

FUTUREWORLD pt.6 2-16-14

What Christ Will Return To Do

(Hebrews 9:28) We are in week six of our look at the future which God has planned for this planet. Last Sunday we looked at 21 reasons why Joe Flacco is the anti-Christ. If you weren't hear you had better get the cd. When we began our series I sought to engage your attention by asking you whether a Christian should be an optimist, or a pessimist when looking ahead. Remember that? But what really is the difference between an optimist and a pessimist? It is usually one of perspective isn't it? Three people look at the same glass of water. The optimist thinks to himself that the glass is half full. The pessimist thinks that the glass is half empty. The realist thinks, "I bet I end up having to wash it." Same glass, different perspectives. When it comes to future events, the events may be good or bad depending on who you are. Remember that today as we look into the second coming of Jesus Christ. We are going to begin looking more specifically at what the Bible says about His return. There are a number of questions we will try to answer over the next few weeks. We will talk about how He will return, and when He will return as it relates to the millennium and other events; but I thought it best to begin by looking at what Jesus will do when He returns, and we start here for a good reason. When you understand what Jesus says He will do when He returns it will help you understand better the Scriptures which tell us how and when He will come.

So, what is Jesus going to do when He returns? What is the next major mission of the Son of God? Briefly put, Jesus will return to complete what He began in His first coming. As we have seen in weeks past Christ came to destroy the works of the devil and to establish upon earth the kingdom of God. And he succeeded, but He didn't finish the job. His holy kingdom came in His first coming but in its fullest expression it is still to come. Christ brought salvation to His people thru His life, death and resurrection but the fullness of that salvation is still to come. So, Jesus is coming to complete His kingly work and that is a work which consists of two elements: salvation and judgment.

What is Jesus coming to do? The first answer to remember is that He is coming to save. Hebrews 9:**28** *so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him* (NIV) Now, you may say, "Wait a minute! I thought we were already saved? Why does this says that Christ will bring salvation when He returns?" Good question, and it goes back to what I was speaking of moments

ago. We have been saved, but not in every way as yet. There is still some salvation coming for us. I developed an illustration I hope may help you understand it. Let's suppose you are out mountain climbing by yourself and a huge boulder rolls down the mountain and lands on your legs, breaking your bones and leaving you pinned and helpless. For hours you lay there thinking about all the sermons you had not listened to over the years. After a while, a pack of wolves surround you and begin moving closer and closer to your helpless carcass, when all of a sudden another lone mountain climber appears with rifle in hand and the wolves scatter. Your timely friend then rolls the boulder off your leg, pulls you under some shelter, raps your bloody leg with his own clothes, gives you food, water and a gun then heads on down the mountain to summons a rescue helicopter. Now, I ask you, at the point that man left you laying there, would you say that he had saved you? Absolutely. He had rescued you from wolves and starvation and exposure, but had the man fully saved you? No. Your salvation isn't complete until you get your bones fixed and return home. That's why your savior is going to come back in a helicopter. Now, Jesus isn't coming back in a chopper but the point is the same. He has already rescued us from sin but there is more rescuing still ahead. The salvation which Jesus brings goes far beyond the forgiveness of sins. It is a rich and many-faceted salvation.

Let's look at some ways Jesus will save us when He comes again. First, He will deliver us from persecution and affliction. As we have seen, the time before Christ comes may be marked by intensified opposition to the followers of Jesus. The book of Revelation depicts great war being waged against the saints of God when Jesus comes back to rescue us. II Thessalonians 1:**6-7** *For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire.* Paul here pictures Jesus coming to the defense of His people and delivering them by demolishing their enemies. We saw last time II Thessalonians 2:**8** *Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming.* So, Christ will save us by delivering us from all our enemies. Secondly, Jesus will save us by giving us new bodies. This is something we will look at more specifically down the road but for now notice what is taught in Philippians 3:**20-21a** *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory.* Whether our bodies are dead and decayed or in the best of health they will be made new and better

by the transforming power of Jesus when He comes. We will thus be saved from sickness and weakness and weariness. That's what Christ will do when He comes. Romans 8:23 *And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.* You see Paul says that we have the first fruits of the Spirit, but there are more to come, and so we eagerly await what our Savior will do for us. He saves us by delivering us from our mortal bodies. Thirdly, He saves us by delivering us from a cursed planet.® You remember in the garden of Eden that when man sinned God cursed the ground so that it brought forth thorns and weeds. Things are not as they were originally. We live on a cursed planet with mosquitoes and poisonous snakes and droughts and hurricanes and celery. But that too will be made new when the Lord returns. Romans 8:20-21 *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.* The earth will be transformed and made new. The desert will become a garden and we will see paradise restored. Fourthly, our Lord will save us when He comes by rewarding His servants. II Timothy 4:7-8 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up 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 loved His appearing.* Isaiah 40:10 *Behold, the Lord God will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him And His recompense before Him.* What exactly those rewards will be is hard to say. Paul speaks of a crown, Jesus spoke of treasure in heaven. He spoke also of mansions didn't He? John 14:2-3 *In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.* Jesus says *I'm coming back for you.* His purpose is to reward His faithful ones and to those who know Christ the greatest reward is precisely what He mentions here. "Where I am, there you will be." We will see Him and live in His glorious presence. One hymnwriter wrote, "When by the gift of His infinite grace, I am accorded in heaven a place, just to be there and to look on his face will thru the ages by glory for me." That is the ultimate reward for the servant of Jesus. And so, the New Testament tells us how we do and we should eagerly await the coming of our Lord. We are to be eager believers who are Titus 2:13 *looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.* For when He comes He comes to save.

But when He comes this time He comes as more than a Savior. For, in His return, Christ will come also in His role as Judge with a capital *J*. And although Christ came initially in His role as Savior, His judgment was put on hold until the final day. John 3:17 *For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.* That was true of His first coming. He did not take His seat as Judge, but, when He comes again, be ready to meet someone other than little Jesus, meek and mild. Peter said in Acts 10:42 *He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.* Did you know that about Jesus? Did you know that we must all appear before the judgment seat of God's Holy Son? Paul preaching this time in Acts 17:30-31 *Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.* Did you know that God has appointed Jesus as the Ruling Judge of the Supreme Court of the universe? And I praise God that this appointment doesn't have to go thru the Senate Judiciary Committee!! No judge, no senator can block this appointment because God outvoted them all when He rolled away the stone and brought His Appointee back to life. But the court of King Jesus is not yet in session. You will, as will I, have your day in court when Jesus returns. Christ Himself said John 5:22 *For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son* Matthew 25:31 *But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And what He does from that throne is judge. 32-33 All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.* Just a couple of notes on this passage. First, it says the nations will be gathered before Christ for judgment. There are Christian teachers who will tell you that this is the judgment of nations as opposed to individuals, but there is no way that you can judge a nation in the way that Christ judges here. And there is no way that you can send nations to heaven and hell as Jesus does in this passage. When Christ says that all nations will be judged He clearly means that the individuals of all nations will be judged. He uses the same language in the great commission when He says that we are to go and make disciples of what? All nations. Has anybody here ever disciplined a literal nation? And not only would you have to disciple the nation and teach it but you would have to baptize it? I could sort of imagine sprinkling a nation but I would like to see one of my Baptist

brothers get Brazil into his baptismal tank. Don't let the language confuse you. This is a judgment of individuals. The point is that all men will be judged by Christ. And what Christ will do in this judgment is very important to see. What He does is to separate. Here he calls the two groups the sheep and the goats. **33** *He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.* This is a major theme of the judgment passages and the second coming passages. Jesus is the great Divider. Go back to Matthew 24:31. Speaking of Christ's coming in glory it says **31** *He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.* Got the picture? The elect are gathered and they are gathered out of the world. Matthew 13 gives us the parable of the wheat and tares. Here Jesus explains to His disciples how the wheat and the tares, which are weeds, grow together in the field until the harvest. At the harvest they are both reaped and separated. Christ says the wheat represents the sons of the kingdom and the tares represent the sons of evil. In Matthew 3, John the Baptist speaks of the separating and judging work of the Messiah. **10-12** *every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire....He who is coming after me is mightier than I...His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.* Now you should see there why the work of separation is essential. What follows the separation? Judgment. Judgment for some and incredible joy for others. The destinies of believers and unbelievers are not very much alike. They will both stand before Christ but one group will be saved and the other damned. One will enter into eternal bliss, the other into unquenchable fire. Matthew 13 says the Son of Man will cast the tares into the furnace of fire where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. But the righteous will shine like stars in the father's kingdom. The true Christian and the unbeliever may look a lot alike on the surface but they're as different as heaven and hell. And this difference explains why, to many, the second coming of Jesus is a terrible danger and to many others it is the blessed hope. Remember the three servants of Matthew 25? Two used their stewardship well and one did not. What happened to them? To the two the Master said, "Enter my joy." But the other was cast into the outer darkness. There is not a verse in the Bible that talks about a third place for the moral agnostic. You either go up or down, sheep or goats, wheats or tares, heaven or hell. You go to paradise or you go to the pit. Where do you find yourself today? Listen again to II Thessalonians 1:7-9 which tells us Christ is coming **7-9** *to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to*

those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, What does that say Jesus is coming to do? To judge and to carry out His sentence. The penalty according to verse 9 is eternal destruction.

You remember from Matthew 24 how Jesus says His coming will be marked by disturbances in heaven? Read Revelation 6 and see how this compares. **12-17** *I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. 14 The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they *said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”* This is the day isn't it? This is what Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24. This is the day of his coming and how did the folks in verse 15 feel about it? Were they optimistic? Did they think it was a happy day? To the Christian it will be a day of salvation and reward and glory and exulting, but to those who don't know Jesus it is the great day of His wrath. To some it is the end of the world, to others it is the beginning of glory. This is the same event that Paul waited for so eagerly. Its all a matter of perspective you see. There are some events that make everyone happy. There are some events that make everyone sad. But there are events like this as well that make some very happy and others very distressed. Where do you stand?

Maybe I thought of this because football season just wrapped up with the Super Bowl, a game that, unlike almost all others, is played on a neutral field. At most football games the home team has 95% of the fans. Everybody in the stands has the same basic outlook on the game. But in the Super Bowl, roughly half the fans are for the NFC team and half for the AFC team. And no matter what happens, half the fans go home happy and half the fans go home sad. Of course, some teams never make it to the Super Bowl. I was talking with a friend recently who grew up a major NY Jets fan. He just loves the Jets, but they have not made it to the big game for over forty years while their division rivals, the NE Patriots go every other year it seems. This bothered him so much that he decided to change his perspective. He gave up on the Jets winning so he asked his doctor if he

could do anything to make him a Patriots fan. The doctor said, "yes this was possible" but he would have to take out a third of his brain. Well, this frustrated fan, we'll call him Mr. Brown, was ready for anything that might help him make it thru the Fall so he agreed to the surgery. After the surgery the doctor was right there next to the man when he came to and as soon as he could the doctor spoke to the patient and said, "Mr. Brown I hate to have to tell you this but you need to know that during the surgery we had a little accident and instead of removing one third of your brain we removed half of it. I'm terribly sorry, but tell me, how do you feel? Mr. Jones looked up at the doctor and said, "How 'bout them Cowboys!"

Oh, that's good isn't it? But I tell that story to make a point about the second coming. You can change your perspective. What sounded like bad news last week can sound like good news this week. It is possible for you to change loyalties and become a fan of Jesus and an opponent of sin. And that, my friend, is application #1. Get right with God. Flee the wrath that is to come and you flee the day of wrath by making it your day of victory only by trusting your life and death into the hands of Jesus. Nothing could be more important than this and I urge you not to let the lure of the world prevent you from taking this step. In *Pilgrim's Progress* Bunyan writes about the man named *Christian* who was told by Evangelist that the city in which he lived was destined to be destroyed and that he could save his life if he would run toward a certain light in the distance. I quote from Bunyan, "*Now I saw in my dream that the man began to run. He had not gone far from his home when his wife and children came crying out after him to come back. But he put his fingers in his ears and ran on crying, 'Life, life, eternal life!' He did not look back but increased his speed.*" Let nothing stop you, for this business of coming to Christ is a matter of life and death, eternal life and eternal death. That is why we Christians spend billions and billions of dollars every year in missionary activity. That is why we have radio stations around the world and print Bibles and tracts and build larger ministry centers so more people can learn of Christ. It's not just to make us feel good that our group is popular and growing. Inviting someone to Christ is not like inviting them to the Rotary Club. We know what is coming for the unrepentant and the love of Christ constrains us to say, "Repent and be saved. Set Jesus up as Lord in your heart and you can look at the future with hope instead of dread."

Application #2 applies to you all. Make sure that you are in Christ. Make sure that you truly believe, that you are wheat and not chaff, that you are a sheep and not a goat. I John 2:**28** *Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink*

away from Him in shame at His coming. John envisions here that some, and I think possibly even true believers, will not rejoice when Jesus comes. They will be ashamed and fearful. They never acquired an assurance of salvation. They never made their calling and election sure. You don't want to be like that when Jesus comes do you? You want to confidently greet Him, with assurance that you are His. But how do you get that? John says you abide in Him ®. What does that mean? Well I John 2:6 *the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.* John 15:5 **scde** *he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.* Are you bearing much fruit? Are you living like Jesus? These are the things that will grow your confidence and grow your excitement over the second coming. In II Peter 1:10 **10** *Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.* And what are the these things he talks about there? Read II Peter 1. Those things are faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, Christian love. Wherever you find these you will find a person who abides in Christ, who is ready, even eager for His coming. As I said, your perspective can change, because you can change thru the powerful love of Jesus. Would you join me now to pray for that?

Father in heaven, we want to look forward to the day of Christ. We want to rejoice when we hear trumpets; we want to be ready. So, touch now with saving power the men and women here who don't yet know you. Show them your glory and set them free so that they can turn away from sin and turn to Jesus. For those unsure of where they stand today, who maybe years ago said "yes" to you, give them now a deeper conviction to walk by your ways in order that they might experience your peace and look ahead to your joy for we ask this in Jesus' name