

CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE POSTAL COURSETutor's Name: Date: Student's Name: Ref No.: **LESSON 3 • The Return of the Lord Jesus to earth**WEEKLY READINGS
READING FOR STUDY PAPERGenesis 7-9, Luke 7-10
Acts 1, 2 Thessalonians 1

Two thousand years ago

Jesus had been crucified. His followers were puzzled and disappointed. All their hopes had been placed in Him - now He lay dead in the tombs.

But the third day He rose again. Surely they must have remembered the words He had spoken to them before His death, "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice...but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John.16:20).

What a joy it must have been to see their beloved Lord and Master again. John tells us, "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord" (John.20:20).
How glad they were, we can hardly imagine.

When Jesus went to heaven

Now read the first eight verses of Acts.1 again. Picture to yourself how happy the apostles must have been during those 40 days, when Jesus was amongst them once more, as their teacher.

Picture them, at the end of those 40 days, standing on the green hill-slopes of Bethany, with Jesus in their midst. Suddenly, He was taken from them, upwards into heaven. How they would gaze after Him as left the earth, and was hidden from their view by a cloud. He had been taken from them again. Yet this time they were neither puzzled nor disappointed; not at all! Luke tells us that, "...He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, and they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke.24:51-52).

The secret of their joy

Why, after this second parting, were they so joyful? Partly, because Jesus had made them a promise. He had said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt.28:20).

So they knew that, whatever happened, He would be watching over them from Heaven.

But that was not all! While they were watching Him go into heaven, two angels came to them with a message. They said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? 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).

This is such an important little verse, it is worth learning by heart. As the disciples went back to Jerusalem to obey the commandments of their Lord, they knew for certain that Jesus Himself would come back to this earth. And this made them very happy.

The words of Jesus

That was nearly 2,000 years ago, and Jesus has not come back yet. But He will come. He said so Himself. In Luke.21:27, He speaks about coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. (Did you notice that He went in a cloud? And that the angels said He would come "in like manner" as they had seen Him go up?)

Many of the parables also speak of His second coming. Take, for instance, the parable in Matt.25:1-13. This speaks of a bridegroom and, although the picture is of an Eastern wedding, we have no difficulty in understanding it. The bridegroom, of course, is Christ, and the story warns us that when He comes, there will be some who are not prepared for Him.

Notice verse 13. Jesus does not say, "Ye know not whether your Lord will come or not". His coming is certain. But He does say, "Ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh".

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In His very last message, in the book of Revelation, Jesus said,
"Behold I come quickly" (Rev.22:7).

The witness of Peter

Not many days after Jesus had gone into heaven, we find Peter in the Temple, in Jerusalem, speaking boldly to the Jews who had been responsible for crucifying Him. See what he says, in Acts.3:19-20:
"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you."

Peter also spoke of the second coming of Christ in a letter which he wrote later to believers. In 2 Pet.3:4, he spoke of those who would say, scoffingly.
"Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Perhaps you have heard people use words very much like those, saying:
"Oh, they've been saying Jesus is coming back for a long time, but He hasn't come yet", and they sometimes add, "He never will."

But God has promised to send Him, and we know that He will keep His promise. Peter goes on to say, in verses 9 and 10,
"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come, as a thief in the night..."

The witness of Paul

Jesus Himself appeared to the apostle Paul, and sent him to preach to others. Paul claims that the gospel that he preached was given him by Jesus Christ.

And Paul taught about the second coming of the Lord. In Acts.17:31, we find him saying,
"He (God) hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained..."

Paul wrote two letters to the Church at Thessalonica. You will find these letters in your Bible - they consist of eight short chapters, and - here is the surprising thing - in every chapter Paul mentions the coming of Jesus.

In 1Thes.4:16 the apostle speaks of the resurrection of the dead at Jesus' coming.
"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."

In 2 Thes.1:Paul tells how Jesus will be..
"...revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Here he speaks of Jesus Christ coming to punish some - but if we read on, we find that he also speaks of some to whom His coming will bring joy, for He will come "to be admired in all them that believe".

If we are wise, like the wise virgins of the parable, we will study His word, and prepare ourselves now for His coming. When Jesus said,
"Surely I come quickly" (Revelation.22:20) to the apostle John, he replied,
"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Shall we be like the apostle, and make this the prayer of our hearts?

Summary

1. Jesus Christ is coming back to the earth.
2. We can be quite sure about this, because He said so Himself.
3. Also the angels said so, Peter said so, Paul said so, and John said so.
4. If we are wise, we shall prepare now for His coming.