

## Lesson 2

### The Second Coming of Christ & Rapture.

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One of the greatest evangelists that ever lived was Dwight L. Moody. Moody was especially fascinated by the subject we are going to study in this lesson. He decided to begin reading the Bible to see how often the second coming of Christ was mentioned. To his amazement, he found over 2,500 references! Thus making it one of the most important truths of the Bible.

As we studied in chapter one, we saw that our present world is nearing its end and the only hope we have lies in the soon return of our Savior. And though the future of this world may be dark, we are continually reminded of God's promises. One of my favorites is **Isaiah 46:9-10, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."** Here God clearly says He alone is God, the *only* one that can declare the end from the beginning!

Let's begin by thinking back to the first coming of Jesus, when He came as a babe in Bethlehem to die for our sins. We see that all the religious people in Jesus' day had the Old Testament of the Bible just as we do today. We also see in the Old Testament many verses that told those people knew exactly *how* Jesus would come, *when* he would come, and *in what manner* He would come. And yet, the *vast majority* of religious people missed His first coming! Why? For two reasons. 1. Few were reading the Scriptures and seeking the truth. 2. The religious leaders had created a teaching that was false. By pulling a few texts out of context, and ignoring many others, they taught a pleasing false doctrine that deceived millions. We can learn much from this, for history often repeats itself.

Jesus also realized this. This is why in **Matthew 24: 4** when the disciples asked Him about the signs of His coming and the end of the world Jesus' first words were: ***"Take heed that no man deceive you."*** That's good counsel! Let's allow the Bible to speak so we can find the truth.

In the book of Daniel, we find one of the most dramatic prophecies in the Bible about the coming kingdom of God. Here God predicts the rise and fall of earth's nations, beginning in Babylon's time, to the end of time and the second coming of Christ. Daniel is a captive Jew in Babylon - one of the few men who serves the true God of heaven. He was highly educated and occupied one of the highest positions in the government.

In **Daniel 2:1**, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. The dream was so vivid that he woke up startled. However, he could not remember what he dreamed! So he summoned his magicians, and astrologers and demanded to know what he dreamed, and the interpretation of that dream! Of course this was impossible, and as they discussed this, the king became aware that he had a lot of worthless men on his payroll. So he decided to kill them all (**verse 12**). As his army captain gathered these men, they came to Daniel. Daniel was surprised at this hasty decree of the king and quickly went to ask him for time (**verse 16**). As Daniel prayed, God revealed the vision to him during the night (**verse 19**), after which Daniel went before the king. We pick up the story in **verses 26-27**, **"The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?"** Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, **The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers,**

**shew unto the king."** Here Daniel speaks lightly of the king's astrologers and soothsayers, revealing their inability. (And by the way, these methods and practices are just as foolish today as they were back then.) In **verses 28-29** Daniel then gives the glory to God. **"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass."**

Notice here this vision is for the "latter days." After chapter one we know we are living in the latter days, so this vision is especially for us! Daniel now reveals the dream! **Verses 31-36, "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken into pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king."**



Let's allow the Bible to interpret this. What does the head of gold symbolize? **Verses 37-38**, "Thou, o king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. *Thou art this head of Gold*" Clearly it represents Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian kingdom. This kingdom ruled from 605 B.C to 538 B.C.

What do the breast and arms of silver represent? **Daniel 2: 39** (first half), "**And after**

**thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee.**" The next kingdom was the Medo-Persian empire. Just as silver is inferior to gold, Medo-Persia was inferior to Babylon, yet overthrew it in 538 B.C. and ruled until 331 B.C.

Next, We have the belly and thigh of brass. **Verse 39** (last part), "**and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.**" The third kingdom to rule the earth was Greece. Under Alexander the Great, they quickly conquered Medo-Persia in 331 B.C. and ruled until 168 B.C.

Finally, we have the fourth metal of iron. **Verse 40**, "**And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.**" The fourth and final kingdom



was Rome. It ruled from 168 B. C. to 476 A.D. A powerful kingdom that for over 600 years ruled the world.

In perfect fulfillment we see today there have only been these four world kingdoms since the days of Babylon. But now the prophecy gets more amazing, and God

prophecies the next events.

**Verses 41-42, "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken."** God says Rome, the fourth kingdom, will be divided, like the feet and toes, with some divisions weak and some strong. History confirms all of these, for when Rome fell in 476 A.D. it did not fall to another world kingdom, but rather was conquered by the Barbarian tribes from the north. Rome then divided into 10 other kingdoms. The ALAMANNI (German), VISIGOTHS (Spanish), FRANKS (French), SUEVI (Portuguese), BURGUNDIANS (Swiss-Austrian), ANGLO SAXONS (English), LOMBARDS (Italian) and the HERULI, VANDALS, and OSTRO-GOTHS. (These last three no longer exist, another fulfillment of prophecy chapter 3 will explain why). Here again we see an amazing fulfillment of prophecy, yet it gets more dramatic. **Verse 43, "And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not**

**mixed with clay.**" Here God predicted that these kingdoms would intermarry, but *never* unite. Think how many men throughout the ages have tried to prove God wrong and unite Europe.

Charlemagne, Hitler, Stalin, Napoleon, and others. Yet all these men, with their mighty armies were stopped dead by seven words in the Bible. **"They shall not cleave one to another."** It's wonderful to know there is a God who is still in control of this world and has a divine plan. Let's see what that plan is. **Verses 44-45, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold: the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."** God says in the days of these kings (kingdoms), He will set up *His* kingdom, which shall stand forever! Everything is in place. The next world kingdom will be God's! Revelation paints a beautiful picture of the coming kingdom. **Revelation 21: 1-5, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat**

**upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new, And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."**

As we look forward to this promise being fulfilled we can also anticipate Jesus' first promise to come again. **John 14:1-3, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: If it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."**

We can be sure of one thing. The devil doesn't want you to think about it. If he tried so successfully to deceive people about Christ's first coming, you can be sure he will try even harder to deceive people about Christ's second coming. Jesus foresaw this and in love revealed the *two deceptions* that would be most prominent regarding His second coming. **Matthew 24: 24-26, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold he is in the SECRET chambers; believe it not,"**

Notice the first deception, "He is in the desert." Christ is here, one can go out to see Him. Today with all the false Christs, and the New Age we hear this constantly. The second deception is more subtle. "He is in the *secret* chambers." When it comes to this important truth, and people speak of Jesus coming in the "secret chambers," *don't believe it!* Amazingly this "secret" coming of Jesus is also a very popular teaching today, even in Christian churches.

How can you not be deceived? The Bible gives five crystal clear facts of how Jesus will come. With these five biblical facts, no one ever needs to be deceived. Let's review them.

### **FACT 1. IT WILL BE LITERAL!**

**Acts 1: 9-11, "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."** This was after the crucifixion and **Luke 24** tells us Jesus had a real body with flesh and bones. There are five words to notice here: 1. Beheld 2. Sight 3. Looked 4. Gazing 5. Seen. These all indicate a literal scene. And the angel said, "as He left, so He will return."

### **FACT 2. IT WILL BE VISIBLE!**

**Revelation 1:7 "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."** Every eye on earth will see Him. Both the wicked and the righteous. **Matthew 24:30**, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." This is something Satan can never counterfeit.

### **FACT 3. IT WILL BE AUDIBLE!**

**Matthew 24: 31, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."** The trumpet will sound! And it's going to sound so loud it will even penetrate the graves! **First Thessalonians 4: 16-17, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."** What a wonderful day as Christ comes and we are caught up (raptured) to meet Him, to be re-united with our loved ones and forever live in the mansions and glories of paradise He has prepared.

Let's take a moment here to address Jesus' warnings. What if they say "He is in the secret chambers"? Today this false theory is growing. The "secret" rapture of God's people is being taught. In the last two Bible passages we have just read about the rapture. It takes place as "all the tribes mourn," as they "see Him come in the clouds," with "power and great glory," the angels are "blowing trumpets," the Lord "shouts," the "voice of the archangel" is heard, and the resurrection takes place as God's people are raptured and taken to heaven. DOES THAT SOUND SECRET? ABSOLUTELY NOT! The secret rapture theory is a most dangerous teaching for it lulls people into a false security. It is an exact parallel to the false teachings about Jesus' first coming which deceived millions of people. It sounded pleasing, but was not biblical.

Let's briefly review the false teaching of the SECRET RAPTURE. It follows these four basic errors.

1. Jesus will come secretly and rapture only the saints. 2. Following will come seven years of tribulation in which all who missed the secret rapture will have a second chance to "get right with God."

3. In the middle of this seven-year tribulation, the AntiChrist is to appear.

4. After seven years Jesus will come again and end all things.

None of this is taught in the Bible. It is contrived from a few texts taken out of context, while ignoring many others. Let's get the Bible answer.

The secret coming of Jesus is supposedly based on two texts. The first is **2 Peter 3:10**. "**The Lord will come as a thief in the night.**" Interestingly this text is only *half quoted* and twisted to make one believe Jesus is coming secretly. Let's read the whole text and context. **Second Peter 3:3, 4,10**, "**Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation, But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heaven shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.**" Obviously a thief in the night does not mean "secretly" for there is "a great noise," the "heavens pass away," and the "earth is burned up!" Now one can see why secret rapture teachers never read the entire text! The point here is the Lord will come when people who are scoffing least expect it!

The second text quoted is always **Matthew 24: 40-41**. "**One shall be taken the other left.**" Again this is taken out of context to try to support a secret coming of Jesus. A simple look at the verses make it clear that a secret coming is not even under discussion! The Bible is simply saying, when Jesus comes some are taken, others are left. Obviously the righteous go to heaven and the wicked remain. Look at the context. God draws a parallel between Noah's day and the second coming. **Matthew 24: 36 - 39**, "**But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**" In Noah's day some were saved in the ark, others were left for destruction (**verse 51**).

The seven - year tribulation will be thoroughly studied in Lesson 7. However, we can now ask the question, Will there be a second chance? Absolutely not, Let's see what the Bible says, **Revelation 22: 11-12**, "**He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still, And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**" Every case is decided when Jesus comes.

When is the Antichrist to appear? During the final tribulation only? Not according to the Bible. Antichrist or "the beast" is a power, a kingdom, and a false spirit that has been active since Jesus Christ. Not some ambiguous man who will suddenly appear at the end.

(See Lesson 4, The Antichrist Beast, Dragon, Woman and 666.)

Notice **1 John 4:3**, "**And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.**" **Revelation 16: 10**, "**And the fifth angel pour out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain.**"

Paul clearly tells us the second coming of Jesus and rapture would *not* take place until Antichrist, and the man of sin had *accomplished* his work. **Second Thessalonians 2:1**, "**Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.**" Here Paul clearly identifies the second coming and rapture. Now notice **verses 3-4**, "**Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.**" Paul clearly says *that day* (second coming and rapture) will *not* take place till this man of sin is revealed. And then in **verse 7** Paul says this power is already working. (See more on this in Lesson 3 and 4).

Last of all, are there two separate comings of Christ? One will search the Bible in vain for such a teaching. You see, the danger of the secret rapture is incredible. For people are holding onto a false hope. 1. I don't have to worry about the tribulation, I won't be here. 2. In case I miss the secret rapture I still have seven years to make it to heaven. 3. I don't have to worry about worshipping or following the Antichrist Beast because I won't be here. Following this false

security millions of people are being led astray just as in Christ day.  
Let's follow the truth!

We have found out the second coming will be literal, visible, and audible. Let's get the *next* fact.

#### **FACT 4. IT WILL BE A GLORIOUS EVENT!**

**Psalm 50: 3, "Our God shall come, and shall *not keep silence*: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him."** Compare that with **Matthew 16:27, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."** He will come and not keep silent, but will come in the glory of the Father with all the angels - certainly not secretly.

#### **FACT 5. IT WILL BE A CLIMACTIC EVENT!**

Matthew 24: 27, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." As lightning from East to West! The second coming will be the most wonderful event of all time! Families will be reunited, no more death, or sorrow, or pain. No more sin or temptation. Praise God!

There will be only two groups the day Christ comes. Those that are unjust, and filthy, and those that are righteous, and holy (Revelation 22: 11). The anguish of the first group is portrayed in **Revelation 6: 14-17, "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every**

**bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"** Oh let's not be in that group! They are afraid when Jesus comes because they never made the decision to follow Him or His Word. However there is another group who is ready. Their joy and anticipation of Jesus' coming is found in **Isaiah 25: 9**, "**And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.**" What a testimony!

As we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, we begin our journey back to heaven. In **John 14: 1-3**, Jesus promised each a mansion that He has prepared. Our minds cannot even begin to comprehend the beauty and glory of our heavenly home.

Let's take a brief look at this incredible city, New Jerusalem. It's size is immense, approximately 375 miles long, high and wide (**Revelation 21: 16**). The city itself is made of solid gold with a wall of Jasper surrounding it (**Revelation 21:18**). It sits on 12 foundations, each one made of a separate precious stone.

My friends, heaven is beyond comprehension. Try to imagine a place where there is no hatred or stealing; a place where you will never be tired or sick. No more loneliness or fear, all war will cease forever. Sin in all its ugly forms is gone. God makes some wonderful promises to us. The Lord himself will live with us (**Revelation 21:3**). There will be pleasure and joy forever (**Psalms 16:11**). All will be physically whole, the deaf will hear, the blind will

see, the dumb will speak and the lame will run (**Isaiah 35: 5-6; Philippians 3:21**). Words cannot describe the glories of heaven, pen cannot write, nor can our greatest thoughts begin to desires us to look. To look beyond the temporal, unstable, and passing things of this earth to our real home. As Jesus said, "**Lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.**" **Luke 21:28.**