

INTRODUCTION

When we come to the second half of October we will study the final theme in our preaching series. At the beginning of the year I said that the overarching theme for our sermons this year is called "The 4G of Christian Life." We have covered the first 3G - What a Wonderful Grace, What an Amazing Growth and What a Marvelous God. From today to the end of the year we will talk about the last G - What a Splendid Glory. Our focus will be on the second coming of Christ. Jesus Christ first came to the world some two thousand years ago to proclaim the good news of God's Kingdom and died for our sins on the cross. The Bible foretells that after Jesus' ascension to heaven He will come again in the future. It is our human nature to be curious about the future. It is a common theme in sci-fi movies. A familiar story line goes like this: when people realize what will happen in the future they try to change the present, hoping to steer the course of history. How would you change your life if you know that something will surely happen in the future? For example, what if you know a particular stock will skyrocket next month? Perhaps you will try to borrow as much money as possible to invest in the market. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ will return in the future. It is not a fabricated story or a false hope. It is Biblical truth. In the first message of the series we will study why Christ's return is a certainty. We shall learn that Jesus Christ will surely return because of the prophecies on our Savior, the problem of sin and the promises to the saints. As we examine those reasons we will ask ourselves how we should respond if we know that Christ's return is a certainty.

EXPLANATION

1. 對救主的預言 Prophecies on our Savior

Christ's return is a certainty because of the prophecies on our Savior. Someone calculated that one-fifth of the content of the Bible is prophetic in nature. On one account there are 333 prophecies in the Old Testament alone about Jesus. Of those prophecies a third of them had been fulfilled in the first coming of Jesus. Those events happened precisely just as the Bible foretold. For example, the birthplace of Jesus, His lineage as a descendant of King David, His triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, His betrayal by someone for the cost of 30 pieces of silver, His suffering, crucifixion and resurrection. Our God is the God of truth. Whatever written in the Bible will eventually be fulfilled, if not already fulfilled. A few hundred years before Jesus' first arrival the Old Testament prophesied about His second coming. Let us look at a few passages. In **Daniel 7:13-14** the prophet described the future coming of Christ this way: 13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. When Jesus came the first time He came as a feeble baby. When Jesus returns in the future He will come as a glorious King. The author of **Psalms 96** tells us that this glorious king will also serve as a judge. **Verse 13** reads: ...For he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth.

The prophet Isaiah told us that when Jesus comes and judges the world He will bring us enduring peace. **Isaiah 2:2-4** read - 2 In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. 3 Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. People of God from many nations will come to Him. They will sincerely embrace God's truth and there will be everlasting peace. The Old Testament prophecy does not only tell us what will happen on Jesus' return, it also specifies the location where Jesus will appear. **Zechariah 14:4** says clearly: On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. This is significant because the Mount of Olive was the same place where Jesus ascended into the heaven. In **Acts 1:11** two angels said to Jesus' disciples who just saw with their own eyes when Jesus went up to heaven: "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." Where were the disciples when the angels said that? **Verse 12** continues: Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When Jesus comes He will descend to the same location where He went to heaven. Since all the prophecies about Jesus' first coming had been fulfilled we have assurance that the prophecies about His second coming will eventually come true. There is no ambiguity in the fulfillment of Biblical prophecies, even non-believers can objectively verify that things happened as they were written. The Bible is the trustworthy Word of God. It is the foundation of our Christian faith. God has been at work in human history, and He will continue to unfold His plan leading to Jesus' return. He will be faithful to accomplish His will.

2. 對罪惡的問題 Problem of Sin

Jesus Christ will surely return because the prophecies on our Savior must be fulfilled. Jesus will come back also because He will deal with the problem of sin once and for all. Paul described the scene when Christ comes to judge the unbelieving world in **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9** – 7 ... This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power. On that day those who do not know Christ will receive the judgment they deserve. This is a judgment that separates Jesus' believers from those who are not. In the book of Revelation, John called this final judgment the judgment at the great white throne. **Revelation 20:13-15** read: 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. God has a record that collects the names of all the believers throughout human history. Those whose names cannot be found in the book of life will be judged. They will be thrown into the lake of fire, which is what we understand as hell. Not only sinners will suffer an

eternal death, even death itself will eventually be destroyed. Our physical death is a curse from the rebellion of Adam and Eve. Our earthly life will inevitably come to an end. But when Jesus returns all who believe in Him will live forever. Topics like judgment and eternal death are solemn matters. I do not intend to scare our gospel friends. But since both Christ's return and the future judgment are Biblical truth I have to tell you as they are. Some people may think that God's judgment is a distant thing, for after more than two thousand years since Christ first came it seems that everything looks fine. Even people in the first century expressed the same comment! **2 Peter 3:4** says: They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." Though in this age we eat better, use better stuff and live longer people's moral standard is on its downward spiral. Perhaps fifty years ago it would be shameful to bring up issues like co-habitation, abortion, divorce and homosexuality even in the United States. Nowadays people may think that you are a bigot if you do not support those matters. Not too long ago criminals have to use real guns to execute a bank heist. Nowadays, they can sit comfortably in front of their computers in another country and hack into people's bank and credit card accounts to steal their money. If there is a judgment of sins why hasn't it taken place? Peter explained in **verse 9** of the same chapter: The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. Jesus is giving people who do not know Him more time to repent. While some people question if there is a future judgment those who suffer because of others' sins are longing for that day. **Revelation 6:10** records a cry for justice from those believers who suffer greatly for the Lord: ... "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" Innocent people are exploited and oppressed. There is a demand for a final resolution for sins. Are you a victim of sin such as cheating, contempt, abandonment, etc.? You did not get the justice you thought you deserved. But there is a future hope. When Christ returns He will judge the sinners. Even if they dodge the court of law, they will not escape God's judgment. However, the Bible tells us that all the behavioral and moral sins come down to the one spiritual sin – that people do not know Christ. To God, an upright atheist and a notorious criminal will both end up in hell if they do not know Christ. Our dear friends: if you do not know Christ then God sees you as a sinner. It is never too late to confess your sins to Christ and receive His forgiving grace.

3. 對聖徒的保證 Promises to the Saints

Lord Jesus will surely return because the prophecies on the Savior have to be fulfilled and the problem of sin has to be dealt with. Thirdly, Jesus will surely return because of the Biblical promises made to the saints. Those promises often give believers comfort and hope when they face difficulties in life. For example, at the Last Supper Jesus told His disciples that He would be leaving them. But He promised them in **John 14:2-3** that: 2 "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." Jesus' temporary departure was to get our eternal home ready. An analogy I can think of is like when we tidy up a guest room waiting for friends and family to spend a weekend. Jesus promised us that when He comes back He will send angels to usher all His believers to their eternal home. Jesus told His disciples in **Mark 13:26-27** – 26 "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the

heavens.” These messengers from God will lead believers to an upward journey. Two thousand years ago after Jesus returned to heaven the ministry of the gospel was given to His disciples. It was a daunting task because they faced opposition from the Jews, oppression from the Romans and disturbance from false teaching. In the midst of those challenges the promise of Jesus’ return was a great comfort to the suffering believers. Paul encouraged the believers in **1 Thessalonians 4:16-18** that: 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words. At that time believers grieved when their brothers and sisters passed away. It is quite possible that some of them perished as a result of religious persecution, because suffering for the gospel is a recurring theme in the two books of Thessalonians. Paul told them that while it was reasonable to mourn because their loved ones died, but those who are in the Lord would definitely see each other again. Therefore, they should continue to stand firm in their faith despite persecution, and be faithful in their work for the gospel. That is why in 1 Corinthians 15 after Paul assuring the believers that they will be resurrected at the Lord’s return he gave them an encouragement. He says in **15:58**: Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. Paul said so because he knew that there will be a reward from the Lord. When Paul understood that his earthly life might be coming to an end he testified in **2 Timothy 4:7-8** that: 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. Paul and other Bible writers were ready to see Jesus. Brothers and sisters: do we eagerly anticipate the Lord’s return? Very often we are fooled by the comfort of this world. Some people may think that as long as they have money in their bank accounts, food in the pantry, TV to watch and malls to kill time that is what life is all about. Even Christians may think the same way! When challenges come unexpectedly, whether it is a layoff, a natural disaster or an acute disease, our world caves in. Then we realize how fragile we are. God’s promises us a bright future. Our hope is not what this world can offer us, because this world will surely come to an end. Our hope is in the Lord. With that hope we have confidence and strength to face the difficulties in this life. We can take our loss and gain lightly. When God says that it is time to go home we can respond with joy.

CONCLUSION

Christ’s return is a certainty. The prophecies about our Savior must be fulfilled. The problem of sin must be resolved. The promises to the saints must come true. No one knows when Jesus will come back. But it will surely happen! How differently we should live if we know that Jesus will return? We should not live as if we will be around on this earth forever. Rather, we need to constant ask ourselves if what we do have any eternal value. Brothers and sisters: do we reflect God’s glory through our lives? Are we drawing people to Christ? We live in a transitional stage from the here and now to eternity. We should be ready to meet with Christ whenever He returns.