

God's Great Story

Advance in Faith 101



Lesson 4 The Completed Story

The Second Coming:

The doctrine of the Second Coming is foundational to the Christian faith. It supplies the bookend at the end of the part of the story which began with the creation of humanity in Genesis, though the Second Coming is not the end of the story.

Acts 1:11 is the first place in which the Second Coming is highlighted.

Now that Jesus had left his followers there was the opportunity for him to come back a second time. Wright notes;

But of course the primary witness (to the Second Coming doctrine) is Paul. Paul's letters are full of the future coming or appearing of Jesus. His worldview, his theology, his missionary practice, his devotion are all inconceivable without it. Yet what he has to say about this great event has often been misunderstood, not least by the proponents of 'rapture' theology.¹

The Greek word mostly use by the NT writers and translated to mean the Second Coming is the word *παρουσία* (Parousia) meaning *presence* (as opposed to absence); *coming*; *advent*; *arrival*. The word is use 24 times in 24 different passages.

Tom Wright explains the definition of this word;

The first meaning was the mysterious presence of a god or divinity, particularly when the power of this god was revealed in healing.

The second meaning emerges when a person of high rank makes a visit to a subject state, particularly when a king or emperor visits a colony or province.

What do we know about the Second Coming?

1. Acts 1:11 – a public event
2. 1 Cor. 15:23 – dead believers will be raised
3. 1 Cor. 15:24-29 – Jesus takes total control
4. 1 Cor. 15:51-53 – Creation is restored and death ceases
5. 1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 – Jesus the King sets up his reign on earth
6. 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 10; 2:1 – The Second Coming will be spectacular and bring judgement
7. Titus 2:13 – The Second Coming will be the ushering in of the 'age to come', a very Jewish phrase
8. 1 Thess. 2:19, 3:13 – Paul sees his people as his 'boasting' at the Second Coming
9. 1 Tim. 6:14 – we are to live well before God until the Second Coming
10. 2 Tim. 4:1, 8 – the Second Coming brings judgement and reward

¹ Tom Wright, *Surprised by Hope* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2007), 140.

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11. Philippians 3:20 – we await Jesus' return from heaven, and by implication, to earth
12. Hebrews 9:28; - the Second Coming is not to deal with sin but rather to judge the world so that all that involves sin/rebellion is finally removed from the creation
13. James 5:7–9; - the Second Coming will establish justice in creation but we must be patient
14. 1 Peter 1:7, 13; - here the Second Coming is described as the 'revelation of Jesus' and it will be accompanied with praise and honour and glory
15. 2 Peter 1:16; - Peter taught the Second Coming as basic to the faith
16. 2 Peter 3:1-13; - This is a significant section dealing with the question of why the Second Coming had not yet occurred. Peter is answering this question and says that God will do what God will do in his own time.
17. 1 John 2:28. – John argues for us to have confidence in our relationship with Jesus so as to not be afraid when the Second Coming occurs

Resurrection:

Along with the establishment of Jesus as the king over the renewed creation the Second Coming also brings the resurrection, about which 1 Corinthians 15 is focused.

What can we say of our resurrected bodies?

1 John 3:2 We will be 'like' Jesus is in his resurrected body, 'as he really is'.

If this is the case then when we look at Jesus in his resurrected body we might conclude;

- It is made of physical 'stuff'
- It can be touched and seen
- Jesus ate in his resurrected body
- Jesus seemed able to move from place to place at will
- Jesus was both recognizable and not recognizable in his resurrected body

Romans 8:9-11 Our bodies will no longer be mortal but will have the life of Jesus

1 Cor. 15:42-49 Our bodies will not perish
 Our bodies will be glorious
 Our bodies will be powerful
 Our bodies will be powered by the Spirit not by
 nature

Recommended book – *Surprised by Hope* by Tom Wright

Group Questions:

- How much thought have you given to the resurrection and what might be some of those thoughts?
- What do you think of when you think about the Second Coming?
- What do you think of when you think about the 'new heavens and new earth'?
- Were any of the ideas tonight new for you and how do you respond to them?