Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Risen to Return
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 80-49

This morning as we think about the Lord Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead, I wanna us to focus our attention, not so much on His resurrection, but on the purpose for which He arose in order that He might return to establish His Kingdom. I'd like our thoughts to be along the line of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Two thousand years ago a man lived on the earth a perfect life. He came into the world without a human father. He was born from the womb of a virgin who had never known a man. The seed had been planted in her by God, and the seed was God. The child born was like no other child. Every thought He had was perfectly pure. Every word He said was true and holy. Every action He did was utterly righteous. He was without sin. His life had absolutely no parallel. He loved all men perfectly. He understood all men perfectly. He spoke perfect wisdom. He was perfectly compassionate, gracious and merciful. He healed the sick, cast out demons and even raised dead people to life.

He hated sin, on the other hand, with a perfect hatred. He exposed false teachers and unmasked hypocrites. He condemned sin and promised judgment on sinners who refused to repent and follow Him.

Illegally and with no just cause, He was executed by the Jews and the Romans, crucified on a cross as if He were a common criminal because He had exposed the hypocrisy of the false religious leaders of Judaism and because the Romans thought Him a threat to their political security. At His death, the sky went black from 12 noon to 3 p.m. as God darkened the sun. The great curtain in the temple that separated God from men symbolically, the veil of the holy of holies was ripped from top to bottom as God signaled the end of separation and the end of the old economy and access to Him through the death of His Son. The earth quaked so that rocks split, tombs opened and dead people came back to life again.

In His death, He bore the sins of the whole world and died as a substitute. As a sacrifice for sin in the sinner's place, the perfect lamb of God to atone for man's sin. Three days later, He rose from the dead, physically, bodily and literally He was alive. 500 plus people saw Him. Many talked with Him personally. Some talked with Him on several occasions. Some ate with Him. For 40 days, He remained on the earth. During those 40 days, He was seen only by those who believed in Him. One day, while He was on a hillside just east of the city of Jerusalem, He was talking with His disciples and immediately ascended into the sky, was caught in some clouds and taken back to Heaven. And

thus, He ended a brief 33 year stay on the earth. The name of this unparalleled person is Jesus Christ, the God man.

But the ascension that ended His first earthly visit was not the end of His story. For Scripture tell us that He is coming back again. And I would like to draw your attention to Acts 1 for a moment, and begin reading in verse 9 where Jesus is speaking with His disciples. And it says in verse 9 of Acts 1, "And when He had spoken these things, while they were watching Him, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward Heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel," angels obviously, "who also said, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven?'" The implication of the question was why are you looking longingly as if you're losing Him? "This same Jesus who was taken up from you into Heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven."

The angel said, "Just as you have seen Him go, so you will see Him come visibly, literally, physically in a cloud." That's how He went. Literally, physically in a cloud is how He will return. That's the promise. Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth. In fact, in the Old Testament there are approximately 333 prophecies concerning Christ. 109 of them were fulfilled in His first coming, leaving 224 to be fulfilled in His second coming. Of the 46 Old Testament prophets, 10 of them referred to His first coming, 36 referred to His second coming. 1,527 Old Testament verses tell us details about the second coming of Christ. One out of every 25 verses in the New Testament refers to Christ's second coming. For every time in the Bible the first coming is mentioned, the second coming is mentioned eight times. Our Lord Jesus Himself referred to His second coming numerous times.

Now people wonder how the world is gonna end. There's always a lot of discussion about that. Some people think pollution will get us and we'll eventually gag to death. Other people think that earthquakes will continue to increase and will sort of topple into oblivion. Some people fear that population growth will get us and we'll crush each other to death. Others feel that we may somehow deplete food sources on the earth and we'll starve to death, and there are many who fear that somehow someone will trigger a nuclear war and we'll disintegrate in some kind of nuclear explosion. How will it all end? How will human history end? It will end, the Bible says, with the return of Jesus Christ, with the second coming of Christ.

To give you a general picture of the scenario, according to the Bible, the true church, that is those who are personally related to Christ by faith will all of a sudden, in a split second be snatched out of this world. And that could happen any moment. In the twinkling of an eye, we will meet the Lord in the air and go to Heaven. The graves that hold the bodies of saints already dead, will give up new bodies to be joined with those souls and all those who are a part of the church will be caught together into Heaven.

Immediately after the church is snatched out, a world government will be set up by satanic forces. The political leader of that world government will enter a covenant with Israel and as that world government comes to the peak of its power, he will eventually exercise absolute control over everyone. The head of this world government will announce finally that he's God. And he will demand that the whole world worships him. And those who refuse will be killed in massive numbers.

Then the Bible says that at the same time this is going on, there will come from God a series of terrible, cataclysmic, catastrophic judgment in which the Almighty Himself will pour out on the earth His fury, resulting in over half the population of the world being destroyed. And the whole thing will finally culminate in a massive world war involving the forces of the world converging in a valley in Israel known as the Plain of Magiddo to fight the battle of Armegeddon. As the armies of the world converge in that very place, the heavens are split, the sky goes black and Jesus comes in blazing glory with His glorified church and His holy angels. He judges the wicked, He establishes His Kingdom on the earth. He reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords.

At the end of that 1,000 year kingdom, Satan is cast into the eternal lake of fire, the righteous are taken into a new Heaven and a new Earth. That's how it ends. Some people don't believe that. Many people don't believe that. That's not surprising. Listen to what Peter said in 2 Peter 3. He says, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts." In other words, they function based on their own desires. They do whatever they wanna do, whatever feels good, they conclude whatever their own mind dictates. They give their own opinions, these scoffers, and they say, verse 4, "Where is the promise of His coming? C'mon all of you who keep saying Jesus is coming. Where is He?" And they mock and they scoff and they ridicule with this query, "Where is the promise of His coming?" All things continue as they were. He hasn't come. There will be scoffers.

But how can we be sure He's coming? How can we know Jesus is really coming back? What evidence do we have? Let me give you some, alright? Point number one, the promise of God demands it. The promise of God demands it. Throughout the Old Testament God made promises, promises that said that there would be coming Deliverer who would deliver the righteous from sin and depression, that that Deliverer would also be a Judge who would condemn the wicked, that that Deliver and Judge would also be a King who would reign and rule over the earth. And as I said, about 224 of those are still unfulfilled. God's character is at stake in this. The credibility, credulity and integrity of God's Word is at stake. Can God be trusted?

Well, God gave prophesies in the Old Testament that said much about Jesus' first coming, and every one of those came true. In Isaiah 7:14 God said, "The Messiah Christ would be born of a virgin," and He was. In Micah 5:2, He said He would be born at Bethlehem, and He was. In Hosea 11:1, He said He would be called out of Egypt, and He was. In Zachariah 9:9, He said He would ride into Jerusalem on an ass, and He did. In Psalm 41:9, He said He would be betrayed by a friend, and He was. In

Zachariah 13:7, God said He would be forsaken by His followers, and He was. In Zachariah 11:12, God said He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver, predicting the exact price, and He was. In Isaiah 50:6, God said He would be beaten and spit on, and He was. In Psalm 22, God said He would be crucified and His hands and feet would be pierced, and He was. In Psalm 34:20, He said not a bone of Him would be broken, and not one was. In Psalm 2:7, in Psalm 16:10, God said He would be raised from the dead, and He was. And God's Word never returns void. It always accomplishes that to which He sends it. And all of those prophesies regarding Christ's first coming were literally fulfilled, and they proved to us that God keeps His promise and His word can be trusted.

And so we conclude that the promises of God regarding His second coming will be literally fulfilled and we can believe those as well. For example, in Psalm 2, God said that He would come and be a king and reign in Mt. Zion and rule with a rod of iron. That has not yet happened, but it will. In Isaiah 9:6, it says He will have the government on His shoulders. That is, He will rule, carry the weight of the government of the world. That hasn't happened, that didn't happen when He came the first time, but it will happen when He comes the second time. In Micah 4:3, God said, "When He comes He will bring peace to the earth." That didn't happen the first time. That hasn't happened yet. It will happen the second time when He brings peace to the earth. In Jeremiah 23, it says that He will come and He will be anointed over the throne of David and He will be a righteous branch and He will reign in power and glory. That didn't happen the first time. It will happen the second time. In Daniel 7, it says He will receive a kingdom and power and glory and authority and will reign. That didn't happen, but it will happen. And in Daniel 7:18, it says, "The saints will partake of the Kingdom of the most high God forever and ever." That didn't happen. It will happen. In Zachariah 14, the prophet Zachariah very specifically says that when He comes, His feet will touch the Mount of Olives, split it wide open, create a valley, and out of that valley will flow rivers to the west and rivers to the east, and there will be righteousness and many other features. That didn't happen the fist time He came. That will happen the second time.

God's Word is at stake. God's integrity is at stake. God's character is at stake, and Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not a man that He should lie." And Titus 1 says, "God who cannot lie." For God to promise that something will come to pass as He did the prophecies of the first coming of Christ and all of them to come to pass exactly as He promised, becomes a guilt edge guarantee that everything He said about the second coming will also come to pass. And if God is promising things He doesn't intend to fulfill, then He must be attempting on His own to destroy His own trustworthiness. God doesn't tell us these things to make us doubt. He tells them to us so we'll believe them based upon His perfect performance of fulfilling His word in the past, though the promise of God demands that He come.

Secondly, the promise of Christ demands that He come. Look at John 14. Jesus speaking with His disciples here about leaving, does not want them to be unduly troubled because He is going away, so this is what He says in John 14:1, "Let not your heart be troubled," or literally, "Stop letting your heart

be troubled. If you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you under Myself that where I am there Ye may be also." Jesus said, "I'm going away, but I'm going away to prepare a place. I'll come back and get you and take you there." Take you there, that's the promise of Jesus. This credulity is at stake also. His Word is at stake, His integrity, His character. Jesus frequently talked about His second coming.

We don't have time, anywhere near the time to deal with all the times He talked about His coming, but just to look briefly at Matthew 24-25 will give us a good indication. Touching lightly on some verses, Matthew 24:27 says that the coming of the Son of Man will be like lightning. Matthew 24:29 says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give its light and the stars shall fall from Heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with the great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds from one end of Heaven to the other." There's Jesus' own words as He preaches on the Mt. of Olives about His own second coming, and He is coming in the clouds of Heaven. Heaven goes dark, He comes out of Heaven. The earth mourns, why? Because of judgment. His angels go to gather the elect into His Kingdom.

Further in that chapter, verse 42, "Watch, therefore, for you know not what hour your Lord doth come." Verse 50, "The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder and appoint him as portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." That's a warning. On the one hand, when He comes, He gathers the elect. On the other hand, when He comes, He splits asunder the wicked and unbelieving. Chapter 25 follows the same teaching on the second coming. Verse 31, "The Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him. Then shall He sit on the throne of His glory." Then shall He judge. Judgment is described in the remainder of the chapter.

There are few samples of the claim of Jesus, the promise of Jesus that He would return, that He would be back. He promised that to His disciples that they might be comforted. He promised that to the unbelieving that they might be frightened, that they might be fearful, that they might consider the end of their sin. Even after returning to Heaven, 50 years later, Jesus spoke through the book of the Revelation. In the first part of the book of the Revelation, Jesus gave seven letters from Himself to the seven churches. Throughout the book of Revelation, Jesus speaks. In fact, throughout the book of Revelation, He speaks at least six times because six times in Revelation He says, "Behold, I come quickly." Six times He said He was coming back, so even 50 years after He descended to Heaven, He was still sending messages, "I'm coming, I'm coming, I'm coming, I'm coming, I'm coming." And He does not lie.

In John 8:40, Jesus says, "Now you seek to kill me, a man that has told you the truth." Verse 45, "Because I tell you the truth, you do not believe Me." Verse 46, "If I say the truth, why do you believe Me?" Jesus said of Himself, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," John 14:6. He cannot lie either. He is God. So you can see that Jesus must return. The promise of God demands it and the promise of Christ demands it, and Their character and Their integrity and Their word is at stake. And if God can be believed, and He can, and if Christ can be believed, and He can, then He is to be believed, and He is coming.

Thirdly, the promise of the Holy Spirit demands it. The promise of the Holy Spirit demands it. When Jesus was facing death, knowing that He would be leaving, He said to the disciples this in John 14:26, "But the Comforter who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things." He said, "I'm having the Father send you the Spirit, and the Spirit will teach you all things." Can the Spirit be trusted? Chapter 16 tells us in verse 13, "Nevertheless, when He," notice His name, "the Spirit of," what? "Truth has come, He will guide you into all truth." How did the Holy Spirit do that? By inspiring the writers of the New Testament. "For He shall not speak of Himself, but whatever He shall hear, He shall speak, and He will show you things to come." This is a promise that the New Testament writers would be inspired by the Spirit of Truth who would tell them the word of God, and that's exactly what happened. As the writers began to write the New Testament, the Spirit of God spoke through them. The Spirit is the author of Scripture. "oly men of God were moved along by the Holy Spirit," Peter says in 2 Peter 1:21. In 1 Corinthians 1:4-8, the Holy Spirit said through Paul that Jesus would return. In Philippians 3:20-21, the Holy Spirit said through Paul that Jesus would return. In Colossians 3:4, the Holy Spirit said through Paul that Jesus would return. In 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17, the Holy Spirit said through Paul that Jesus would return. In James 5:8, the Holy Spirit said through James that Jesus would return. In Hebrews 9:28, the Holy Spirit said to the writer of Hebrews that Jesus would return. So, the Holy Spirit's integrity is at stake as well. God the Father promised it, God the Son promised it, God the Spirit promised it. We can sum that up and say He must return because of God's person. God's person demands it.

Secondly, as a major point, God's program demands it, God's program demands that Christ return. First of all, His program for the church demands it, His program for the church demands it. Let me see if I can explain this to you very briefly. In 2 Corinthians 11:2, Paul says, "I'm jealous over you with a Godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Paul says, "I see my responsibility to bring you, the church, as a chaste virgin to Christ, to present you to Christ as a chaste virgin." What is he saying here? What is the imagery here? What is this all about? Let me explain it to you.

A Jewish wedding had three parts, the contract, the betrothal and the wedding. Part number one was the legal part. Two sets of parent who determine that their children should marry got together. They negotiated a contract which meant that the man had to pay a dowry to the family of the girl, and that

was negotiated dependent upon their economic status, and the estimated value of the girl. So, the parents got together and they negotiated a contract. The price at that point was paid, and the daughter was purchased to be a wife. Then later on after that came phase two, the betrothal. We would call it the engagement. The ceremony was always held in the home of the bride, and guests came over and it was what we would call today an engagement party. And there was a public announcement that the two were going to be wed. Gifts were given, there was a time of joy, rejoicing as they were formally engaged. About a year later, came phase three, the wedding. This was held always when the groom came to the bride's house, got the bride and took her to the father's house for the wedding. Now follow that part.

In Revelation I wanna show you something, something beautiful, 19:7, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready, and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." Now, listen, that's the marriage. That's the marriage of the bride, the church, and the bridegroom, the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the consummation.

At Calvary, when Jesus died on the cross, He purchased the elect, the contract was written in His blood. Phase one of our union with Christ was at the cross where in death, He fulfilled the contract and paid the price for His bride. When you believed and I believed, who are the elect, at that moment the engagement took place, and we received the gifts, the Holy Spirit, and the other gifts of grace that come to believers. And we even received the Spirit who it says, "is the ourabund," the word is earnest translated in English. The Greek word ourabund means engagement ring. So, the engagement occurred when we believed. The purchase price was paid at Calvary, before we believed. The contract was made then. But we received the engagement ring and the gifts and the celebration took place when we were saved. But beloved, we're still waiting for the wedding. We're still waiting for the wedding. And if this is all there is folks, then Jesus Christ is an unfaithful bridegroom who paid the price and went through the engagement, and never showed up at the wedding and stood up the bride, if there's no second coming. You see, the program for the church demands it, and that's why Revelation 7 says the marriage of the Lamb has come. And when Jesus returns, the wife is ready and the bridegroom is ready and the marriage takes place, and what does He do? He takes us to the Father's what? House, just like they did in the Jewish wedding, to dwell in the Father's house. That's the program for the church. That's not complete without His coming to get His bride from her house and take her to His house.

Secondly, His program for the nations demands the second coming. God's program for the nations demands the second coming. The Bible promises that He's gonna judge the nations, that He's gonna judge the wicked. Psalm 2 shows Christ coming as a judge with a rod of iron. In the New Testament, John 5, "All judgment is committed under Christ and He is coming some day to judge all men." Revelation 11:15 shows Him as judge. Revelation 14:14-30 shows Him as judge. Revelation 20:11-15 shows Him as judge. He comes to destroy wicked men, to deal with sin. He comes to bring equity to

the world. He comes to bring righteousness and judgment and peace. Every evil must be rectified. Every injustice must be overturned. There is a day of equalization and He is the Equalizer. Things will be made right. The Old Testament prophesied as well as the New repeatedly that the ungodly will be judged. And God's plan for the nations demands that Jesus come back as Judge. So the plan isn't finished. It's unfinished, and that would mean that wickedness is never dealt with. That would mean that in an unjust world, justice will never reign. That in an inequitable world, equity will never reign. That in an unfair world, fairness will never reign. That in an unrighteous world, righteousness will never reign. It'll always be this way, but that's not true. Christ will come and He will end it and He will punish sin and the sinner. That's His plan, and all the nations that know not God will be judged. The plan of God for the nations demands the return of Christ. He's the Judge. He's the Judge. In Revelation 20, He comes with a flaming sword and blood spattered garments, riding on a white horse to do battle with the ungodly. He comes with such power, early in Revelation, it says, "People who see Him and the world sees Him, cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them to hide them from His face."

Also, the program of God for Israel demands that He come. In Romans 11:25-26, Paul writes that Israel will be saved in the end. In Ezekiel 36, God says that He's gonna regather Israel. That He is not only going to regather Israel, but He's gonna take out their stony heart and give them a new heart. He's gonna wash them, He's gonna plant His Spirit in them, He's gonna save them. In Romans 11, it says, "All Israel will be saved." The Old Testament promises a kingdom to Israel. In Acts 15, starting in verse 14, the Scripture says that, "God is taking out a people for His Name, and after this, after the church is taken out, then He will build again the house of David and His King will reign over the world." Israel will be restored, the nations will be judged. God has a plan for Israel. That plan has never been fulfilled. God promised them a kingdom. He will fulfill it. Listen, all of the promises of punishment that were given to Israel, if they were unfaithful, were literally fulfilled, and Israel is still under the punishment of God for their disobedience. But just as all of the promises for punishment were literally fulfilled, so will all the promises for blessing be literally fulfilled. And God promised them a kingdom. He promised them a time when the lion would lie down with the lamb, a time when the desert would blossom like a rose, when the earth would be in abundance and there would peace everywhere and knowledge would fill the earth, and every man would love his neighbor and there would be perfect righteousness, a time when they would live the joy and that plan has to come to pass, or God's entire program for Israel is frustrated as well as His entire program for the nations, His entire program for the church. You see, God's person demands the second coming, God's program demands it.

So do God's priorities. God's priorities do as well. There are three of those. The humiliation of Christ is one that demands it. He must return to vindicate Himself. Do you realize what the last view of the world has of Christ? The last view? The King of kings, the Son of God, the Lord of lords, the Supreme Person who ever lived in this world. The last view the world ever had of Him is a bleeding, dying, crucified criminal, covered with blood, spit and flies, hanging naked against a Jerusalem sky while His

enemies gloat and held rejoices. That is not God's ultimate plan for Christ, not God's ultimate plan for Christ. The world will see Him again. And the Bible says, "Every eye will see Him when He returns," every eye will see Him. The last view this world has of Christ is not a dying dead Jesus, but the glory of His exalted person. Every eye will see Him when He comes in blazing, triumphant glory. That's the promise of Scripture and that's the view of the world is gonna see for the last time. Matthew 26:57 says, "Jesus was led away to Caiphus." Pick it up in verse 63 at His trial. "Jesus held His peace. The high priest answered and said unto Him, 'I _____ Thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus said unto him, 'Thou hast said, 'Nevertheless, I say unto you,' said Jesus, 'Hereafter, you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of Heaven.' And the high priest tore his clothes saying he hath spoken blasphemy. 'What further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard His blasphemy.' 'What think ye,' they answered and said, 'He's guilty of death.' And they spat in His face and buffeted Him and others smote Him with the palms of their hands saying, 'Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who smote Thee?' He said, 'This isn't the last view you're going to have of Me. The last view this world will have of Me is in power and glory. The cross is not the final seed.'" God's priority for Christ demands that He come back, not in humiliation, but in glory.

That second priority is the exaltation of Satan demands it. Presently, Satan is exalted. He is the prince of the world. He is the god of this age. The whole world lies in the arms of the wicked one. He is now exalted and that's not God's priority. For thousands of years since the fall, Satan has run the world, exalted himself, received worship. He's a usurper, he has no right to rule, but sinful men have chosen him as their monarch and their king, and God will overturn that. If Jesus didn't come back, then Christ would have left in humiliation, Satan would remain in exaltation, and that's reversed from God's priorities. That's why in Revelation 5, the cry is for someone who can take back the earth and destroy the usurper and out comes the worthy Lamb and takes the title deed to the earth in His hand. And as He unroles that title deed, the seven seals unfold, and the description of what happens is Revelation 6-19, all those chapters describe Christ taking back the earth from Satan, and finally, taking Satan and sending him into the bottomless pit forever. The earth is the Lord's and the _____ _____, not Satan's. Christ is King of the earth, and He'll take it over, He'll take it over. God's priorities for the exaltation of His Son and the destruction of Satan demand that Christ return.

And lastly, one other priority, the expectation of the believers demand it. We're a priority to God, too. We're the beloved of the Father. He loves us with a perfect love. We are the children of His affection, and He has our best interests in His heart, and we are love gifts from the Father to the Son, John6 says. We are His joy, there's more rejoicing in Heaven over a sinner who repents than any other thing. We long for Heaven. He told us that He which hath begun a good work in us will perform until the day of Jesus Christ. He told us that we could commit ourselves to Him and know that He would keep us until that day. He promised us eternal life. He promised us Heaven. He promised us bliss and blessing. He promised us a new body. He promised us a place in the Father's house. He promised us

that we would be with Him. That's our expectation, that's what we hope for, that's what we live for. And He loves us, and if Jesus doesn't come back, then we aren't His priority, but we are and Jesus will come back. God's person demands it, God's program demands it, God's priorities demand it. He will exalt His Son, He will humiliate and destroy His adversary, and He will fulfill the expectation of His beloved children. Those are His priorities.

The only remaining question is are you ready? That's the only remaining question. Are you ready? He could come any moment. Listen to the words of Jesus, poignant, simple and yet clear. In Luke verse 42, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward? Whom His Lord shall make Ruler over His household to give Him His fortune of food and _____. The Lord says, 'Who is gonna get blessed? Who is that faithful, wise person who is gonna rule with Christ, who is gonna receive eternal blessing?'" I'll tell you who. "Blessed is that servant whom His Lord, when He comes finds so doing." That is to say, finds doing righteous things, doing what is right, doing what honors God. "Of the truth, I say to you, that He will make Him ruler over all that He has," that's what Heaven is, gonna rule, but there's some servant in the analogy, some man or woman says in his heart, "Ah, my Lord delays His coming," and begins the menservants and maidservants and eat and drink and be drunk. In other words, there are some people who believe the Lord's coming, and they get their life right. They commit their life to Christ, they live no other God. There're some people who say, "Ah, I don't buy that." They do whatever they want, like a servant who took advantage of his master being away in abused every privilege. "The Lord of that servant," verse 46, "will come in a day when he looks not for Him, in an hour when he's not aware and cut him in half," strong language, "and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers," and that's how he interprets the parable. The believers are those who did obediently. The unbelievers are those who wasted their opportunity. And that servant who knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. That means the severe punishment in Hell, the more you know, the greater the punishment. Verse 48 says, "The one who didn't know," there're some people that don't know, and now you know more than you've even known because of this morning, "the ones who knew less and still committed things worthy of stripes will be beaten with a few stripes." Hell, dear friend, will have degrees of punishment. The more you know, the greater your sin of rejection. The greater your sin of rejection, the greater your eternal punishment. That's what He said. The Lord is coming back. You don't know when and I don't know when. When He comes back, He's gonna find some people serving Him, some people loving Christ, some people doing what He asked them to do. He's gonna reward them by making them rulers in His eternal kingdom. He's gonna find some people who wasted their spiritual privilege, who sinned against what they knew and what they heard, and He's gonna cut 'em in half and give 'em a place with the unbelievers where they'll know torment, and the greater their knowledge, the greater their torment. And I submit to you that Jesus rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven with the express purpose of returning to this world to finish the plan of God. God's person demands it, God's program demands it, God's priorities demand it, and the only question is are you ready when He comes?

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