

the serpent will swallow his tail

Jesus, prophetically, said that a kingdom divided against itself will not stand:

*If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. **And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come.*** (Mk 3:24-26)

We are going to see the kingdom of Babylon begin to dissolve due to that very principle.

"Babylon," as we have seen, is a kind of all-purpose code word for the world system that is ruled by Satan. This is the kingdom that Satan had offered to Jesus:

And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." (Luke 4:5-7)

In chapter 17, we saw religious "Babylon," the prostituted church that Satan (working through Antichrist) will manipulate for purposes. This is the religious arm of the beast.

In chapter 18, we see a political/commercial "Babylon," which is the other arm of the beast.

And then, as if the beast were arm-wrestling himself, we see political Babylon turn against religious Babylon.

We have seen evil at war with itself before:

**In 2 Chronicles, three nations were in league against Israel until they turned on each other:

*As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. **The men of Ammon and Moab rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another.** When the men of Judah came to the place that overlooks the desert and looked toward the vast army, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground; no one had escaped.* (2 Chronicles 20:22-24)

**In the court of Pharaoh, a snake devoured the other snakes. (Exodus 7:11-12)

**Ultimately, at the cross, Jesus became sin in order to defeat sin:

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

When God has no alternative but to fight fire with fire, he will pit hell against hell, until heaven wins.

the revelation of the Revelation of the revelation of Jesus Christ

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. (Revelation 19:11-12)

The purpose of the Bible, all 66 of its books, is the revelation of Jesus Christ:

For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Revelation 19:10)

Within the Bible's 66 books there is one book, the last, which is even called "the Revelation of Jesus Christ."

Within that last book is a chapter (chapter 19) that describes the Second Coming--the moment at which Jesus is physically, visibly revealed to the entire world, to the believer and non-believer alike.

Thus you could say that we have arrived at the revelation of the Revelation of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

There has been so much information and misinformation concerning the Second Coming that we've decided to print the facts we know from the Bible. We hope this little "outline" will help you to distinguish between what is scriptural and what is merely speculation and guesstimation.

The phrase "Second Coming" does not appear in scripture. Scripture refers to the "return" of Jesus. (Same difference, but we don't want you tearing your hair out searching your concordance for "Second Coming.")

The return of the Lord Jesus Christ will take place personally, powerfully, bodily, visibly, publicly, and instantly: *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 17:24; also see Matthew 24:30-31 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:3.)

This will be no local happening; you will not have to '*Look there!*' or '*Look here!*' (Luke 17:23)

On that day, the world will not be seeing the carpenter from Nazareth. It will be Jesus in his incandescent brilliance as the 'Son of Man,' as foreseen by Daniel (7:13-14) and by Peter, James, and John (Luke 9:28-36) when Jesus appeared in glory, as if clothed in light. (This appearance, known as the "Transfiguration," provides the best preview of Jesus' triumphant return.)

The martyred Stephen, as he was about to die, had a similar glimpse:
"Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." (Acts 7:56)

The Apostle John, writing Revelation from the Island of Patmos to which he had been exiled, saw the same figure:
...his face was like the sun shining in full strength (Revelation 1:16; Revelation 1:7 tells us that the whole world will witness this same spectacle.)

The return of Christ will mark the end of history as we know it. It will inaugurate the final Judgment and usher in the new heaven and the new earth. Pain, death, and sorrow will all be banished. The entire structure of evil will be dismantled.

This new realm will surpass our current understanding and imagination. Our attempts to express what we shall experience fall so short that we demean heaven whenever we attempt to convey it. We will need--and receive--new eyes to enable us to see what we shall see. Our current portals of perception--eyes, ears, nose, and tactile receptors--would be unable to take it all in.

We have been warned all along not to place a date or time upon the Second Coming of Christ (Matthew 24:42-44). But many people waste their time in endless speculation and calculations.

The way we should be spending our days is to watch, and to work; to witness, and to *Repent!* --for the return of the once and future King is at hand.

God's got a serious heart condition (which is holding things up)

We have reached the last two chapters of the Bible, where the "end times" give way to eternity. This transition generates a lot of curiosity and many questions. So we will attempt to deal with these FAQs. Some of the questions will look back in review; some will look forward, to "*all things new.*" (Revelation 21:5)

Q. Explain the overall "Day of the Lord." What is the sequence of events?

The relative timing of the events of the "Day of the Lord" is endlessly debated. Here's how this teacher sees things unfolding:

"The Day of the Lord" is an extended period of time that includes the following events:

- "That day" begins at the moment of **the "Rapture"** (the removal of the true church).
- **The Great Tribulation** begins immediately after the Rapture.

- The Great Tribulation ends with **the Second Coming of Christ to the earth.**
- The Second Coming ushers in **the Millennium** (the 1000-year reign of Christ).
- At the end of the Millennium, unbelievers are judged at **the Great White Throne.**
- Thereafter, the **new heavens and new earth** come into view as the Millennium gives way to the **eternal Kingdom of God.**

Q. Does the Bible give any indication of when Christ will return?

No.

Q. Really? But I thought...

What part of 'no' don't you understand?

The Bible explicitly states that no one can know the exact time of Jesus' return (Matt. 12:36). But several passages describe **the kind of time** it will be. Thus, while the Second Coming will come upon the unbelieving world like *a thief in the night* (2 Pet. 3:10), believers who are closely attuned to scripture will not be completely startled by Jesus' return (1 Thessalonians 5:2-6).

Q. How will he return? Will he be some kind of a spirit?

No way! The return of the Lord Jesus Christ will take place personally, powerfully, bodily, visibly, publicly, and instantly:

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 17:24)

He will come as a conquering warrior. The *Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world* is the *Lion of the tribe of Judah* who will obliterate the sin of the world.

Q. What's taking him so long?

I'm glad you asked. It seems that God has a heart condition, called 'love,' which is holding things up. He wants to give as much time as possible for every sinner to find Jesus, the only Way out of here:

*But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.* (2 Peter 3:8-10)

Q. When is Judgment Day?

It depends.

Scripture identifies three specific Judgment Days, listed below.

We should understand who will--and who will not--appear at each of the different judgment days. We should understand why the judgment days differ.

The most important concept concerning judgment is this:

Where, when, and how an individual is judged depends upon his individual relationship to Jesus Christ:

Judgment Day #1-- The Cross

Jesus Christ was judged at the cross, where he had carried my sins and your sins. Faith in Christ activates the redemption he purchased there. Thus the sins of all believers were already judged--at the cross.

Judgment Day #2-- The Great White Throne

The sins that were not taken to the cross by faith are judged at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11). Thus all unbelievers will be judged there, where they will themselves pay the wages of sin, which is death.

Judgment Day #3-- The Judgment Seat of Christ

The *works* (not their sins!) of believers will be tested by fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This judgment will determine their *rewards*.

Their salvation is not in question here, because eternal salvation was irrevocably purchased for them when Jesus

Q. John 3:16 says that those who believe in Jesus will not perish, but have eternal life.

A. Right.

Q. So do those who do not believe cease to exist?

A. No. There is no such thing as cessation of existence. Your question points out something that is essential to an understanding of the future:

What Jesus purchased at the cross wasn't eternity, because everybody--believer and unbeliever--has eternity ahead of him. What Jesus purchased was life.

Q. Life?

Life, in scripture, is the presence of God: Christ is our life (Col. 3:4; Phil. 1:21--also Gal. 2:20; John 11:25; John 17:3).

The opposite of life is separation from Christ. Separation from Christ is death.

Q. Death?

Death is a banishment, a final and total separation from the presence of God--2 Thess. 1:9. We have a name for that state of being; we call it "hell."

Q. Is hell pictured in the Bible?

Yes, a clear and definitive picture of hell can be found in scripture:

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46)

Because *the wages of sin is death* (Romans 6:23) when Jesus *became sin for us* (2 Cor. 5:21), God withdrew his presence. God is holy, and he will not be in the presence of sin (see Psalm 22:3). Separated from God, Jesus was in hell. But he would not stay there. (Psalm 16:9-11)

Q. So, what are the conditions of hell?

Ungodly. That's all we need to know. Take God completely out of the equation, and from there hell plays itself out. Things could conceivably be OK for a while, but then, well, it's going to hit the fan.

Q. Do heaven and hell have anything in common?

Both are eternal. Both have a physical dimension; the people in heaven and hell will have bodies.

Q. I mean, Is there anything good about hell?

There is nothing intrinsically good about hell, but God has used hell to motivate many a lost sinner right into heaven. I know because I am one of those who went to the cross more to avoid hell than to gain heaven. So in my case--as is often the case--God used something bad for good (1). Therefore, we should not stop talking about hell. Jesus certainly didn't; in fact, most of what we know about hell comes from the lips of Jesus himself (Mark 9:3; Luke 16:28; Matthew 25:30).

But there is something even more important to say in regards to "hell" and "good" and "bad"--

We must never consider hell apart from the cross. The Judge of the universe stepped forward to take his own judgment upon himself. Because Jesus Christ knew the reality of hell, he went to the cross. Hell is as real as the cross.

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(1) see Genesis 50:20