

LifeSavers Bible Studies

#10: Bon Voyage

"Looking for the Blessed Hope and glorious appearing of our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13 (NKJV).

At the Christmas season the Christian world celebrates the coming of Jesus as a baby to a manger in Bethlehem. Only a few shepherds in Judea and some wise men from the East were present to greet Him and rejoice at his marvellous birth. He was to be called Immanuel, God with us, yet generations have failed to grasp the magnitude of this event. The prophet declared, "for unto us a child is born...and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6).

The biblical record gives a sad commentary about the world into which Jesus was born. "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him." (John 1:10-11). How is it possible that those who knew the Messianic Prophecies missed His birth? The answer is simple. Israel longed for one who would deliver them from Roman bondage, not for a Saviour who would deliver them from sin. They read only those portions of Scripture which supported their beliefs and anticipated a Messiah who would crush their enemies under His feet. No wonder they missed His unpretentious appearing in a lowly manger. By not studying all of the Scriptures regarding the Messiah, they missed their grand opportunity to greet the Saviour.

As we come to know Jesus as a personal Friend, we can avoid making this same mistake.

Check one answer for each question:

I. Without a Doubt

1. Jesus promised to return for those who want to be with Him.

John 14:1-3: TRUE FALSE

2. Even those bent on killing Christ were informed about His plan to return to earth.

Matthew 26:63-64: TRUE FALSE

The Second Coming of Jesus is referred to 1,518 times throughout Scripture. For each Old Testament prophecy about His First Coming (as an infant), there are eight that predict His Second Coming. One in every twenty-one verses, or one fifth, of the New Testament is about Christ's Second Coming!

3. These Old Testament prophecies about Christ's Second Coming help clarify what it will be like.

Job 19:25-27; Psalm 50:3; Isaiah 25:8-9: TRUE FALSE

II. Visible To All

4. At His departure, angels said Christ's return would be invisible.

Acts 1:9-11: TRUE FALSE

5. Christ said He would return as an ordinary person.

Matthew 16:27; 24:30: TRUE FALSE

6. Every living person will witness Christ's return.

Revelation 1:7: TRUE FALSE

The Bible makes an ironclad case about the manner of Christ's return. Jesus warns that there will be an attempt by many, even Satan himself (2 Corinthians 11:14), to counterfeit His Second Coming and claim to be the Christ. But none will be able to duplicate the grand entrance amidst clouds of angels, for God has reserved this commanding entry for His Son. By the manner of their appearing and their teachings, you will be able to discern the true from the false. You will be able to know the true appearing of Christ because He will come in the clouds, visible to everyone.

7. If some say Christ has secretly come, or is in a remote place, we are not to go there or believe their claims.

Matthew 24:24-26: TRUE FALSE

In the entire King James Bible, the above passage is the only text where the word "secret" is used in connection with the coming of Christ, and Jesus says, "Don't believe it!" It is interesting to note that within the context of this statement by Jesus, some think that they have found evidence for a secret rapture, an invisible return by Christ to redeem His chosen ones (verses 40-41).

8. When Jesus' words are properly understood in their context, He compares His Second Coming to the Flood.

Matthew 24:37-44: TRUE FALSE

9. Far from being secret, the Second Coming will be as sensational and sudden as lightning.

Matthew 24:27: TRUE FALSE

Imagine that one evening the TV news reports that Christ has returned to a certain locale and is performing miracles. Even though thousands of people are flocking to Him and many famous people are kneeling before Him, would you, after having read these texts about just such a deception, go out to see and worship Him?

III. A Spectacular Resurrection!

10. One day, every person who has ever lived will be resurrected from their graves.

John 5:28-29: TRUE FALSE

11. Everyone will be resurrected, but not all at once.

1 Thessalonians 4:16: TRUE FALSE

According to Paul, the "dead in Christ" are resurrected to life when Jesus returns in the clouds.

12. Revelation 20:4-6 refers to the "first resurrection," which involves those who have made Jesus their Saviour. The resurrection of the wicked (briefly mentioned in the first part of verse 5) takes place 1000 years after Christ's Second Coming.

Verse 5: TRUE FALSE

13. Those who are alive and eagerly waiting for Jesus to return will be caught up in the air to meet Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:17: TRUE FALSE

IV. Mortals Become Immortal

14. As Christ returns with the resounding peal of trumpets, His followers' bodies (both dead and alive) are changed from mortal (subject to death) to immortal (not subject to death).

1 Corinthians 15:51-54: TRUE FALSE

Many believe the Bible teaches that people receive their reward and are taken immediately to heaven when they die. But have you ever wondered, if that were the case why does there need to be a resurrection?

15. According to the Apostle Paul, the resurrection of Jesus is critical to our hope of immortality (everlasting life).

1 Corinthians 15:16-19: TRUE FALSE

If there is no resurrection, then all the dead have "perished," which is very final. Paul considers any notion of this to be a hopeless and miserable predicament for any Christian. Why? Because he knows there is no life apart from the body. Satan manufactured a lie to have us believe that some are now in heaven or hell enjoying their reward or suffering their punishment. Through this misguided belief, Satan hopes to malign God's justice and cause many to be resentful of Him.

16. Satan began to perpetuate his lie about death with Adam and Eve.

Genesis 3:1-5: TRUE FALSE

God said that sin would result in death. Satan said that through disobedience Adam and Eve would enter into a higher plane of existence and would excel in wisdom. Indeed, they would become like "gods"! God said "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), which is the opposite of Satan's promise that they would live in a superior state of existence. Since we are all sinners (Romans 3:23), and subject to death, we must wait for the resurrection at the Second Coming of Jesus or the end of the thousand years to receive our reward.

V. Are the Dead Really Dead?

17. These texts describe the dead as being in a state of sleep or unconsciousness.

Ecclesiastes 9:5-6, 10; 3:19-20; Psalms 146:3-4; 115:17: TRUE FALSE

18. Peter says King David is not presently in heaven, but is dead.

Acts 2:29-34: TRUE FALSE

When David prophesied that "his flesh would not decay," he was not talking about himself, but rather about Jesus Christ (verses 31-32). David is still dead and buried in Jerusalem.

VI. Understanding the "Soul" and "Spirit"

All the various Scripture translations use the words "soul," "being," and "creature" interchangeably, meaning they all indicate the same thing.

19. When God created human beings He used 2 elements (dust and breath).

Genesis 2:7: TRUE FALSE

Scripture makes it clear that God did not give a soul to a person, but rather a person *is* a soul. Dust plus breath equals a soul, much like boards plus nails can equal a box (when put together in the right way). But when the nails are separated from the boards, where does the box go? Nowhere! It merely ceases to exist. The Bible defines all living creatures as souls (Genesis 7:21-22) who cease to exist when they die.

20. The "breath of life" that God instills in humans and animals alike is what enables them to live.

Genesis 7:21-22; Isaiah 2:22: TRUE FALSE

The Hebrew words ruahh and n'shahmah are regularly translated "breath, wind, blast and spirit." They are used almost interchangeably and most often refer to that simple commodity we call "air." The Greek word is pneuma (which has the same translation) from which we derive words like "pneumonia," a sickness of the lungs which hold the air we breathe, and "pneumatic," such as an inflatable tire or a tool that is powered by air.

The word "ghost" is most often translated from this word because, like the wind, the notion of a ghost, triggers the idea of something that is real, but cannot be seen. The Holy Spirit, sometimes referred to as the Holy Ghost, is described as working like the wind (John 3:8). The notion of a frightful ghost (referring to Jesus walking on the water in Matthew 14:26) is from the word phantasma in the Greek, from which we get the word "phantom." It is also important to note that these words are never modified in Scripture with words such as "immortal, never dying, or deathless."

21. When a person dies their "spirit," or "breath" returns to God.

Ecclesiastes 12:7: TRUE FALSE

If your Bible has a margin, note that the alternate reading for "spirit" is "breath." In this verse, death is defined as being just the opposite of the process of creating life. The body returns to dust and the breath of life goes back to God. (See also Psalms 146:3-4; 104:29-30).

22. The Bible regularly compares the condition of a person when they die to sleep.

1 Thessalonians 4:13; John 11:11-14; Daniel 12:2: TRUE FALSE

When one uses the expression that they are "dead tired," it is quite fitting, for when they are in that condition and go to sleep, they have absolutely no perception that many hours have passed when they awaken. Death is like a sleep. When Jesus comes He will wake the sleeping ones from their dusty beds and confer immortality upon them.

23. God prohibits us from attempting to make contact with "familiar spirits" or spirits of the dead because they are evil spirits in disguise.

Leviticus 19:31; Deuteronomy 18:9-13; 1 Timothy 4:1: TRUE FALSE

Whoever consults or has anything to do with mediums, or one who professes to receive instruction from the spirits of the dead, is disregarding God's plain instruction and places himself on enemy territory. We

must remember that evil angels were cast out of heaven and are yet in the world on a seek-and-destroy mission (Revelation 12:9, 12), but they are not spirits of the dead.

24. When Jesus was resurrected He had a physical body that could be seen and touched.

Luke 24:36-43: TRUE FALSE

25. In the first resurrection, at Christ's Second Coming, the bodies of the redeemed will be like Christ's, immortal and glorious).

Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2-3: TRUE FALSE

(1 Corinthians 15:35-58 gives a lengthy description of the resurrected body.)

What a wonderful hope God has given us! We suffer now, and our bodies might be marred with deformity and racked with pain, but at the resurrection Jesus will give us bodies like His. Isn't God's plan more wonderful than anything we have ever imagined!

26. God's truth is always more wonderful than Satan's lies because it brings comfort and peace. I'm thankful for what I've learned about Christ's Second Coming and the resurrection!

TRUE FALSE

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