

Semester 1 – Week 1 - Class 2
A THIEF IN THE NIGHT

The very famous Dwight L. Moody was especially fascinated by today's subject, so much that one day he decided he was going to go through his Bible from Genesis to Revelation and see how often this subject of the second coming of Jesus was mentioned in the Bible. He found that **over 2,500 times** in the Bible this great event is mentioned, showing it to be one of the most important studies in the entire Scriptures.

There were over 300 prophecies which pertained to the first advent of Christ that He fulfilled. Because of false theories of how Jesus should come, the religious leaders rejected His Messiahship when He was with them, and discouraged people from listening to Him. Today most religious leaders are teaching a false theory of His second coming and would discourage people from hearing the real truth. We only need to learn what the Bible says and stand on that.

Matthew 24:4 **“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.”** Let's be sure that no man or woman deceives us, as God has the answer in His Word

In the **260 chapters of the New Testament** this subject of Christ's Second Coming is mentioned **331 times**. The Bible mentions the Second Coming **once in every 25 verses in the New Testament**.

John 14:1-3 **“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also.**

That promise is **the blessed hope** of every sincere seeker for truth.

Question: What solemn warning does Jesus give about His second coming?

Matthew 24:5 **“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”**

Matthew 24:24 **“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”**

Matthew 24:25, 26 **“Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth...”**

That's the first great deception that will be in the world about the second coming of Jesus. They're going to say, "Jesus is here in the desert or some other place. You can go out and see Him. He has already come."

Matthew 24:26 **“... behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not!”**

- 1) Christ is here, go out and see Him. All kinds of self-proclaimed messiah's and thousands and millions of people following after them.
- 2) He's coming in the secret chambers. Christ is saying, "Don't believe anything pertaining to a secret coming."

QUESTION: What will prevent the righteous from being deceived? It will be the manner of His coming.

1. Christ's coming is literal.

Acts 1:9-11 **“And when he had spoken these things, while they *beheld*, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their *sight*. And while they *looked* steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also 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.**

2. Christ's coming will be personal.

3. Christ's coming will be visible.

Revelation 1:7 **“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him...”**

Matthew 24:30 **“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”**

2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8 “**And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall 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.**”

4. Christ’s coming will be audible.

Matthew 24:31 “**And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**

Notice carefully now that the trumpet sounds when the gathering takes place!

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 “**For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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:**

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

- 1) the Archangel shouts, and 2) the trumpet blows, 3) the dead in Christ rise, and 4) we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Satan couldn't possibly duplicate that! That's clear, harmonious, simple, beautiful Bible truth.

The word "voice" here is from the Greek word 'phone', from which we get the word "telephone."

And in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 the apostle Paul says, “...**the trumpet shall sound...**” The **trumpet** is the most piercing of all instruments, nothing silent about it.

Jeremiah 25:30 “...**The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout...**”

- 1) He's coming literally. 2) He's coming personally. 3) It's visible. 4) It's audible.

5. Christ’s coming brings a resurrection.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 “**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 will rise first.**”

There will be a world-wide resurrection of the faithful from every land and generation. Satan can never duplicate this. He can trick and deceive, and impersonate but he cannot create life. Therefore he can never resurrect anyone. Could a world-wide resurrection occur and no one know it or see it?

6. Christ’s coming will be glorious.

Psalms 50:3 “**Our God shall come and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.**”

2 Thessalonians 2:8 “**And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.**”

Matthew 25:31 “**When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.**”

The glory of His father with all His holy angels. One angel killed 185,000 wicked Assyrian soldiers.

Texts like 1 Corinthians 15:52 “**In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:**” are used by thousands to say that Jesus is coming secretly, silently, and invisibly-- *** NOTICE*** The “**change**” comes In the twinkling of an eye,

verse 51 “**Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ...** “-- the coming does not happen ‘In a twinkling of an eye’!

QUESTION: What about the rapture?

The word rapture is not in the Bible. “Rapture” means catching up or snatching away.

1 Thessalonians. 4:16, 17 **“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: Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”**

QUESTION: What about the false doctrine of a secret rapture?

Books had been written that Jesus would rapture His church in 1988 based on the speculation of Hal Lindsey, author of the Late Great Planet Earth. 1994 was another date chosen for the rapture. How did this theory evolve?

Martin Luther, a reformer in the 16th century taught that the Pope was the antichrist, as did many other reformers.

A counter reformation move by Rome was called the Council of Trent, 1545 – 1563.

In 1590, (the Jesuit Francisco Ribera) Ribera published a commentary on the Revelation as a counter-interpretation to the prevailing view among Protestants which identified the Papacy with the Antichrist.

Ribera applied all of Revelation but the earliest chapters to the end time rather than to the history of the Church. Antichrist would be a single evil person who would be received by the Jews and would rebuild Jerusalem.

“The Blessed Hope: A Biblical Study of the Second Advent and the Rapture” by George Eldon Ladd, p.37, 38

Ribera denied the Protestant Scriptural Antichrist (2Thessalonians 2) as seated in the church of God – asserted by Augustine, Jerome, Luther and many reformers. He set on an infidel Antichrist, outside the church of God.

“Champions of Christianity in Search of Truth” by Ron Thompson, p.89

The result of his [Ribera’s] work was a twisting and maligning of prophetic truth.

“Seventy Weeks: The Historical Alternative” by Robert Caringola, p.32

Margaret MacDonald, Plymouth Church of the Brethren, was born in 1815 in Port Glasgow, Scotland and died around 1840. She embraced the futurist doctrine.

John Nelson Darby (18 November 1800 – 29 April 1882) was an Anglo-Irish evangelist, and an influential figure among the original Plymouth Brethren. He is considered to be the father of modern Dispensationalism and held to the futurist doctrine of Margaret McDonald.

Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (August 19, 1843 - July 24, 1921) was an American theologian, minister, and writer whose best-selling annotated Bible popularized dispensationalism among fundamentalist Christians. He learned the futurists theory of a pre-tribulation rapture from Darby and it is well notated in his Scofield Reference Bible.

The *“Left Behind”* Series and *“The Rapture”* by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins Sold 63 million copies and was termed fiction by the Library of Congress. It convinced many of a secret rapture.

One objection to the pre-Tribulation Rapture is that no one passage of Scripture teaches the two aspects of His Second Coming separated by the Tribulation. No single verse specifically states ‘Christ will come before the Tribulation’.

QUESTION: What about the seven years of tribulation?

The term **“seven years of tribulation”** is never used in the Bible.

However in Daniel 9:27 **“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease...”** This is a prophecy of the last seven years of the Jewish 490 years to right their many wrongs. It covered a period from AD 27 when Christ was baptized, to 3-1/2 years when He was crucified, to 3-1/2 remaining years concluding in AD 34 when Stephen was stoned and Paul was raised up to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. Somehow Ribera took this seven year period and projected it to the end time and applied it to the antichrist.

Because certain false teachers of Scripture say this seven year tribulation period over and over, indicating that those who are not raptured, will still have a second chance and therefore an assumption is made that it’s biblical. They say that the raptured saints will not have to endure the tribulation, but what does the Bible say?

Acts 14:22, **“Confirming the souls of the disciples, [and] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”**

John 17:15, **“I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”** God never said that His people will not go through the tribulation. We will be studying the prophecies of Daniel in detail in future lessons.

QUESTION: What about Jesus coming as a thief?

The Bible uses the “Thief in the Night” illustration 6 times: Matthew 24:42-44; Luke 12:39; 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 3:3; Revelation 16:15.

Christ’s coming as a thief does not refer to *HOW* He comes but *WHEN* He comes. It’s sudden and unexpected. Jesus will come as a thief in the night to those who are unprepared.

Matthew 24:42-44 **“But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch, the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”**

Luke 12:39 **“And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.”**

1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4 **“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.”**

2 Peter 3:10 **“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”**

Revelation 3:3 **“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”**

Revelation 16:15 **“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”**

The secret rapture theory teaches that sudden destruction will not come upon the wicked, but that they will have a 2nd chance for salvation and continue in a seven-year tribulation. Again, very inconsistent and unscriptural!

QUESTION: What about the expression ‘One taken and the other left’?

Matthew 24:40, 41 **“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”**

Luke 17:34-37 **“I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.”**

Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. . .

And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together. Matthew 24:28 uses the word "carcass" instead of body.

Matthew 24:37-39 **“But as the days of Noe [were], so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (They were taken to their destruction, those in the ark were left)**

Luke 17:28-30 **“Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”**

The vocabulary of the 2nd coming consists of three Greek terms used in the New Testament to describe the return of Christ. (3 different words—“parousia” and “epiphaneia” and “apokalupsis”)

Parousia—coming, presence; **Epiphaneia**—appearing, brightness; **Apokalypsis**—revelation.

Matthew 24:37-39 (Parousia is used for "coming") **Luke 17:26, 30** (Apokalupsis is used for "revealed")

2 Thessalonians 2:8 **“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming [Parousia].”**

These verses tell us that the lawless One, the Antichrist is destroyed by Jesus' coming! (Greek word "Parousia") The Antichrist can't be after the parousia. He's destroyed by the parousia!

2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9 **“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence [Parousia] of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”**

1 Peter 1:13 **“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation [Apokalypsis] of Jesus Christ.”**

Question - Why would Peter exhort Christians to keep hoping to the very end of the world for the grace brought through the revelation of Christ if their real hope was the secret rapture seven years before the revelation?

Titus 2:13 **“Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing [Epiphaneia] of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

1 Timothy 6:13, 14 **“I give thee charge in the sight of God... That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing [Epiphaneia] of our Lord Jesus Christ:”**

Matthew 25:31 **“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:”**

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 **“Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality.”**

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 **“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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: Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”**

A Simple Comparison

Luke 21:26-28 **“Men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”**

7. Christ's coming will be climatic.

Matthew 24:27 **“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming [Parousia] of the Son of man be.**

8. Christ's coming will be decisive.

Revelation 22:11, 12 **“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give (to how many people?) every man according as his work shall be. *Decisive event!! No second chance for salvation when Jesus comes.**

2 Corinthians 6:2 **“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”**

Matthew 24:36 **“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”**

Matthew 24:33 **“So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.”**