

## **Christ is coming again for the final judgment**

The Bible makes it very clear that Jesus is coming again to judge the world. Even Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about this. In Jude we're told that Enoch prophesied, "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against Him," (vv. 14-15). The Old Testament spoke of Christ's second coming. Job declared, "In the end He will stand upon the earth," (19:25). The Psalms speak of the Lord's return in judgment (58:11; 75:7; 96:13). The Old Testament prophets spoke of the "end of all things" and "the day of the Lord."

The New Testament also speaks clearly of the second coming of Christ. In His discourse to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, Jesus spoke of His coming at the end of the world. He stressed there will be one final return, one final bodily resurrection of all people, and one final judgment. This "Olivet Discourse" is basic to a study of the last things. The angels told the disciples at Christ's ascension, "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven," (Acts 1:11).

The epistles frequently mention Christ's second coming. Paul declared, "Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. 3:20). Paul spoke of Christ's second coming to the Thessalonians. He said, "And so we will be with the Lord forever." (1 Thess. 4:17). Paul spoke of receiving a crown of righteousness, which the Lord would give to him and "to all who have longed for His appearing," (2 Tim. 4:8). Peter spoke of Christ's second coming, the destruction of the world, and a new heaven and a new earth, (2 Peter 3:10-13). The book of Revelation throughout speaks of Christ's second coming.

The Lutheran Confessions also speak of our belief in Christ's second coming. Each of the ecumenical creeds confesses our belief that Christ will come again. Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession states the belief that Christ will come again. It also condemns the error of millennialism.

Jesus' first coming took place in quietness and great humility (Luke 2). His second coming will be in great glory so that all can see Him. As Jesus said, "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other," (Matt. 24:30-32). All people, either willingly or unwillingly, will acknowledge Jesus as the Lord of the universe. Those who do not believe in Him will tremble with fear as they behold His second coming. As John beheld it in Revelation, "They called to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?'" (Rev 6:16-17; cf. also Is. 2:19).

God has determined when the end will come. He is not sitting in heaven, trying to find the optimum time for Christ's second coming. That time has already been set. As Paul said to the people of Athens, "For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed," (Acts 17:31). God knows that day. Does Jesus? The question is asked because Jesus said, "No one knows about that day or hour, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father," (Mark 13:32) It must be noted that Jesus spoke these words in His state of humiliation. From conception to the grave, Jesus did not fully or constantly make use of the powers His human nature had received from the divine nature. The knowledge of when judgment day would take place was given from Christ's divine nature to His human nature (Col. 2:3; 9). Jesus chose not to make use of this knowledge during His state of humiliation. Since Jesus began His state of exaltation, He has been making full use of the powers His human nature received from the divine nature. Thus Jesus, in His exaltation, does know when judgment day will be.