be a time of great suffering on earth called the tribulation. This tribulation will be a seven-year period. After the tribulation Christ will return physically to reign on earth for one thousand years. When Christ returns to begin His millennial reign, all who have believed will be raised from the dead to reign with Christ. During the millennium, Satan and his demons will be removed and bound so that they will not have influence on the earth. However, there will be people who sin and reject Christ during this time.

- Revelation 3:10. What will Christ keep the church from? _____

- **Pretribulation Premillennial View:** The return of Christ will happen in two stages: first, He will *appear* before the seven-year tribulation to suddenly take (rapture) the Church out of the world; and second, after the tribulation (seven-year period) He will *return* back to earth and will bring Christians back with Him to reign for one thousand years. During the tribulation, the vast majority of Jewish people will trust in Christ as their Messiah (Zech. 12:10; Rom. 11:25–26; Rev. 7).

“What unites all premillennialists is the belief that there will be a kingdom of Jesus on earth with His saints after this present age but before the eternal state.”
—John MacArthur, *Essential Christian Doctrine*, gen. ed., pg. 454

Application

1. How does this truth challenge you to live your life now?
2. How does the truth of Christ’s return give you hope?