

PURPOSE OF STUDY: To show that the second coming of Jesus is imminent, literal, visible, audible, and glorious - the hope of every true believer.

TEXTS:

1. JN 14:1-3 (17:24)
2. MT 11:2-5; MT 27:42; LK 24:21
3. AC 1:9-11
4. REV 1:7 (14:14)
5. 1TH 4:16-17 (PS 50:3)
6. 1CO 15:51-52
7. MT 25:31 (MT 28:1-4; LK 9:26)
8. LK 17:26-37; REV 19:17-21 (JOB 39:27-30)
9. MT 24:40-44 (2PE 3:10-13)
10. 1TH 5:1-6 (REV 3:3)
11. IS 25:9; REV 6:15-16
12. 2TM 4:7-8

THE STUDY:

1. **What precious promise did Jesus make to all His followers? JN 14:1-3 (17:24)**
Jesus promised He would come again so that we could be with Him. This is His greatest desire, and He will do as promised. The return of Jesus to this earth is the culmination of the Christian hope.
2. **How important is it to understand the manner of Jesus' second coming? MT 11:2-5; MT 27:42; LK 24:21**
At the time of Jesus' first coming, the majority thought that He would come to conquer the Romans and set up an earthly kingdom. Because of this misconception of how the Messiah would come, they didn't recognize Him when He did come. Even worse, the religious leaders actually crucified Him because they thought He was an imposter. This makes it very important that we know how He is to come so that we don't make the same mistake! There is a very widespread belief today that Jesus will come in secret and steal the believers away.
3. **Will the second coming of Jesus be a visible event? AC 1:9-11**
As He ascended to heaven, the angels gave the bystanders an object lesson, saying that Jesus would come again in the same way they saw Him go. Notice all the words related to seeing and sight- "watched, sight, looked, behold, gazing, saw." John says "Every eye" will see Him (Rev. 1:7). Very clearly the Bible teaches that Jesus' return will be visible.
4. **Will only the saved see Him? REV 1:7 (14:14)**
Jesus is coming with clouds (remember "a cloud received Him out of their sight"), and every eye will see Him. Again in Rev. 14:14, Jesus is seen sitting on a cloud preparing for His coming.
5. **Will the coming of Jesus be audible? 1TH 4:16-17 (PS 50:3)**
A shout (voice of the archangel) and a trumpet. Definitely a noisy event. David says "Our God shall come and shall not keep silent" (Ps. 50:3). In addition to being visible, the coming of Christ will be audible (very audible!).
6. **What other climactic event will mark the coming of Jesus? 1CO 15:51-2**
Just as in the previous verse, we hear the sound of the trumpet, and the dead are raised, and the living at the time of Christ's coming are made immortal. People are united with their loved ones, all receiving the finishing touch of immortality – what a spectacular event! Who could miss it?! So far we have seen that the return of Christ to this earth will be a literal, visible, audible, and climactic event!

7. Will the coming of Jesus be glorious? MT 25:31 (MT 28:1-4; LK 9:26)

Yes, this will be a “glorious” appearing! To give us a proper perspective, when one angel appeared at the resurrection of Christ, the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb fell “as dead men.” When Jesus comes again, He will be coming with His glory and the glory of His Father and all the angels. No one will miss it!

8. What does the Bible say about those who are “left behind”? LK 17:26-37; REV 19:17-21 (JOB 39:27-30)

If you read the passage carefully, the context tells us that it will be just like it was in Noah’s day. There were only two groups – those saved and those destroyed. Likewise in Lot’s day. There was no second chance. Where will the wicked be left? “Where the body is...” We find the fulfillment in Revelation 19, when the birds are filled with their flesh.

9. Doesn’t the Bible tell us that Jesus is coming as a thief? MT 24:40-44 (2PE 3:10-13)

When the Bible speaks of Jesus coming as a thief, it is talking about the timing of His coming, not the manner of His coming. He is not coming to steal people away; rather He is coming unexpectedly, but when He gets here you’ll know it! Once again, when He comes it may be a surprise, but it won’t be a secret! Peter says that in the day He comes as a thief the heavens will pass away with a great noise.

10. Will Jesus come as a thief to everyone? 1TH 5:1-6 (REV 3:3)

The Bible says that Christ’s coming shouldn’t be a surprise to the believers, because they have been watching and waiting for His return, studying the prophecies that tell when the time is near, and laboring to spread the gospel to others. Jesus said that if we do not watch, He will come to us as a thief.

11. What two classes of people will exist when Jesus comes again? IS 25:9; REV 6:15-16

One class will be eagerly waiting Jesus’ return, while the other will be looking upon that day with fear and dread. Which group will you be in?

12. Who will ultimately receive the crown of life and go home with Jesus when He returns? 2TM 4:7-8

Do you “love His appearing”? Are you looking forward to that day?

APPEAL:

The Bible could not be clearer. Jesus is coming again. His coming will be a literal coming, not just spiritual; His coming will be a visible coming; an audible coming; a climactic coming; a glorious appearing. All heaven will come with Him; Father and Son will come together with all the holy angels to receive those who are eagerly waiting for Him. Jesus is coming again! Don’t you want to be ready for that day? Don’t you want to be with those who say, “This is our God! We have waited for Him, and He has come to save us!”? Nobody will be ready unless they plan now to be ready. Won’t you decide just now to start living for Jesus?

DIFFICULT TEXTS/OBJECTIONS:

“What about the secret rapture and the seven years of tribulation?” The popular theory of a secret pre-tribulation rapture is not a Biblical teaching. We have already seen that the coming of Jesus is anything but secret. The seven years of tribulation theory is actually taken, if you recall, from the 70 weeks of Daniel 9, which actually point to the work of the Messiah. The last prophetic week, or “7 years”, are torn from the historic setting and placed at the end of time based on something called the “gap theory”, which inserts a two thousand year gap between the 69th and 70th week (but that would make it the 2070th week, wouldn't it?). Again, this theory, as popular as it is, cannot be substantiated from the Bible. Part of its popularity is due to the fact that (1) it offers an escape from tribulation, and (2) it offers a second chance of salvation. Both concepts are diametrically opposed to the Christian faith. First of all, the Bible says tribulation builds character (Ro. 5:1-3). When Jesus faced His trial, He said “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour” (Jn. 12:27). In every age God has carried His people through times of trial. Noah and his family were saved through the flood, not from the flood. The three Hebrew worthies were saved in the fiery furnace, not from the fiery furnace. Daniel was saved in the lions' den, not from the lions den. And God is able to save me and you in the trials of our lives, only to make us stronger in Him. Furthermore, what Christian would want to be raptured and miss the greatest witnessing opportunity in history? Finally, the idea of a second chance is leading millions to believe they can put off their day of reckoning. That's just how the devil wants it. They are deceived, and if they remain deceived, they will be so until it is forever too late.

“The Secret Rapture and the Glorious Appearing are two separate events”

Many futurists believe that Jesus will return in two phases – the “secret rapture” and the “glorious appearing”. They base this on the fact that three words are used for the coming of Jesus – *apokalupsis*, *epiphaneia*, and *parousia*. The *apokalupsis* and *epiphaneia*, they say, refers to the glorious appearing, known to the rest of the Christian world as the second coming of Christ, while the *parousia* refers to the rapture.

However, the Scripture does not support such a teaching. In Matthew 24:3, when the disciples of Christ asked about His coming, the word they used was *parousia*. Jesus warns against those who would teach that His *parousia* is secret (vs. 26-7); He says it will be like lightning that shines from the east to the west. He further describes the event as a time when “all the tribes of the earth... shall see the Son of Man coming...” (vs. 30-31). This also parallels the description given by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4, where he says that Jesus will come with a “shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God” and the dead will be raised.

Eleven Reasons Why PAROUSIA, APOKALUPSIS, and EPIPHANEIA are Kindred Terms to Describe One Great Future Event!

1. There is a crown laid up for Paul, and for "all of them also that love His (Christ's) appearing (*epiphaneia*)." Will they then receive it at a previous *parousia* some seven years before?
2. According to the Apostle Paul, the commission to "preach the Word" does not expire until the coming of Christ "at his appearing (*epiphaneia*) and his kingdom" (2 Ti. 4:1, 2). But all the preachers of God's Word, according to the Secret Rapture theory, are delivered at the previous *parousia*!
3. Christ declared that "the wheat and tares are to remain "together" in "the field" until "the harvest, " or "end of the age;" whereas the secret Rapture theory teaches that all the wheat is removed, and the tares left standing, before the end (Mt. 13:24-30, 36-42)!
4. The saints' probation continues until the *epiphaneia*, which could not be true if they are made immortal by a previous *parousia*. "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing (*epiphaneia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Ti. 6:14).
5. The "Blessed Hope" is "the glorious appearing (*epiphaneia*)" of the great god and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Tt. 2:11-13). "What a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Ro. 8:24); therefore, the hope continues until the *epiphaneia*, and is not realized at a previous *parousia* some seven years before!

6. Paul declared that because of the "hope of Israel" he was accused of the Jews, which hope was the resurrection (Ac. 26:6-8). 1 Corinthians 15:23 shows the resurrection will be at the coming (*parousia*), but 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 shows that the saints will be glorified when the Lord shall be revealed (*apokalupsis*). Hence, the *parousia* and the *apokalupsis* are simultaneous!
7. The saints of the Corinthian church were commanded to wait for the "coming (*apokalupsis*) of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Co. 1:7). What would be the sense of this, if they were to be raptured several years before at the *parousia*?
8. Works of faith shall be rewarded at the "appearing (*apokalupsis*) of Jesus Christ" (1 Pe. 1:7), but our age-to-come brethren say the rewards will be awarded at the *parousia*!
9. Grace is to be brought to the believer at the "revelation (*apokalupsis*) of Jesus Christ" (1 Pe. 1:13). What would be the significance of this, if raptured saints had received it at the *parousia* several years before?
10. Christ will recompense tribulation to the troublers of His people, and rest to those who are troubled. When? Not at the *parousia*, but at the revelation (*apokalupsis*) of Christ with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on the wicked (2 Th. 1:6-10). Rest for His people, and vengeance upon the ungodly take place at the same time at the one and only Second Coming of Christ!
11. The climax of the argument, however, on this point is reached in 2 Thessalonians 2:8: "And then shall the wicked (the man of sin) be revealed, whom the Lord shall destroy with the (*epiphaneia* tees *parousias* auto) brightness of his coming." Here both words are applied to one action. *epiphaneia* being rendered "brightness:" and *parousia*, "coming." This passage proves first, that the *parousia* and *epiphaneia* are simultaneous: and, second, that the career of "the man of sin" ends (instead of begins) at the *parousia*, when the saints are delivered, and does not extend to a subsequent *epiphaneia*, as the secret rapture theorists teach. The *parousia*, the *apokalupsis* and the *epiphaneia* all synchronize at one great crisis "at the last day." The shout, the voice of the archangel, the sound of a great trumpet, the quaking earth, the passing away of the heavens "with a great noise" (2 Pe. 3:4, 12), the resurrection and translation of saints, the destruction of sinners, will all attend the coming (*parousia*) of the Son of man.

1 Th. 4:14: "The Bible says when Jesus comes again, He will bring the souls of the righteous with Him to get their bodies." The text says God will bring with Him (Jesus) those who *sleep*... First of all, take note that they are *asleep*. Second of all, the context likens God "bringing" these people to God raising His Son from the dead. Where did God bring His Son from? The grave, of course. And just as Christ died and was raised, "even so" (in the same manner) will God the Father bring (forth from the grave) those who sleep in Jesus. A companion text is 2 Co. 4:14, which tells us virtually the same thing. We know within the context that the living will not precede those who have fallen asleep, for the dead in Christ will "rise" and then the living will be caught up "with them". They wouldn't need to rise if Jesus were bringing them with Him – this is plainly speaking of bringing their bodies forth from the grave.