

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN JESUS RETURNS

Part 1 of The Return of Christ. Revelation 19.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. July 9, 2023.

OUR BLESSED HOPE

Christianity is planted in the past, practical in the present, and focused on the future.

Titus 2:11-14 (ESV) The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

We call our focus on the future the “blessed hope.”.

- Our blessed hope is the confident expectation of “the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”
- Two kinds of hope: wishful thinking, and absolute certainty. The blessed hope is absolute certainty, confident expectation.
- We can build our lives on the blessed hope of Christ’s return.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN JESUS RETURNS?

1. Our hope: Godless culture will collapse - verses 1-5.

Revelation 19:1-5 ESV After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, 2 for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” 3 Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.” 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” 5 And from the throne came a voice saying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.”

- We build our lives on this: The deceptive attractions of the godless world are temporary. They will collapse in an instant. But Jesus is forever. Stake your life on Jesus.

2. Our hope: Jesus will be with us - verses 6-10.

6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; 8 it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints ...

- The wedding imagery assures that Jesus will be here on earth with us.
- We’re the bride because Jesus has set us apart exclusively for himself.

Ephesians 5:25-27 (ESV) Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish

- We build our lives on this: When Jesus returns we’ll be presented to him in our wedding dress, which is made from our good deeds flowing from faith: bold testimony, commitment to Jesus’s teachings, not following the crowd.

3. Our hope: The spiritual war will end - verses 11-16.

11 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. 12 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. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 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. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

- Jesus will conquer every nation, institution, organization, and individual who fights against him.
- The metaphor of the warrior king communicates the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. See Psalm 2.
- We build our lives on this: Jesus rules the world now from heaven, but is coming to reign on the earth forever. The war will end.

4. Our hope: The truth will be gloriously obvious - verses 17-21.

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, 18 to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.” 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

- Ancient battle field language, some borrowed from Ezekiel 39 which ends:

Ezekiel 39:21-22 (ESV) And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid on them. 22 The house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God, from that day forward.

- We build our lives on this: Though few believe us now, when Jesus returns the truth will be obvious - There is one God. He is manifest in Jesus Christ who won't tolerate any rivals.

CORNERSTONE GROUPS - TALK IT OVER

Pick one or more of these questions to discuss this week.

Review Sunday's teaching on Revelation 19.

- Review Sunday's study guide or watch Peter's teaching on YouTube.
- What part of the teaching most impacted your thinking?
- Summarize the main ideas in your own words.

Prayerfully apply the insights of the teaching.

- Read aloud Revelation 19. What impression does it convey? It sounds to me like an opera; the chorus watches the action on the stage and sings in response. In a similar way, believers, angels, and creatures around God's throne sing praise for the return of Christ to judge the godless world. Discuss your impressions of Revelation 19.
- God has assigned the final judgment to the risen, exalted, Lord Jesus. Read the following passages to confirm this: John 5:22-23; 9:39; Acts 17:31; 2 Timothy 4:1; Matthew 16:27; 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-15;
- What advice would you give to someone who wants to build their life on the sure hope of Christ's return? How can they stand firm in Christ without buying into the ideas, values, and lifestyle of the godless world?

Pray together. Be bold.

Pray for the courage and conviction to 'come away' from Babylon, to commit to Christ without compromise, to not conform to this world, and to not be captured by godless ideas. Ask for the hope of Christ's return to burn in your heart.

Preparation for Next Sunday

- Read: www.thegospelcoalition.org/commentary/revelation/#section-35