

I. Introduction

- A. Please think with me today on the Second Coming of Christ.
- B. Jesus is coming again.
 1. *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. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (Revelation 19:15,16)*
- C. His second coming will not be like his first coming.
 1. His first coming was in humility; his second coming will be in glory.
 2. His first coming was in weakness; his second coming will be with power.
 3. His first coming was shrouded in obscurity; in his second coming, every eye will see him.
 4. His first coming was for salvation; his second coming will be for damnation.
 - a) It's pay-back time.
- D. Today is part 6 in our series called Endgame. It's the end of the world as we know it, and I feel fine.
- E. In the mind of God, prophecy is as easy as history. What came in the past and what will come in the future are all one thing in the mind of God. He is the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity. So when the eternal God moved into the minds of temporal human writers — when he inspired them to write this perfect, flawless, inerrant, and sufficient Scriptures — it was as easy for God to inspire them to write prophecy as it was to write history. The future is no problem for God.
- F. And what is written in Scripture is as certain as the steel reinforced super-thick foundation on which this building stands. If Jesus said, I will come again and receive you to myself, you can bank on it.
- G. We have been teaching on the second coming of Christ and the end of the age. The Bible prophecies certain major events. These events happen in a certain order, a certain sequence.
- H. The most epic, the most dramatic, the most awe-inspiring event in human history will be the second coming of Jesus Christ.
- I. And the event that will set the stage for the return of Jesus Christ is an event you have heard about, talked about, seen in movies, and heard in sermons — actually last week, if you were here — is the Battle of Armageddon. World War X.
- J. So let's put the things we have studying in their correct order. Then, we are going to come back and add one event in front of the rest.

II. *The Sequence*A. *The Rise of the Antichrist*

1. The Bible speaks of a coming world dictator who will have massive power over many nations of the world. This may or may not include the United States. We just don't know.
2. The Antichrist rules a revived Roman empire. The most likely candidate to fit the bill in our day and age is the European Common Market, something Christians were predicting decades before it came to be, and something Great Britain is finding it very hard to get out of. In Daniel 7 and Daniel 10, this is the Roman Empire, illustrated by ten toes on a great statue — meaning a confederacy of nations. The Antichrist comes out of Europe, and if you lived in Europe, you would be very tempted to vote for him. Yes, evil is that appealing.
3. The Antichrist is the king of the west.
4. His power is satanic. His sidekick is demonic (the false prophet). And his agenda completes an epic — the devil's quest to rule the world.
5. When the Antichrist makes a treaty with Israel, the world moves into the next event in the EndGames countdown.

B. *The Tribulation*

1. The Antichrist will make a treaty with Israel. In this treaty, he will bring about peace and stability to the world. Peace and stability in the Middle East. Peace and stability in the world. The Antichrist will be the great Peacemaker. He will be the answer to the problems of the world...
2. But we know that can't be true, because there is only one answer to the problems of the world.
3. As the King of the West, the Antichrist, gains power in the middle east, the other nations are jealous. The Bible speaks of wars and rumors of war. These wars and rumors of war will come from the kings of the north (Russia and allies—wait, didn't those nations collapse?), South (Egypt and Islamic nations), and East (China and its allies).
4. The tribulation will be a great time to be alive, until it becomes an awful time to be alive. There will be famine. There will be riots. There will be hyperinflation. There will be rampant false religion. There will be a kind of worship that looks so good and true, but its followers are worshiping the devil in disguise. The tribulation will see a level of corruption that makes Operation Varsity Blues look like a Sunday school picnic.
5. It is during the Tribulation that the Antichrist implements the Mark of the Beast, and 666 and all that.
6. It's a horrible time, and Jesus said that if it were any longer than seven years, no one would survive.
7. All the political machinations of the world's elites and rulers will boil over. Which is the next event in the great EndGame sequence.

C. *The Battle of Armageddon*

1. This is World War X. The kings of the north, south, east, and west, will descend on Israel. They will make war against the antichrist. They will make war against each other.

2. The blood in the Armageddon valley will flow up to a horse's bridle. And it will take seven months to bury the dead. It is possible there may be nuclear war in play. So...
 - a) We have the nations gathering against the Antichrist.
 - b) We have Satan drawing the nations to the Antichrist.
 - c) We have God bringing the nations to confront the Antichrist.
 - d) We have the world at war.
 3. All of this is the devil finally having his way in the world — it is a giant satanic hissy fit.
 - a) *Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. (Revelation 12:13)*
 4. The dragon is the devil. The woman is Israel. And the male child is Jesus, the coming king. The devil persecutes Israel. It has always been this way. The devil hates Israel. Hates the Jews. Hates the children of Abraham.
 5. Down to verse 15
 - a) *So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. (Revelation 12:15)*
 6. That is why you keep hearing these people who do not want Israel to exist. They want to drive Israel into the sea, and be done with it once for all. God has made promises to Israel. Satan wants to nullify those promises, and if he can destroy Israel, Satan can prove that God is the liar and he isn't. It is Satan who has inspired these nations and these political rulers to hate Israel, and to hate the Jews. That is the theological reason for the constant turmoil in the middle east.
 - a) So here is the setup for the Battle of Armageddon. It is inspired by the devil.
 7. But do not miss the fact that what the devil means for evil, God hijacks for good.
 - a) Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. Because even when the devil is spitting at you his worst, God can still drop down on you his best.
 - (1) Because God can use the devil's spit to fertilize his garden of grace.
 - (a) It makes the devil furious.
 8. And just when the nations of earth have their heads down to destroy one another, another army enters the fray.
- D. *The Second Coming*
1. It's show time. This is the moment the world has been waiting for.
 - a) *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:29,30).*
 2. The sky will turn dark, because that's what happens at show time. The powers of the heavens will shake. All the war on earth, the armaments, the missiles, the IEDs, the tanks, the aircraft, the bombs, the aerial warfare, the noise of war, and the stench of death.
 3. The seeds of Armageddon are sown in every heart by the force of sin. And the force of sin makes every heart a rebel against God, until Jesus comes in and remakes the heart.
 - a) If you want to know what unchecked sin produces look at the Battle of Armageddon. Thank God for Jesus and his shed blood — the only power greater than the power of sin.
 4. All this war and devastation will pause when Jesus comes riding down out of heaven. And suddenly this great war will turn. It will turn from nation against nation. And it will turn to the world against God.
 - a) We will not have this man to reign over us, the citizens in Jesus' parable declared (Luke 19:14).
 - b) And so it is with the world at war. And they will turn their guns against Jesus.
 - c) And they will have to because he has turned his guns on them.
 5. *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. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. (Revelation 19:11-13)*
 - a) This is not gentle Jesus, meek and mild. This is not sweet little Jesus boy. This is not turn the other cheek Jesus. The time for that is over. This is not the lamb... this is the Lion. He is untamed and untamable. Uncontrolled and uncontrollable. He has fire in his eyes, crowns on his head, and war in his belly.
 - b) And if you don't like this Jesus, it means you've made up your own Jesus, and you don't know the real deal.
 - c) We all get to relate to Jesus in one of two ways.
 - d) You can relate to him as your Savior, or you can relate to him as your Judge. Jesus on the Cross is your Savior. Jesus on the white horse, and later on the great white throne, is your Judge. Your Savior or Judge.
 - e) And when I say Judge, I mean, judge, jury, and executioner all rolled into one.
 - f) The only reason people today recoil at that description is because they have lost all sense of holiness, and sacredness, and purity, and moral uprightness, in equal measure to having lost all sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, to borrow our grandparents' phrase.
 - g) When Jesus comes back, he comes back, and I am quoting,
 - (1) But a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. (Hebrews 10:27).
 - (a) You can't erase these parts of the Bible, no matter how postmodern you want to be.

- h) So the war is fierce, and it turns upward. Because now, Jesus comes riding forth. This is the return of the king. This is high point of history and the purpose of all creation.
- i) Jesus is coming again.
- j) But he is not coming alone. Guess who rides down from heaven with him.
- 6. *And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. (Revelation 19:14)*
 - a) Do you know what this means?
 - b) You finally get a pony.
 - c) When Jesus comes, we come with him. We are part of the armies of heaven. The captain is Jesus. The angels are there. The saints of all the ages are there. We will not be weak. We will not be tired. We will not be confused. We will not be unfocused. We will not be depressed. We will not be discouraged. We will not be afraid. We will not be guilty. We will not be ashamed. We will not be dirty. We will not be defeated.
 - d) We will be clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Heaven is God making you you. Heaven is God unburying you from the avalanche of sin and shame. Heaven is you standing tall and proud and regal and elegant and classy and beautiful and wise. Clothed in fine linen, white and clean, and radiant and glorious and free...
 - e) Following the King on white horses.
 - f) Can you imagine that day?
 - g) And then you will watch the most amazing thing happen. You will watch as Jesus delivers a knockout blow to the combined powers, the combined might, the combined armaments of all the nations of earth.
- 7. *Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (Revelation 19:15,16)*
 - a) They will be destroyed by the word of his mouth.
 - b) It was his word that created the world and everything in it. It will be his word that decimates his enemies and everything they stand for.
 - c) The word of the Lord is invincible.
 - d) You can treat this like a joke if you want to. You can treat this like some relic of a primitive belief system that has no place in modern society. Go right ahead.
 - e) The King is coming.
 - f) The King of kings and Lord of lords ascends to his throne.
 - g) And if you are not ready for that great day of the Lord, you will have absolutely no excuse. Even your own conscience has told you all life long to prepare to meet your God.
 - h) Behold, now is time, and today is the day of salvation, the Bible says. During this age, and this time, and these days, he is offering himself as your Savior. But during that day, it will be too late. He comes to judge the living and the dead.
- 8. He will descend to the Mount of Olives, which was the place he ascended from. He will come and rule, and he will bring about the one thing the world has longed for since the garden of Eden. And this is the next event in the prophetic timetable:

E. *The Millennium*

- 1. He will restore paradise. He will outdo the Garden of Eden, and create the only Utopia the human race can know — the kingdom of God on earth with Jesus Christ on the throne.
- 2. No one can fight him for he rules with a rod of iron.
- 3. And no one should fight him, for his reign is the reign of grace.
 - a) Marvelous message we bring,
Glorious carol we sing,
Wonderful word of the King,
Jesus is coming again!
- 4. Aren't you glad for that day? The Second Coming is Coming. I don't know when, but I think it's soon. I think the signs are in place, and the time is late.
- 5. Now, I want to add one more major event. Scripture reveals yet one more major event in the divine timetable of the end.

F. *The Rapture*

- 1. This is number 1. This is the next thing to happen in the divine timetable. Let me say that all of this sequence has reasonable Christians debating each other. That is why I laid out the ground rules way back in part one. Be charitable. Be normal. Because reasonable Christians disagree on some of these things.
- 2. But I can only teach you what I believe, and what I see in Scripture. And as I see it, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ happens in two phases, seven years apart. Phase One, the Rapture. Phase Two, the Second Coming.
- 3. There was a church in a city that had learned about the second coming. The church existed 2,000 years ago. The city was in Greece, and was called Thessalonica.
- 4. The Christians there were confused. They were worried the second coming already happened. They were worried that they missed it.
- 5. So Paul writes them a letter, and in that letter, he clarifies all this. He writes these words:
 - a) *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17)*

- (1) The dead in Christ — those are Christians who died. And they rise first.
- b) The rest of us Christians what happens to us? We are caught up. We are caught up. Caught up is English. In the original Greek language, Paul wrote the word “*harpazo*”. Later on, the Greek Bible was translated into Latin. In the Latin Bible, the word is “*rapiemur*”, which means the same thing as caught up. The word Rapture is based on the Latin word here. It means to be suddenly taken or grasped or seized, and that is what will happen to all living Christians on earth in this moment.
- c) But that’s not all.
- d) I want you to notice two things about this event: 1) It pertains to Christians only, and 2) it is in the air. There is nothing here about every eye seeing him. Nothing about a war. And nothing about the tribulation or the rest of the world. So that is our first hint that this capturing away, this Rapturing of the church is a separate event.
- e) There is another really important Scripture on this.
- 6. *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:51-55)*
 - a) Same event. Only in this verse, there is a physiological and spiritual transformation that happens in the human person at the time of the Lord’s return.
 - b) This is the event that outfits you for heaven. If you went to heaven right now in your physical body, you would explode. This mortal body cannot handle the presence of God.
 - c) But, when Jesus returns, you get your new body. A body of the resurrection.
 - d) And look how fast it happens. In a moment in the twinkling of an eye.
 - e) And this is why so many Christians believe, and I am one of them, that the Rapture makes it seem like people just disappeared. And this is why so many of us believe that Jesus returns in two Phases. Once for the church, and once to battle the evil of the world. Once to the air, and once to the earth and the Mount of Olives. Once to take us home, and once to bring us back in victory.
- 7. No matter what else you can say about the return of Christ, you have to say this: Jesus can come back at any time. In theology, his return is *imminent*. It can happen today, tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, or a hundred years from now. Nobody knows. Jesus said, “*Of that day and of that hour, no human knows.*”
- 8. But if you know he is coming, you know this:
 - a) You’re on your way to glory, so you shouldn’t be ashamed of him in history.
 - b) You’re on your way to heaven, so you shouldn’t forget about him on earth.

III. Conclusion

- A. One last thing.
- B. In Zechariah, the prophet says, “*They will look on him, whom they have pierced.*” And he was pierced...by thorns...by nails...by a spear. For you.
- C. When you get to heaven, you will have a glorified body. Flawless. Perfect. No pains. No sickness. No disabilities. And no scars.
- D. The only scars in heaven... well those will be on the hands and feet and side and brow of Jesus — an everlasting reminder of the price of the love that carried you all the way home to glory.