

The Second Coming of Christ

“The Second Coming” refers to the return of Jesus Christ as described in Revelation, Hebrews, the Gospels, and many other places.

The first time Jesus came to earth, He was only a baby. After His ministry on earth, crucifixion, and resurrection He returned to Heaven “to prepare a place” for His followers (John 14:3). He also promises His return (1 Corinthians 15:23), in which the first resurrection occurs, He brings His followers to heaven with Him, and sin and Satan will be destroyed forever.

The Second Coming is something to hope for. It is a literal event, a personal encounter, a visible experience, and a worldwide occasion. It’s the culmination of the plan of salvation!

So let’s learn more about this incomparably wonderful event:

What the Second Coming will be like

When will the Second Coming happen?

Biblical prophecies about the Second Coming

How the Second Coming is the ultimate hope of Adventists

How the truth about the Second Coming helped shape the Adventist denomination

How to prepare for the Second Coming

Introduction - The Second Coming of Christ

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour’s coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ’s coming is near. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-6; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; Rev. 1:7; 14:14-20; 19:11-21.)

What Will the Second Coming Be Like?

Literal

The Second Coming is not a secret for only the most educated, or a prize for the rich. It’s not metaphorical or symbolic, or only happening on a spiritual plane, as once believed by many Christian communities. It is and will be a literal event described in Scripture.

Jesus will descend on a cloud.

The righteous dead will rise from their graves and up to the cloud with Jesus.

The righteous living will rise up to the clouds with Jesus and “always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

Adventists believe this in its straightforward terms. Jesus will return on a cloud, staying in the sky. He will not set foot on the ground. The dead in Christ will rise up with Him, and

those living will soon follow, as we're all "caught up together" in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

"When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:4).

Acts 1:11, when an angel was addressing Jesus' disciples after they witnessed His ascension, also confirms the visible manner of His return. He will "come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven".

Personal

Jesus' return is about reuniting Himself with us. In John 14 He informed His disciples He was ascending back to heaven, but He would be preparing a place for us. "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" (John 14:3).

Not only will we be called up to the clouds with Jesus, but we'll be with Him forever. Philippians 3:20 tells us that "our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ".

Even if someone hasn't yet made the decision to follow Jesus, He is always ready for us to come to Him so He can bring as many of His children with Him to heaven as possible.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20).

Close-up of a man's eyes as the Scripture says that every eye will see Him coming on clouds of heaven

Visible

Revelation 1:7 says "every eye shall see Him". We will not have to guess or wonder if this is really Jesus or not. No matter where we are, we'll be able to "see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30).

Before His crucifixion, Jesus told the high priest, "from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64).

Jesus will be visible to all—those who hurt Him, those who choose to believe in Him, and those who don't. The Second Coming will not be something anyone can miss!

Worldwide

Through the Bible we can see the Second Coming is not only a literal event, but a global event. Just as referenced in the section above, "every eye will see Him"—no matter the time zone, continent, etc.

It's hard to imagine something like this, but with God nothing is impossible. We're told, "For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in His day..." (Luke 17:22).

We will also be able to hear the trumpet calls and victory shouts of the Angels who will accompany Jesus when He returns.

No one knows "the Day or the Hour" of the Second Coming

Though Jesus was clear that He would return, He also explained that the details for when it would happen are not ours to know.

But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only (Matthew 24:36).

Not even the angels know the day Jesus will return.

This is similar to how Noah knew the rain would come, but not the exact moment it would begin. God warned Noah that He would send a flood to destroy the corruption on earth (Genesis 6). Noah knew the rain would come, but did not know when it would begin. Like the flood in Genesis, no creature in existence will know when Christ will return, but we know He will.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus tried to prepare His disciples for His departure (crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension) as well as His second coming. To prepare them, Jesus used parables for lessons and examples.

Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1).

In the story Jesus tells, there are five virgins who are wise and five who are foolish. All ten gather to wait for the bridegroom to arrive so they can enter the wedding feast. The wise bring extra oil for their lamps, and the foolish bring none.

Before the bridegroom arrived, those who brought no oil for their lamps had to go buy more. While they were gone, the bridegroom came. The wise virgins got to go into the wedding feast. When the five foolish virgins returned they could not go in (v. 1-12).

Jesus finishes His warning by telling them “watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour” (v. 13).

It is not for us to know, because our job is not to focus on “when” it’s happening. Our task is to keep our eyes on Jesus, take the Great Commission to heart, and live as a walking testimony—knowing that Jesus will indeed come to save us, and put an end to sin and evil forever.

And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray (Matthew 24:4, 5 ESV).

No one knows when the events of the second coming will occur—no one but God the Father. This means anyone who claims to know is either mistaken or seeking to manipulate.

About the Second Coming

The Bible open to the book of Revelation on a black table as it mentions of many end time prophecies and of Jesus' return

Bible Prophecies Proclaim Christ's Second Coming

The book of Revelation in the Bible proclaims Jesus' second coming in the first chapter.

The author of Revelation, John, writes of his vision of Christ's return. He says “Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him” (v. 7).

In Revelation 14, he recounts other images from his vision

John included in this vision the Lamb standing on Mount Zion with 144,000, a number to represent those believers who stand with Jesus at the end of time on earth (v. 1).

This vision continues until John sees Jesus on a white cloud. On a cloud, He descends to earth with a sickle in His hand and He “swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped” (v. 16).

In vivid word pictures and poetry, the Bible tells of the triumphant coming of Christ in Revelation chapter 19.

John says,

“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war” (v.11)

The heavens will open like a crowd parting for royalty and Christ will appear on a white horse, as a conquering king. He brings heavenly armies with Him and will keep His promise to redeem and to judge.

“His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself” (v. 12).

Jesus’ eyes pierce through to our hearts where we can hide nothing from Him. He doesn’t wear one crown, but many, as He is the King of Kings.

“He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God” (v. 13).

Jesus’ victory is displayed on His garment. While some believe the blood on His robe is the blood of His enemies, it is more likely the blood represents His victory at calvary.

“And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses” (v. 14).

When Jesus comes, He will lead an army of heavenly beings, also riding white horses and wearing clean, pure white robes.

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty” (v.15).

Jesus’ victory over the nations comes from His mouth, from the power of His words. With His voice and with a rod of iron, as prophesied in Psalm 2. He will wield the rod as a shepherd uses a staff, but it will be made of iron so that even the most rebellious will submit.

On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords” (v. 16).

The name, King of kings and Lord of Lords is written on Jesus’ robe as well as His thigh, so it will be easily seen from His place on the white horse.

The Bible open to Revelation as we study various prophecies mentioned in it and of Jesus’ soon return

Symbolism in Revelation

There's a lot going on in Revelation, much of it described in symbolism because we have no frame of reference yet for the things that will happen. We know the symbolism and prophecies are modes of telling the most important truth and hope for humanity.

The gospel, that is Jesus' death on the cross and His promised Second Coming, is a beacon of light in a darkened world. Revelation is viewed by many as mysterious and scary, but it's actually a story of hope and love.

In the first verse of the first chapter of Revelation we're told: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place."

Revelation is not about the end of the world, but rather it is the climax of the entire story of existence. It is the transformation from death to life, from tribulation to peace. And Jesus and His love for humanity make up the theme for all of it .

A woman reading a book outside as we learn the meanings of the symbols used in prophecies and let Bible interpret itself

The Second Coming is the Hope of Adventists

The second coming is so important to Seventh-day Adventists that it's part of the name—The word Advent means "arrival."

Jesus first came to earth as a baby in a manger over 2000 years ago. This is the first Advent, and it's why Christmas calendars are often called "Advent Calendars." The second advent, the second coming, is not just the hope of Adventists, but of all Christians. We have this hope because Jesus promises His return.

Near the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, during the last night with His disciples, He told them

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 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" (John 14:2).

Christ's second coming is a promise from the Bible. It will be the triumphant return of a king. It is the blessed hope of Adventists that Christ's future return will be the climax to our story on earth. It is not the end, but the beginning of how life was meant to be all along. With Christ's coming, our existence will be perfect and complete.

Christ's Return as a Key Topic in Adventist History

Before the Advent movement became a global church, most churches believed the second coming would be a spiritual or figurative event. It likely wasn't even discussed very often.

However, soon after the Second Great Awakening in the United States, a Baptist named William Miller decided to study scripture more deeply after returning home from war. Through his study of Daniel and Revelation, Miller discovered that Christ's second coming must be a literal event.

This was a big deal. It changed the way Christians could look at the present and the future. So Miller kept studying and sharing what he found.

However, there was one issue with Miller's message. He also predicted the exact date of Christ's return—somehow missing the counsel of Matthew 24:36 that "no one knows the day or the hour" of this event, "not even the angels in heaven," but only the Father.

Even though it became clear Miller's prediction was incorrect, many people decided to do further study to find out where he went wrong. As more and more people realized new truths from Scripture about the Second Coming, this began the "Advent Movement" that eventually paved the way toward the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In a way, Miller's mistake led to a revival of personal and small group devotion among believers. Many of the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs were discovered after in-depth studies following this time. And as Christians learned more about scripture and God's truth, they were more motivated to follow the Word and continue studying it.

How to Prepare for the Second Coming

Like the ten virgins in Jesus' parable, we must be prepared for the bridegroom's coming. We are all sinners and need Him. It's through Jesus Christ alone that we may enter the "wedding feast" (heaven).

It's through Jesus that we prepare for His coming, and as long as we have a relationship with Him, we will be ready. We won't lose our spot in heaven if we make a little mistake. We won't need to fear the end of time. We can rest assured knowing our home is in heaven, despite our sinful nature.

Scripture tells us "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). That means every one of us has sinned and doesn't deserve heaven.

Because of the fall of mankind in Eden, we are left with a legacy of sin. Through Jesus Christ we are saved from the consequences of sin. That's why Romans 3 continues, telling us we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (vs. 24).

Additionally, Romans 6:23 says,

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord".

Jesus took that death upon Himself, dying in our place and being raised again to return to heaven to minister on our behalf.

We have the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. To prepare for that life is to prepare for His coming. To prepare we must believe in Him (John 3:16). We must know Him.

To know Jesus and grow our faith in Him, we must cultivate a relationship with Him. Some things to help us do that could be:

Pray daily—throughout the day. Pray for others. Pray as a family. Pray in the name of Jesus who intervenes for you in heaven.

Study your Bible. Read the Bible daily so that you can meditate on God's Holy Word. Use scriptures and Bible promises in your personal prayer life. Memorize scripture and draw connections with your modern life and experiences.

Listen to sermons and teachers. Use free online platforms to listen to uplifting messages and Bible lectures. Find trusted mentors to teach you deep Bible truths.

Attend church. Find a local congregation that is filled with Bible-believers. Develop relationships with like-minded Christians who will help you in your walk with God.

Limit exposure to worldly things. No one knows better than you how secular activities and experiences affect you. Maintain caution and limit exposure to things that tempt you or hinder your relationship with God.

To grow our faith in Jesus and our relationship with Him, prayer and personal Bible study are extremely important. Bible study and prayer through the Holy Spirit is our direct connection to the Savior we're waiting for. It is the best way to prepare for His soon coming. Walking this journey with other believers is a crucial part of the experience.

Yes, this world is in chaos. Political and social unrest is imminent. Sin runs rampant. Physical and mental health is suffering around the world. But with all this working against us, we still have hope.

This world is not what God intended, but Jesus' return will be the end of this world as we know it. His return will be the first step in restoring this world into the perfect world it was always meant to be.

The Advent movement began because of hope in Christ's return. Now the Seventh-day Adventist Church rests its hope in Christ alone, in His promises, and in His return.