



DISCOVERING REVELATION

The Appearing

There are five things we know about the Second Coming beyond the shadow of a doubt:

1. His coming will be **literal**. *Acts 1:10, 11; Luke 24:38, 39*
2. His coming will be **visible**. *Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:30; Matthew 24:27*
3. His coming will be **audible**. *Matthew 24:31; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Psalm 50:3*
4. His coming will be **glorious**. *Psalm 50:3; Revelation 6:14; Matthew 16:27; 25:31*
5. His coming will be **final**. *Revelation 22:11, 12*

Of course, these biblical facts raise some really good questions. The most popular scenario of Christ's return has Jesus coming in two phases. The first time, He comes secretly for His church, after which the antichrist appears and reigns over the earth for seven years (some versions have him reigning for only the last three and a half years of the seven). Then Jesus comes in glory to destroy the antichrist in the second phase of His coming.

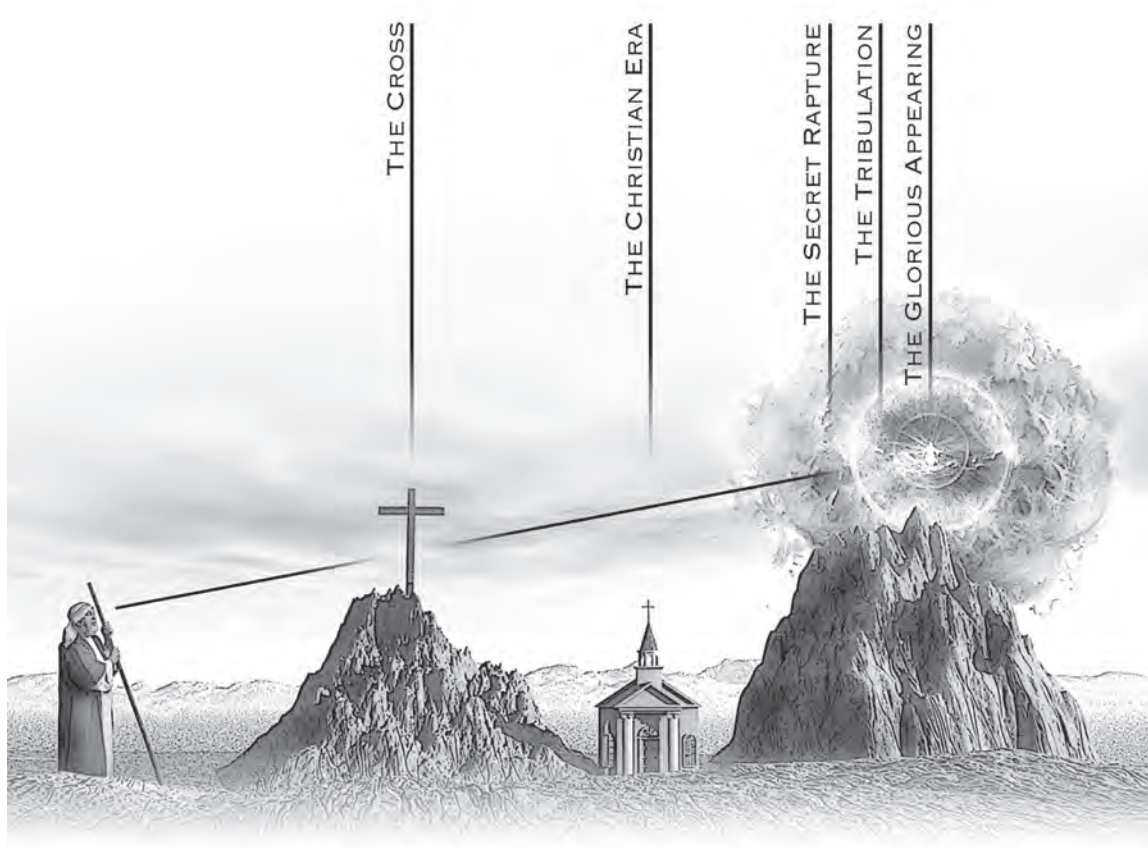
The question, of course, is how can all of the above texts be true in that scenario? For example, if every eye sees Him, as the Bible says, how can His arrival be a secret? **Matthew 24:30** indicates that all the tribes of the earth mourn as they see Jesus coming, and the very next verse (**Matthew 24:31**) confirms that the righteous see Jesus coming at the same moment that the tribes of the earth mourn. **Matthew 24:38, 39** compares the Second Coming to the flood—and confirms that the wicked and the righteous experience this event at the same time.

Another issue arises with regard to the antichrist. The most popular scenario has the antichrist appearing after Jesus comes for His church, but the Bible describes the exact opposite. In **2 Thessalonians 2:1-3**, Paul tells the church that the antichrist must appear before they see Jesus. And **2 Thessalonians 2:8** confirms that the antichrist will be destroyed by the glory of Christ's appearing.

Another serious problem with the popular scenario is that it offers a second chance to change your ways after the Second Coming, but the Bible states in **Revelation 22:11, 12** that when Jesus comes, all decisions have been made—for all eternity!

The theory of a two-phase coming of Christ can be traced back to something that happened during the Dark Ages. Many Bible scholars had noticed the Bible's prediction that there would be serious problems within the Christian church; others refused to acknowledge it. To avoid discussion of the issues, two clergymen were assigned to come up with a theory that would divert attention away from the Christian church. A scholar by the name of Alcazar developed a theory that said that most of Bible prophecy had already been fulfilled in the distant past (a theory known as **preterism**); therefore the Bible couldn't possibly be talking about the Christian church.

Cardinal Ribera designed another theory, known today as **futurism**, which is similar to the modern rapture theory. This theory states that most of Bible prophecy would be fulfilled in final short burst of history, and therefore the Bible could not be talking about the problems in the church of his day. The theory—which is a complete fabrication devised to accomplish a political purpose almost 500 years ago—is still with us today, making into mainstream Christian thought in the early 19th century. It essentially teaches that the Old Testament prophets could not see the Christian church. They were able to see the cross and the Second Coming, but nothing in between. This effectively eliminated the possibility that the prophets saw problems in the Christian church.



Even those who teach this theory today admit that it is not found in Scripture. The Scofield Reference Bible taught a mystic disappearance of Christians, but Mr. Scofield admitted that this is not something that was seen by the Bible prophets, but rather “a new promise to a new body.” John Walfoord says, “The departure of the church from the earth will obviously cause quite a stir, though the Bible never seems to refer to it directly.” John Darby, who brought the secret rapture theory to America, stated that Matthew 24 had nothing to do with the rapture of the church. John Walfoord, a modern authority in the field, said: “The rapture isn’t found anywhere in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or in any part of the Olivet Discourse.”

A two phase coming of Christ is simply not taught in scripture; neither is the secret rapture. On the contrary, there is no shortage of evidence to suggest that the appearing will be a public event—witnessed by all. The question is simple: are you ready?