

# Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
Isaiah 40:31*



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## The Second Coming of Christ

The New Testament often mentions the return of Christ. But modern theology has obscured the simple message of what will happen on that occasion.

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, 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, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven’” (Ac. 1:9-11).

This promise of a second coming of Christ is repeated numerous times throughout the New Testament, and is a central tenet of the Christian faith. It certainly deserves our attention.

However, before looking at what the New Testament says about the Second Coming, we must remind ourselves that the Jews thought they had the First Coming all figured out — and completely missed it when it happened. They misread what their Scriptures said on the subject, overlooking some texts and misinterpreting others, to the extent that they could not accept a simple carpenter’s son as their Messiah. If we are not

careful, we can make a similar mistake in our treatment of the Second Coming. It behooves us, therefore, to approach this topic with a healthy dose of humility, knowing that God is in charge of executing this historical event, not us.

Although there are many passages that mention the Second Coming of Christ, everything we need to know about it can be summarized by reading only two passages: 1 Thess. 4:13-18 and Rev. 20:11-15. A careful reading of these two texts reveals the following sequence of events:

- 1) Jesus will appear in the clouds.
- 2) All the dead will be raised.
- 3) Those who are alive will be changed (into the same resurrection bodies as the dead).
- 4) The earth and the universe will be destroyed.
- 5) A final judgment of all mankind will be conducted, and eternal destinies will be determined.

Modern theology has complicated this simple description with a host of exotic details, all of which can be corrected by a closer examination of related

texts. For example, some claim the Second Coming will be preceded by signs (but it will come “as a thief in the night,” without warning, 1 Thess. 5:2-3). Others teach there will be two resurrections, separated by a vast span of time (but the NT teaches only “a resurrection” of all, Ac. 24:15; Jn. 5:28-29). Some believe that Jesus has already come, but in an invisible manner (not true, for “every eye will see Him” when He comes, Rev. 1:7). Many argue that the Second Coming will usher in a thousand year reign of Christ on a literal throne in Jerusalem (but His kingdom already exists, and He rules from heaven, Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9). Others link the Second Coming with the nefarious work of an all-powerful Antichrist figure (but John warned of antichrists active in the first century A.D.—two thousand years ago, 1 Jn. 2:18).

We could go on with such examples, but space prevents an exhaustive review. The key message here is that human history will come to an end—and eternity will begin—when Christ returns. “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20).

– David King