

I. Introduction

- A. Today, we're wrapping up our series called Christus Victor. Christ the Victor, Jesus is the Champion you need in the battle for your life. It's super important that we know who he is. Why? Knowing him is the only way to know yourself. It's the only way to know your destiny.
- B. So, for this season, we've been laying the foundation of Christ. We have looked at his birth, childhood, baptism, temptation, teachings, miracles, arrest and trials, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and session.
- C. Today, our topic is pretty huge: *The Second Coming of Christ*.

II. My Story

- A. The Second Coming of Christ was really big news back in my student days. I remember as a high school kid sitting in my church to watch a movie. It was about the second coming and it scared the snot out of me. Have you seen *Thief in the Night*? That movie was eventually seen by over 300 million people. It tells the story of a teenage girl. One day, she comes home to an empty house. The doors are open. The tea kettle on the stove is whistling but nobody is around. The phone is off the hook, making a beeping noise. She searches through the house. Nobody's home. She discovers that Jesus returned. And sorry, but "You've been left behind."
- B. I'd call that a Scared Straight approach to evangelism. Worked for me!
- C. There was a book that hit number one on the New York Times best selling list called *The Late Great Planet Earth*... who's read that one?
- D. There was prophecy mania in the land.
- E. I went to a prophecy conference in downtown Chicago. A famous preacher basically guaranteed that Jesus would return before I finished my senior year of high school. It was a weird feeling. For a while, I stopped caring about my future.
- F. I now know that Jesus clearly said NOT to set dates for his return (Mark 13:32,33). That's just out of bounds.
- G. But I do believe that one day, and it could be soon, Jesus Christ will return to end history as we know it. It could be a year from now. It could be a hundred years from now. It could be before I finish this message.
- H. Now, the pendulum has swung the other way. It's very rare to hear teaching about the return of Christ. Very few books are published about it, and very few Christians are talking about it.
- I. Bible prophecy has gone cold in the land. So let's fix that today because the basic question is simple.

III. Are You Ready?

- A. Are you ready? Are you ready to meet your Maker?
- B. If your answer is maybe or I think so, that's fine. How about making sure today?
 - 1. I'm not asking if you're a church person.
 - 2. I'm not asking if you've been baptized, or gone through confirmation, or anything like that.
 - 3. I'm not asking if you're a good person, a loving person, a giving person, or a kind person.
- C. Because you can be good, loving, giving, and kind, and still not be ready to stand before God.
- D. You need to be saved. Or as Jesus said, "You must be born again." It's not an option.
- E. If you don't feel ready for that moment, I am extra glad you're here today. That's because I want to show you how to be ready and know it. At the end of this message, I'm going ask you to pray a simple, silent prayer. In that time, I want to walk you through the steps of being born again.
- F. I won't single you out. I won't embarrass you. But I do want to help you receive Jesus.
- G. Because he's coming again and we need to be ready.
- H. This event will end history as we know it. It will transform the world. The Second Coming will be the most revolutionary event in cosmic history.
- I. Think with me about Five Revolutions within the Second Coming of Christ.

IV. Five Revolutions

A. *The Rapture (Second Coming Part One)*

- 1. The second coming is a little bit complicated. It's a bunch of parts that snap together like a Lego set. Here's the next event on God's big timetable.
 - 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)*
- 2. Like I said, it's a little bit complex.
- 3. I have to say that reasonable Bible experts will put this puzzle together in a different order. There are several main views on how this all goes down.
- 4. So, we don't need to get all fired up about somebody else putting these things in a slightly different order. It's okay, and God still loves us all. Please don't email me.
- 5. There are two main parts to the coming of Christ.
 - a) Part one: He comes to the sky (The Rapture)
 - b) Part two: He comes to the earth (The Second Coming)
- 6. In Part One, Jesus comes to the sky. And, according to Scripture, he gathers up believers only.
 - a) So, "we are caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

b) It's also described here in 1 Corinthians:

(1) *What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These perishable bodies of ours are not able to live forever. But let me tell you a wonderful secret God has revealed to us. Not all of us will die, but we will all be transformed. It will happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, the Christians who have died will be raised with transformed bodies. And then we who are living will be transformed so that we will never die. For our perishable earthly bodies must be transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die. (1 Corinthians 15:50-53, NLT) (compare Phil. 3:20,21)*

7. The first part of the second coming happens in the air. Bible experts have a name for this. It is based on the words "caught up" in the 1 Thessalonians verse.
8. If you read that verse in Latin, caught up is the word *rapiemur* (from *rapio*). So this is called the Rapture. It means to be caught up, to grab, to be suddenly gathered in. In the Rapture, Jesus suddenly gathers in his people.
9. You might have heard that the word Rapture isn't in the Bible. Yes it is, in the Latin translation, if you mash the Latin word into English.
10. In the Rapture, Jesus comes for saved people only. If you are still living when that happens, you will suddenly fly up to the clouds. It will look like you just vanished. Your car will keep driving itself. Your toast will keep toasting itself. The largemouth bass on the end of your line will pull your rod and reel into the water. The burgers on the grill will burn.
11. You will be snatched up out of this pain machine called earth. You will meet the Lord in the air.
12. Believers who have died *before* this happens, will be there too. Their souls and spirits are with Christ already. So when he comes, they will come with him. A giant army of all the believers of all the ages past. My Dad will be there. My aunts and uncles will be there. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, David, Daniel, Moses, Ruth, Esther, Naomi, will be there.
13. God will fashion each one a new Resurrection Body, raising their bodies from the grave, or the dust, or the ash [see previous message]. Their souls will get their fancy new bodies.
14. And we will all fly up to heaven.
15. This is the Rapture. It can happen at any moment. There's nothing that needs to happen in Bible prophecy. The stage is all set.
16. And that's why it's so important to be ready for this day.
17. If you're not saved, you will be left behind which is a very good reason to be saved today.
18. Even if you don't *feel* ready, just choose to be willing.
19. This sudden departure of Christians will unleash unprecedented craziness throughout the world. And that creates the second big Revolution on God's timetable.

B. The Tribulation

1. Jesus called his followers "the salt of the earth." We're preservatives. All natural and organic. When you remove the preservatives from culture, culture will turn rotten real fast.
2. The Tribulation [Troubles] period is predicted in several places in the Bible.
 - a) It will be terrible:
 - (1) *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:21, 22)*
 - b) So, the Tribulation will be basically unsurvivable if it goes too long.
 - (1) Seven Year Period. (Dan 9:24-27)
 - (2) The Rise of the AntiChrist/Beast. (2 Thes. 2:3,4, Rev 13)
 - (3) The Mark of the Beast and Global Tyranny. (Rev. 13:15-18)
 - (4) The Rise of Satan. (Rev. 12, 13)
 - (5) The Rise of Demonic Activity. (Rev. 9)
 - (6) The Judgments of God. (Rev. 16, the "bowl" judgments)
 - (7) The Battle of Armageddon. (Rev. 16:14-16)
3. The Tribulation is the devil's last chance to seize total control of planet earth. It's also the world's last chance to create Utopia. Under the inspiration of the devil, humankind's leaders have been fighting forever to create a single, good, united world under the leadership of human kind.
4. But that's impossible. Those attempts always turn to tyranny, violence, and oppression. Why? Because the human heart is fallen, and given enough power, people use people up and throw them out.
5. Only Jesus can unite this world, and he will.
6. But during the Tribulation, world leaders under the subtle sway of the devil will try. They will fail.
7. The greatest world war earth has ever known will break out - the Battle of Armageddon.
8. It will be history's worst bloodbath. (Rev. 14:20)
9. And just when it seems that this broken down, corrupt human race is about to exterminate itself, Christ returns, only this time to earth.
 - a) *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 19:11-16)

C. *Second Coming (Part Two)*

1. This is the Second Coming, part two. Snapping the third lego into place.
2. Christ returns. He comes with his angels. He comes with all of us.
3. We come riding down out of heaven, dressed for war, riding these awesome heavenly horses — I can't even imagine what that's going to be like. I pretty sure my fear of heights will be gone.
4. Jesus will see the armies of earth arrayed against him. They have actually come to battle God to throw off his rule and reign. It would be funny if it weren't so sad.
5. Never underestimate the ability of the human heart to resist the love of God.
 - a) I hope you don't resist his love today. You have a Savior. Let him save you today.
6. So Christ returns, and sees these armies ready to fight him. All the might of all the nations of all the world. Is he worried?
7. No. With one word out of his mouth, he defeats them all. (Rev. 19:15,21)
8. Christus Victor, the Champion you need in the fight for your life.
 - a) He chains Satan and throws him into the bottomless pit. (Rev. 20:1-3)
 - b) He restores Israel, and the Jewish race realizes he is their Messiah and King. (Rev. 7:1-7, Dan. 12:5-7; Ezek. 20:33-38)
 - c) He sweeps away the governments of the earth.
 - d) He sets up his righteous government of earth.
9. This is the moment the world has been waiting for. Evil is banished. Your broken heart is mended. Pain is a distant memory. Tears are wiped away. Hope springs back to life. It's so beautiful and so powerful.
10. And what will he do?

D. *The Millennium (The Thousand Year Reign)*

1. God promised the world a king, and this is the day he keeps his promise.
2. God promised to Christ a kingdom, and this is the day he keeps that promise.
3. When Adam and Eve sinned, the world, everybody and everything fell under a curse. Every bit of creation is in pain. Pretty much every day our lives prove it. This is why life is hard. This is why pain happens. This fallen world is a morally broken pain machine.
4. In this one moment, when Jesus is revealed in all his glory, when Jesus takes his rightful throne, with a shout and a trumpet blast and the thunderous applause of the redeemed cosmos and the holy angels... in that glorious moment the curse is lifted, the fall is reversed, death is crippled, and the love of God, the peace of God, and the joy of God take hold of all our hearts in ways we can't begin to imagine.
5. What a day that will be!
 - a) *For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, everything on earth was subjected to God's curse. All creation anticipates the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. (Romans 8:19-22, NLT).*
6. The curse is over. Only Jesus can do this. Only Jesus can create heaven on earth. Church can't. Government can't. The world's philosophers, rich people, wise people, bright people, and elite people can't. The devil can't.
7. Only Jesus.
8. Only Christus Victor.
 - a) Jesus will set up a government on earth, from Jerusalem.
 - b) He will be the visible, literal, ruler of earth. The only way global government can work is if Jesus is here on earth making it happen. Anything else is tyranny.
 - c) He will do what the devil has tried to do since the beginning: he will create a beautiful world of true love and lasting peace.
 - (1) You will be the happiest you have ever been, if you know Jesus.
 - (a) With all the love and compassion I have, I'm urging you to make him yours and make yourself his today.
9. This is the kingdom of God. This is the coming rule and reign of Christ. It will last a thousand years and you will see it happen with your own eyes.
 - a) *Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)*
10. You will be there. If you have Jesus, his glory will be your glory. His throne will be your throne. His powers will be your powers. His joy will be your joy.
11. A thousand years of pure bliss on earth.
12. When the millennium is over, this present cosmos gets rolled upon the history books, and we get Revolution Number Five:

E. The Eternal State

1. I didn't make up that name. It's a name in Bible study books and theology books.
2. At the end of millennium, God will usher in a new heavens and a new earth.
 - a) *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new..." (Revelation 21:1-5)*
3. I don't know what it's going to feel like, smell like, sound like, look like, or taste like. I don't think human language can describe it or human minds can grasp it. It's a feast. It's a party. It's an adventure. It's a mission. It's infinitely better than you can ask or dream.
4. God has written a story. It arcs from his pre-creation solitude to the acclamation of ten thousand times ten thousand ransomed beings in the new heavens and new earth. Each of us lives, dies, and lives again as interconnected subplots in God's grand story. From our perspective on this anthill called earth, the story unfolds one nerve-wracking line at a time. But from God's perspective on Mount Eternity, the story has already been written to a breathtakingly satisfying conclusion.
5. In that conclusion, you will look upon the One with nail pierced hands. You will see the scars on his brow from the crown of thorns. The wound in his side from the spear.
6. You will see with your own eyes this baby born in Bethlehem — who went through childhood, baptism, and temptation. Who loved and taught and did miracles. Who was arrested and tried and nailed to a cross. This One who rose from the dead and ascended on high. He will come again, and you will see him come into his rightful throne. Your heart will overflow with gratitude. Your mind will burst with a sudden realization of who this Person is and of what price he paid to bring you to this moment. Your jaw will drop when you see Christus Victor himself, your brother, your Savior, your friend, and your God, open wide his arms, and run to you with a smile and embrace that will take your breath away.
7. Thank God for Christus Victor, the Champion you need in the fight for your life.

V. Invitation

- A. Be Ready
- B. I want to dedicate our closing moments today to you, if you know that you don't yet have Christ. This is that moment I told you was coming.
- C. We want you to know that Jesus came into this world because he loves you. He had you personally in mind when he died on the Cross and he washed your sins away. When he said, "It is finished," he completed all the work needed to make you right with God forever and ever.
- D. All you have to do is believe in him. Trust him. Receive him.
- E. And I want to help you do that right now.
- F. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. Yes, it's that simple.
- G. So I'm going to ask you to bow your head, and to close your eyes. We do this to create some quiet and some privacy for you and to give that courtesy to your neighbor.
- H. I'm going to lead you in a prayer. In that prayer, you can tell God that you are believing in Jesus as your Savior. I'll say the prayer one line at a time. You can pray it silently, in your heart, to God.
- I. A: *ADMIT*. God, I admit I need you today. I need you to save me, because I can't save myself. I have not lived up to your standards. I have not even lived up to my own standards. I am a sinner and I need a Savior. I admit it today.
- J. B: *BELIEVE*. I believe that Jesus is my Savior, today. I believe he's your Son. I believe he died on the Cross. I believe he rose again. His did this for me to cleanse me and forgive me and make me your child. God, I don't know how it all works, but I'm telling you as best as I can that I believe in Jesus as my Savior today.
- K. C: *CHOOSE*. So right now, I choose to receive Jesus as my personal Savior. I choose to trust him. I choose to rely on him. I choose Jesus as my only hope for salvation. And I ask you, as best as I can, right now, please save me. Amen.