

COME, LORD JESUS.

January 24, 2010.

Introduction.

Just over two thousand years ago a seemingly unimportant event took place. A baby was born to a poor young couple in the town of Bethlehem. If you were there and you had rushed out in the street and shouted, “*Joseph & Mary just had their first child. And it’s a boy!*”, most likely nobody would have paid attention to you. And maybe someone would have shouted back to you, “*Stop disturbing the neighborhood. We are trying to get some sleep here.*”

But that night when this child was born, someone very important was paying attention. That someone was the God of heaven and earth. The child born was His Son. When the angel Gabriel visited Mary, he told Mary that she would conceive and bear a Son and she must name Him “**Jesus**”. The angel told Mary, “He will be called the Son of the Most High” and He will be called “the Son of God.” (*Lk.1:30-35*).

The First Coming.

Jesus’ birth was no unplanned event. The Bible tells us, “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” (*Gal.4:4-5*). Note the expression, “when the fullness of the time came.” Jesus came into this world at the appointed time, at the time that was divinely decreed.

Jesus did not come into this world because this was His decision to do so. He came because His Father sent Him. The verse says, “God sent forth His Son” into this world. This was a point Jesus made several times during His ministry on earth. Jesus came for a specific purpose. He came to redeem us. He came so that in redeeming us “we might receive the adoption as sons.” All God’s redeemed children, male and female, are called “sons”. The language is not sexist but it accommodates the prevailing culture of the time. Only sons received an inheritance from their fathers. A daughter was not given any inheritance share in her father’s possessions. *1Pet.1:4* tells us that all God’s children have an inheritance reserved for them in heaven.

The first promise that was made concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is found in *Gen.3:15*. The promise is made right after man’s fall into sin and in the midst of the judgments being pronounced against the serpent, the woman and the man. God said to the serpent, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall crush you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

As someone once said, this is no ordinary snake story. So who is this talking snake? It must be noted that the snake that came to Adam and Eve was a real physical snake. But that snake was used by another being and became representative of that being. That being is the devil and, if I may put it this way, his messenger for accomplishing his wicked deeds was the snake. He who has ears to hear, let him hear and understand. The Lord Jesus identified the devil with the serpent in *Jn.8:44*. *Rev.12:9* speaks of “the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan.”

God promised that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. The seed of the woman is the Lord Jesus. In redeeming us He would, at the same time, crush and defeat the devil. When you kill a snake, what do you normally do? You crush the head. Every time you kill a snake by crushing its head God’s promise is re-enacted and, unwittingly, the gospel is preached – the gospel of Christ’s victory, Satan’s defeat and our redemption from our sins.

Several other promises would be made in the Old Testament concerning the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. These promises or prophecies spoke of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection. They also spoke about the purpose of His coming. Time will not allow me to survey these many passages for you. But let me encourage you to read the gospels. You will see many of these prophecies quoted in the gospels and their fulfillment are marked as having taken place in Christ.

I want to do two things here. **Firstly**, I want to mark the established historical fact that Jesus came into this world the first time. First century secular historians do not acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ or promised Messiah and the Son of God. But they do acknowledge that one called Jesus lived in Judea, was an itinerant preacher, was reported to have performed miracles, was sentenced to die as a common criminal under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, and it was reported that He rose from the dead the third day. For the last two thousand years the world has acknowledged the first coming of Jesus by celebrating His birth, death and resurrection.

Secondly, why did Jesus come the first time? The Jews were expecting their Messiah to come, establish Himself as a political King, overthrow the Roman government, re-establish the kingdom of Israel as a world power, and restore the nation's former glory that existed under Kings David and Solomon. Just prior to His ascension the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (*Acts 1:6*).

Jesus acknowledged to Pilate that He is a King. But as He told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." (*Jn.18:36-37*). The kingdom Jesus came to establish is a spiritual kingdom. That kingdom is His church. He did not come to wage war against and overthrow the Roman kingdom. He came to wage war against and overthrow Satan's kingdom. Satan was bound, crushed and defeated by Jesus' death on the cross, burial and resurrection. In *Matt.12:29* Jesus said you cannot plunder the strong man's house unless you first bind him. Jesus has bound Satan and He is plundering Satan's house.

By His death on the cross Jesus paid the legal penalty for our sins. As sinners we are guilty of breaking God's Law. The penalty for sin is death. Take note of this fact – the penalty for sin is death. The penalty for sin is not good works and / or religious works. You do not pay for your sins by being good and serving God. The Bible clearly says, "the wages of sin is death." (**Rom.6:23**). We are no different to Adam and Eve in their sin against God. God laid down His command. Adam and Eve believed the satanic lie. They believed they could do things their own way and God would just have to accept that as a fact of life. They discovered how very wrong they were.

Satan continues to lie to men and women and they are still believing his lies. God has clearly said the penalty for sin is death. Man believes that he can pay for his sins with good works and religious devotion to God. God has clearly said only the Lord Jesus Christ can save you. Man believes he can save himself. God has clearly said that there is only one way to Him. Man believes he can devise his own way to God. This is why you have so many religions and religious books. This is the very reason why you have so many cults and liberal denominations even in Christianity. Those who believe Satan's lies will discover in the final judgment how very wrong they were. But then it would be forever too late.

But let us get back now to the point I was dealing with. Jesus paid for our sins by taking our place, becoming our substitute and dying in our stead. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." (**Jn.10:11**). **Rom.5:8** says, "Christ died for us." **1Cor.15:3** says, "Christ died for our sins." **Gal.1:4** says Jesus "gave Himself for our sins."

Because He paid the penalty for our sins on the cross, we can receive the forgiveness of our sins. In **Lk.24:47** Jesus said "that repentance for forgiveness of sins [must] be proclaimed in His name to all the nations." **Acts 5:31** tells us that He is the Savior who grants repentance and forgiveness of sins. **Acts 10:43** says, "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him

receives forgiveness of sins.” *Eph.1:7* says “In [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.” (cf. *Col.1:14*).

If you repent of your sins and put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to save you, you will receive the forgiveness of your sins and the Lord will save you. (*Acts 2:38; 16:30-31*). Yes, that is how simple and easy it is. God’s way is simple. God’s way is easy. In God’s way salvation is His free gift in Christ to you. All you have to do is receive it. Furthermore, when God saves you He also rescues you from Satan’s domain of darkness and transfers you to the kingdom of His beloved Son. (*Col.1:13*). In *Jn.5:24* Jesus said you will receive eternal life and you will not come into judgment because you have passed out of death into life.

Picture yourself living in the city of death. You are then rescued by the Lord. He puts you into a boat and sends you across to the city of life. You get out the boat and enter the city of life. Then you hear a loud explosion. You look back and you see the boat that brought you across has been destroyed. You look more carefully and you see there are no boats tied up in the docks of the city of life. Those in the city of life will never go back to the city of death. Those in the city of life cannot go back to the city of death. This is what the verb “**has passed**” tells us. Those in the city of life have eternal life.

I want to outline for you a few of the things Jesus accomplished when He died to save you.. *Heb.2:3* describes salvation in Christ as “so great a salvation.” Salvation is described as eternal life. Note the word “**eternal**”. According to *Jn.5:24* salvation in Christ means you do not have to fear or worry about being brought to the final judgment all sinners will have to face.

Salvation in Christ means you have received total forgiveness for all your sins – past, present and future sins. And so the psalmist says, “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!” (*Psa.32:1*). The word “**blessed**” is plural. Even though it is grammatically awkward, we can translate this verse as follows, “*Oh the blessednesses, oh the great happinesses, oh the great joys of*

the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Think of this for a moment : God has taken all your sins without exception, past sins, present sins and future sins, and covered them with the blood of Christ and buried them. And His promise is that they will stay buried for all eternity. Do you see the reason why the psalmist was leaping for joy? Do you see the reason you must be leaping for joy, even shedding tears of joy?

Lastly, salvation means that when God saves you in Christ, He changes you. *2Cor.5:17* says, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” The old life is brought to an end. The new life has come to stay permanently. This new life is characterized by godliness, love for God, love for Christ, love for the word of God, love for the people of God, love for the worship of God privately and in the public assembly.

This is what Jesus came to do the first time. He came to live and die to save sinners. He came to establish and build His spiritual kingdom of the church.

The Second Coming.

Now, along the way as Jesus dealt with His disciples He indicated to them time and again that He came to die, will be buried, will rise again the third day. But He also indicated that He would return to His Father in heaven and, at the set time, He would return a second time. In *Jn.14:3* Jesus said to His disciples, “If I go ... I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”

The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will be completely different to the first coming. The first time He came as a baby. This time He will return as an adult. The first time He came in humiliation. The second time He will return in glory. The first time He came as a citizen of Nazareth. This time He will return as the King of heaven

and earth. *Matt.24:30* says the people who are alive “will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.”

Even though the Lord gave us several signs that will point to His coming, Jesus also made it clear that He will come like a thief in the night. He made it clear that no one will know the day or hour of His coming. And so He warned us, “be on the alert ... you must be ready.” (*Matt.24:42-44*).

The signs that will take place are political, natural and spiritual. The political realm will be marked by conflicts and wars. The natural realm will be marked by all kinds of natural disasters. The spiritual realm will be marked by apostasy. Now let me explain a couple things. **Firstly**, the “**last days**” are not those days that immediately precede Christ’s return. The last days began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and will end with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter began his sermon on the day of Pentecost by seeking to explain the signs that were taking place with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And he began with these words, quoting from Joel’s prophecy, “‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind.’” (*Acts 2:17*).

Secondly, the signs given to us may take place in cycles but they will gradually increase and intensify. The reality is that despite all the efforts to establish peace after the two world wars, we have had more civil and inter-nation conflicts in the last fifty plus years than in any century in history. You must watch also for the increase and intensification of natural disasters through earthquakes, storms, diseases, etc. The world will come up with all kinds of fancy explanations. Then they will try to quietly explain they were wrong or made errors and how they must now redo this and redo that. Keep your minds focused on God’s unchanging word. Paul tells us in *Rom.8:19-22* that creation was subjected to futility as a result of man’s fall into sin. And creation is anxiously longing for that day when it will be freed “from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” Meantime the whole of creation is groaning and

suffering. Are we seeing a suffering groaning creation acting up with increasing intensity?

Turn to *Lk.21:25-27*. (**read**). Did you notice the interesting statement – “in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves”? *Rev.16:8-9* says, “The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.” The Bible makes it clear that through natural disasters God will bring increasing hardships and death upon men. Will the outpouring of Divine judgments bring them to repentance? No! Instead they will blaspheme God.

Let us take a moment and look at the spiritual sign. In *Lk.18:8* Jesus asked the question, “when the Son of Man comes, will He find the faith on the earth?” “**The faith**” is a reference to the Christian faith. The Lord Jesus made clear for us a number of things in the Olivet discourse (*Matt.24; Mk.13; Lk.21*). In *Matt.24:12* Jesus said, “Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold.” The statement is general and it tells us that increasing lawlessness will negatively impact peoples’ love for one another and peoples’ love for God. Selfishness will increase and as it increases it will have the effect of increasing lawlessness.

The waning of love for God is necessarily accompanied with a waning of love for His word and love for worshipping Him. A waning love for God’s word means you will not desire to read and study it and you will not desire to be taught it. The resultant effect will be a growing ignorance of God’s word and a gradually disappearance of the faith. How pervasive is the ignorance of God’s word in this nation? What does that tell you? A waning love for God and an increase in the ignorance of God’s word will result in the fear of God decreasing and common grace disappearing. This will lead to further lawlessness. In other words, *Matt.24:12* is a vicious cycle for this world.

Secondly, Jesus made it clear that in the last days there will be a proliferation of false Messiahs and false teachers. Their goal is to deceive and mislead. And they will be very successful. In *2Thess.2:3* Paul said, “the apostasy must come first.” The evidence of the success of false teachers is very clear for you to see. False teachers, both on TV and in churches, have the largest following in the world. It is quite likely that TBN is the most watched station on cable TV in this nation.

False teachers do not come to you with horns on their heads and teeth dripping blood. The Bible says they will come to you as angels of light. (*2Cor.11:13-14*). The Bible says they will come to you with smooth and flattering speech. (*Rom.16:18*). Peter tells us they have hearts trained in greed and “in their greed they will exploit you with false words.” (*2Pet.2:3, 14*). Note the word “**exploit**”. It means they operate like greedy businessmen. Note the word “**false**”. It was used to describe a document that was made up, forged or falsified. In other words the document made statements and claims that were not true. They will do the same to you and will not be afraid to say to you, “*God told us; God showed us; God wants you to know this through us.*” They are not afraid to use God’s name in telling you lies in order to exploit of you because they are lawless and do not fear God. In *Matt.7:21-23* Jesus described false teachers as workers of lawlessness.

Is the end near as yet? I do not know. But we are certainly two thousand years nearer to the end. Personally, I do not think the end is next door. The apostasy has been here since it invaded the apostolic church but it has not been pervasive. False teachers continue to abound but they are not in full control. We are seeing conflicts in the nations increasing and the accompanying death and destruction but we are not at the point as yet where the world is crying out for a world leader which we believe will be the antichrist. We are seeing major natural disasters and multiplied thousands dying but the world is not caught up as yet in the throes of suffering, destruction and death.

We are seeing a fresh rise and intensification of persecution of the church but the church has not been outlawed worldwide and it is not experiencing a worldwide persecution.

The process of outlawing the church is already taking place in the free world and especially in places like the USA, Canada and England. The steps are very simple : the passing of hate laws that forbids you from preaching against certain sins and the passing of new zoning laws that says churches cannot be built here and churches cannot be built there. These new zoning laws are also having the effect of outlawing house churches. I believe one of the things we must look for is the rise of the papacy to a position of international political power. The papacy as an office bears all the marks of the man of lawlessness who is yet to rise up.

Now Brethren, I want to briefly outline for you what will happen when the Lord returns. His return will be sudden. No one will be expecting His return. He will come like a thief in the night. In the meantime people will be asking with mockery, “Where is the promise of His coming?” (*2Pet.3:3-4*). The Bible makes it very clear that when the Lord returns, there will be a lot of noise because He will be returning in a blaze of glory. There will be no secret rapture. There will be shouting and the blowing of trumpets by the angels. (*1Thess.4:16*). The blowing of trumpets announces the arrival of a king but in Biblical imagery it also announces that judgment has arrived. When Christ returns the entire world will see Him in the clouds. (*Matt.24:30; Rev.1:7*).

When the Lord returns He will bring with Him all those Christians who died and went to heaven. From Abel, the first Christian to die, they will all return with the Lord. (*1Thess.4:13-17; 1Cor.15:50-57*). Their bodies will be resurrected and they will be reunited with their bodies. Then all Christians who are alive will be changed from corruptible to incorruptible and rise to meet the Lord in the air. The Bible says all these things will take place in the twinkling of an eye.

At the same time the Lord will pour out judgment on the earth and upon all who are living on the earth. (*2Thess.1:6-12; 2Pet.3:10-13*). *2Thess.1:7-8* says the Lord will be returning in flaming fire to deal out retribution. “**Flaming fire**” points to the holy fiery anger that He will have against the wicked. *2Pet.3:6* says the first world was destroyed by flood. *Vs.7* says, “But by His word the present heavens and earth are being

reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.” *Vs.10* says, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.” When the Lord returns, He is returning to pour out judgment and bring about the end of this world.

Now, in closing, a few points of application. **Firstly**, we know the Lord will come the second time because He came the first time. God’s word cannot be broken and God’s promises cannot fail. God’s word was fulfilled when the Lord came the first time. God’s word is being fulfilled as we look at what is happening in the world. God’s word will be fulfilled when the Lord returns the second time.

Secondly, the destruction of the present heavens and earth is not the final end of all things. Peter said, “according to [the Lord’s] promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.” (*2Pet.3:13*). *Rev.chaps.21 & 22* give us a glimpse of the glory of what is to come.

Thirdly, *2Pet.3:11* says to Christians, “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.” I want you to take note of two words here. The first is **“ought”**. This is the Greek verb **dei** which also translated **“must”**. This is a very important verb that is used several times in the Bible. It is the verb that expresses to us divine necessity, that which God expressly requires. The Lord’s return and the destruction of the heavens and the earth demand that our lives be marked by holy conduct and godliness.

The second word is **“what sort of.”** This is the translation of one Greek word. This is the word John used in *1Jn.3:1* where he wrote, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us....” In this verse our Greek word is translated **“how great.”** This word is found in *Matt.8:27*. After Jesus calmed the storm His disciples asked one another, “What kind of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” Our Greek word is translated **“what kind of”**.

This Greek word expresses utter surprise, wonder, amazement. Jesus' power astounded the disciples and they asked, "What kind of man is this...?" God's love for us astounded John and he asked, "What kind of great love is this?" God is saying to us that in view of the second coming of the Lord Jesus and the destruction of all things, your quality of godly and holy living must astound, amaze, surprise a watching world. One commentator translated what Peter wrote as follows, "*how outstandingly excellent must you be in holy conduct and godliness.*"

Now here are the questions : do non-Christians know you are a Christian and are they amazed at the godly quality of life you are living? Or are non-Christians amazed, shocked, astounded and saying, "*You are a Christian! I would have never known!*" Your life is not different. Your conduct is not different. Your language is not different. Your desires are not different. You have no qualms about cheating on the job, living poorly at home, liming and drinking with them, laughing at their coarse jokes. Peter is saying : Christ is coming. The end is coming. Judgment is coming. How outstandingly excellent must you be in holy conduct and godliness!

Lastly, if you are not a Christian you need very urgently to get ready for the Lord's return. When the Lord puts in His appearance, that is the end. When you hear the first trumpet blast, know this – the age of grace has ended. The door of salvation has closed and will never be reopened. That first trumpet blast will announce to the church, "*Here comes the Bridegroom.*" But it will also announce to every sinner, "*Here comes your judgment.*" The Bible makes it clear that the sinner will not run to Christ when He returns. Every sinner will run away from Christ and seek for a place to hide.

Do not fool yourself. Do not believe the devil's lies. Do not tell yourself that you have time because you do not know that. You do not know when the Lord will come. Do not tell yourself that you will have time to repent. On that day there will be no time to repent. Do not tell yourself that the Lord will be merciful. The parable of the ten virgins shows us very clearly that on that day the Lord will not be merciful. (*Matt.25:1-13*).

There are two other facts you must bear in mind as you dilly dally with your soul's salvation. The first is your death. The Bible says you have a fixed appointment with death but you do not know when you will be keeping that appointment. (*Heb.9:27*). Two people die in this world every second that passes. Approximately **173,000** people die every day. It is of the sheer grace of God that you are not in that number on any given day. Death will usher you into final judgment. And if you are not saved, you will be cast into hell for all eternity.

The second fact is this, God's hardening of your heart. God is calling you to salvation in Christ today. Tomorrow He can harden your heart as He did Pharaoh. And regardless of what happens, you will never respond to the gospel. The gospel call will be like water off a duck's back for you. In *Rom.1* we read three times, "God gave them over." God abandoned them. (*vss.24, 26, 28*). The book of Hebrews warned three times in quick succession, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart." (*Heb.3:7-8, 15; 4:7*).

Today God is calling and you are not listening. Tomorrow you may call and He will not listen. *Isa.55:6* says, "Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near." *Prov.1:24* says, "I called and you refused; I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention." *Vs.28* says, "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me."

We read in *Ezek.33:11*, "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord God, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die...?'" In *Isa.45:22* the Lord said, "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the other; For I am God, and there is no other."

The Lord is calling you today, calling you to repent of your sins and put your trust in Him to save you. What will you do with His call? Will you reject it yet another time? Beware of rejecting this call because this may be His final call to you.

