

WHY IS IT NECESSARY FOR JESUS TO RETURN?

George Burnside

www.CreationismOnline.com

There is a widespread tendency to regard the doctrine of the second advent as neither useful nor needful in these modern times. Many would have us discard this belief as an exploded idea or obsolete theory. However, an examination of the scriptures will reveal that the second coming of Jesus Christ is just as necessary and indispensable to the success of the plan of redemption for this world as was His first advent. We shall seek to show that there is at least a sevenfold necessity for our Lord's second advent.

The first reason that we shall give is that: The Redeemer's return is necessitated by the expectation of the dead in Christ. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ shall rise." 1 Thessalonians 4:16. The resurrection of the righteous is inseparably connected with and wholly dependent upon the second coming of Christ. Without the cross there is no atonement, without the second advent there is no resurrection. Without the resurrection there is no eternal life for the righteous.

In his great discourse on the resurrection Paul plainly states: "if the dead rise not then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." 1 Corinthians 15:16-18. Jesus taught that it is necessary for Him to raise up His disciples at the last day so that not one of His followers should be lost. (John 6:39.) If there is no resurrection then everyone is lost. As Jesus' death on the cross is the only hope of sin's pardon and peace with God. Just so certain is it that His appearing the second time is our only hope of a resurrection from death, and impartation to His people of eternal life.

2. The return of Christ is necessary for the gathering of His saints to heaven. Jesus is coming to gather all His saints into the garner of God - the New Jerusalem. This is the crowning purpose of His return according to Christ's own words: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3.

Jesus declares that when the Son of man appears "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," then He will "send His angels" to gather together His elect from the four winds." Matthew 24:31.

But God is just and He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. "To him that sows righteousness shall be a sure reward." "God is not mocked for whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap." Evil cannot go unpunished; good cannot go unrewarded. Christ must return to reward the righteous and to punish the wicked.

4. The return of Christ is necessary for the dethronement of Satan. Specialists are prescribing various remedies today for the cure of this invalid world. But how many are taking into account that the dethronement of Satan is an essential step in the righting of the world and the ushering in of the long-looked-for golden age?

Behind all anti-Christian systems, back of all the oppositions to the gospel, beneath all the evil and wickedness which stalk rampant through the earth, is that old serpent the devil. "The whole world lies in the evil one." 1 John 5:19, R.V. And let all men remember that there never can be any real golden age of righteousness and peace on this earth, while this great enemy of God and man is at large. But how is an end to be made of Satan's power and dominion?

Ever since the fall of Adam, the devil has been working terrible havoc with the human family. Are things going to continue thus, throughout the whole existence of this planet? Is Satan to be allowed "free rein forever? The old serpent is to be given a death blow in harmony with the first gospel promise.

But what and who is going to oppose him? The church cannot dethrone him or it would have done so long ago. Legislation is powerless before such a task, for human governments cannot vote him out of the world. Humanity is powerless to rid the world of his awful presence. Nothing finite can remove him. Who then shall overthrow the kingdom of darkness? There is only one answer possible.

There is only one sufficient for such a task and that is the Lord Jesus Christ who is mightier than Satan. As Jesus Christ alone is competent to cope with the great adversary it is necessary for Him to return in person in order to Imprison and remove this arch foe.

5. The return of Christ is necessary for the regeneration of the earth in righteousness. As two electric wires are necessary to complete a circuit so as to produce a light at a given point. Just so it takes both the first and second comings of Christ and the events connected therewith, to complete the circuit between Paradise lost and Paradise restored.

The Psalmist tells us that when “our God shall come” He will issue the call “gather My saints together unto Me.” Psalm 50:3-5. Thus, Paul spoke to the Thessalonian brethren of “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” as the time of “our gathering together with Him.” 2 Thessalonians 2:1.

The second coming of Christ is the harvest of the gospel, the grand homecoming of the ages. “The harvest is the end of the world.” Matthew 13:39. One of the predominant Ideas connected with that of His coming is that of reaping. He will appear as a Reaper, holding in His right hand a sharp sickle. This is symbolical of the fact that the coming of the Lord is the reaping of the gospel harvest.

(Revelation 14:14-16). Then the good from all ages and ill lands will be gathered into the garner of God. The teaching of the second advent holds just as important a place in the gospel of Christ as the erection of the last span is important to a bridge. It would be useless to build a bridge nine-tenths of the way across a river, and then stop, leaving an awful gap of several hundred feet between the end of the bridge and the other shore. We want a bridge that reaches all the way across the river.

So with the coming of the Lord. It is the last span In the gospel bridge that puts us over on “the other shore,” in the kingdom of God. It is the consummating or culminating act in the plan of the ages. It is the reaping act that-brings the realization of all the good that hat been done both by Christ and His followers during the whole history of the world. Those who attempt, by the rude hand of a violent criticism, to tear the advent hope out of the Christian faith today, are committing the fatal mistake of destroying the last span of the bridge before crossing over the river.

3. The third reason is, Christ must return to complete His work as the final Arbiter of human destiny.

The reward of the righteous for their good deeds, and the punishment of the wicked for their evil deeds is essentially connected with the return of Jesus. The awards of God’s judgment for good or evil are not bestowed upon man at death.

If Christ should not return, evil would go unpunished; and good unrewarded. This would be the worst fate that could possibly overtake the earth. It would make the government of God a failure, the Bible a farce and creation itself a colossal mistake. Life would be a vain bubble.

Everybody knows that the world needs regenerating. But no plan of man can ever accomplish it. Man is absolutely powerless to remove the curse of sin or deliver the earth from corruption. The Redeemer must come to take off the ban. The reconstruction of the world in righteousness is inevitably dependent upon the coming of our Lord.

6. The return of Christ is necessary for the ushering in of the triumph of righteousness and the establishment of the kingdom of glory.

If Christ should not return, righteousness would never universally prevail in this world and the kingdom of glory could never be established here. But “the Son of man shall come in His glory,” and “then shall He sit on the throne of His glory,” and then the righteous will inherit the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world. (Matthew 25:31-34.) “The Lord my God shall come,” and all the saints with Him and then “the Lord shall be king over all the earth.” Zechariah 14:5, 9.

7. The Redeemer’s return is necessitated by the present degradation and desolation of the world.

If there is anything which imperatively needs Jesus Christ to return it is surely this poor sin-cursed world of ours. Look at it and what do we see? A world everywhere racked with suffering and out of joint. A world convulsed with misery entailed by the curse of sin. A world now in its death throes, with hope almost completely gone.

“Not since Christ was born in Bethlehem have the stars looked flown from heaven upon a world more full of anxiety and fear and that hope deferred which makes sick the heart.... Everywhere, on two continents, the tides of hatred and the tides of despair carry the helpless peoples toward the maelstrom of universal war.” The Son Francisco Examiner, a leading daily paper declares.

Consider carefully then, what is involved in the question of our Lord’s return: the hope of the dead, of reward for the just of heaven, for the saints, of the full triumph of Christianity, of restoration to the physical earth and the deliverance of all creation of the Christ Himself as King, of the consummation of the plan of redemption, of the fulfillment of the prophecies and inspiration of the Scriptures, all these are at stake.

Consider now how much depends on His re-appearing then you will realize the tremendous importance of the advent doctrine in the plan of salvation. It stands out as the grand consummation of the gospel the crowning event of redemption. In view of the proportion of the Lord's redemptive work which is embraced by His return we can say that the belief of it constitutes the crowning article of an evangelical creed.

All our ultimate hopes and attainments concentrate in the coming of Christ. The second coming of Christ is the center in which all the doctrines of the future life meet and stand together. If the return of Christ was stricken off God's blue print of the future, the plan of salvation would thereby be as completely wrecked as an automobile wheel with the hub smashed out-

Satan knows the vital relation that the second coming of Christ sustains to God's plan. That is why the devil fights this advent truth so much. John Calvin says: "In plucking up the faith of Christ's coming, Satan aims directly at the throat of the church. For to what end did Christ die and rise again, but that along with Himself He might someday redeem us from death and gather us into eternal life."

No one wishes that Jesus would never return more than does the Devil. If that return appointment could be cancelled, then Satan could hold God's saints forever in his dark prison house. He could hold this world under sin as his kingdom indefinitely. He could escape the death blow on his head which was predicted immediately after he plunged this world into sin.

Satan knows that without the second coming of Christ the plan of salvation itself would be wrecked as would a suspension bridge over a river, if the tower on the other side should tumble down in ruins. In view of these considerations, we may expect that Satan will make a supreme effort to undermine, repudiate, discredit, distort, and cover up this doctrine of the advent, which spells his eternal doom, and determines the eternal victory of God's great plan. C. H. Spurgeon declared. "The day of our Lord's appearing is the day around which our chief hopes must center."

May the Spirit of God help you in your study of this important theme, is my earnest prayer In Christ's name.

www.CreationismOnline.com