

WHAT WE BELIEVE – God Returns

Have you ever been waiting for someone, but didn't know exactly when they would arrive? We live in a "life 360" and cell phone world now...

Does anyone remember life before cell phones? Imagine going back...

How did we know when someone would arrive? We had to take them at their word... We had to trust the plan... We had to consider the signs around us... We had to be prepared for whenever they did show up...

The same is true for the return of Jesus... We know He is coming back again!

- But we don't know when... So we take Him at His Word... We trust the Father's plan... We consider the signs... We prepare for His arrival!

GOD RETURNS... *We believe Jesus will return one day, God in the flesh, to judge the living & the dead! Those who have put their faith in Him, & in all He accomplished in His first coming, will stand eternally justified in His second coming. Those who have rejected Him in this life will suffer His eternal judgment (Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 21:28, Philippians 3:20-21, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10).*

There is a lot included in this doctrinal statement that speaks to more than just the fact that Jesus is returning! **Too often we get caught up in the "when"...** and we neglect the more important issue of **being prepared!**

If we are ready, in the prepared sense, then it doesn't really matter "when!" The Parable of the 10 virgins teaches us this in **Matthew 25:1-13**.

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." Watch what? **Watch ourselves...** Check our own preparedness... Be ready...

You see, what matters more than the "when" is the "what"... What Jesus' return is meant to do... and *what* we are to be doing in anticipation of it!

Our doctrinal statement summarizes it well...

- **On the day of Jesus' return, there will be a reckoning between God & all the living & the dead...** On what basis? On the basis of "what" every human being has done with the gift of their one life... **Matthew 25:31-46**

- **On the day of Jesus' return He will eternally justify those who have put their faith in Him & what He accomplished in His 1st coming! Romans 8:1-4**

- **On the day of Jesus' return He will eternally judge those who have rejected Him, and they will suffer the wrath & justice of God upon sin!**

Why is such a final judgment necessary?

- **The holiness of God demands it... Nahum 1:2-3a, Romans 2:5**
God would not be just, Holy, righteous, if He left sin unpunished!
- **So that we know that justice will be served in this world... Colossians 3:25**
"A permanent & accurate record of all our deeds has been kept by God, & ultimately all accounts will be settled & all will be made right."
- **So that we can freely forgive others now... Romans 12:17-21**
"We realize that it's not for us to take revenge on others who have wronged us, or even to want to do so, b/c God has reserved that right for Himself."
- **So that righteous living would be the motivation of our hearts... Matthew 6:20 – "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven..."**
We don't do good works to earn heaven, but to prepare for it!
- **So that our hearts would be stirred to evangelize...** If hell is real, & real people will suffer for eternity there, we need to get the gospel to all!

There will be real life experiences of the "wicked servant" in the parable of the talents (**Matthew 25:30**)! **We should desire this for no one!**

There will also be real life experiences of the "faithful servant" (**Matthew 25:23**)! **May we use the 2nd coming of Jesus as a catalyst for the gospel!**

When GOD RETURNS at the second coming of Jesus, it is not the end, it is just the beginning!

Too often we are stuck in the "here and now" and we never give thought to eternity... But our 70, 80, 90 years of life "here and now" are just a speck of time in comparison to eternity!

May the awareness of the future coming of Jesus prepare us today for not only His return, but also the eternity that He ushers in when He comes!

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