

The Doctrine of Christ's Return

1. What is "Christ's Return" & why is He coming back?

- **God sent His Son: & He will return** (1Jn 4:14; Rev 19:11ff)

- Personal: 1Th 4:16; Ac 1:11
- Bodily: 1Co 15:35ff; cf. Jn 20:27
- Premillennial: see Rev 19 & 20

- **Christ will return for our Salvation: & to usher in His Kingdom**

- to save those who are waiting for Him: Rev 19:1; Heb 9:28; 1Pe 1
 - to be united with His bride (church): Rev 19:7; Eph 5:2ff
 - to fulfill God's promises to His people: Is 9:6ff; Ge 12; Zep 3:14ff
 - to liberate the poor & oppressed: Is 11:4; cf. Rev 18:13
 - to defeat & judge His enemies: Rev 19:11ff; 1Co 15:22-26 (Satan, the unrepentant/unbelievers, & death itself)
 - to make all things new: Rev 21:5; 11:15 (God dwelling with us in eternal glory in a new heaven & earth)
- **How then shall "we" live?** With sanctifying hope & comfort as we wait for His appearing (Rev 1:3; 2Pe 3:11-13; 1Th 4:14ff; Ti 2:11ff)

2. When will Christ Return?

- **Regarding a Date: no one knows** (Mt 24:36; v27)

- **Regarding the Rapture:** (1Th 4:14ff)

- Post-trib: the rapture is after the Great Tribulation
- Pre-trib: the rapture is before the Great Tribulation
 - Mid-trib: the rapture is in the middle of the Great Tribulation
 - Pre-wrath: rapture is before God's wrath/at end of Great Tribulation

- **Regarding the Millennial Reign:** (Rev 20:1ff)

- Pre-millennial: Christ's return is before the millennial reign
- Amillennial: there is "no separate/future" millennial reign (also called Inaugurated millennial reign: it is now in heaven)
- Post-millennial: Christ's return is after the millennial reign

- **Regarding World Events**

- Before Christ returns there will be Tribulation in this Age: Rev 1:9; Mt 24:6ff; Ac 2:17 (the current age is tribulation/the last days)
- Before Christ returns God's judgment falls on Jerusalem: Mt 24:2ff (in A.D. 70 & at end of age; a prophecy with multiple fulfillments?)
- Before Christ returns there will be Deception, an Increase in Evil, & a Falling away (idolatry, immorality, oppression/poor): Mt 24:11ff
- Before Christ returns there will be a Great Tribulation with global persecution & God's wrath on an idolatrous world: Rev 13-18
- Before Christ returns there will be the Rise of a Final antichrist:
 - many antichrists will come (1Jn 2:18; cf. Rev 13)
 - a final antichrist will arise (2Th 2; Rev 17; Mt 24:15; Dan 11:31)
- Before Christ returns the Gospel will be preached to all nations:
 - the Great Commission fulfilled: Mt 24:14; 28:16ff; Rev 7:9ff
 - a great Harvest of Jews (coming to Christ): Rom 11:25-27

- **How then shall "we" live?** Proclaim the 2nd Coming as part of the Gospel: & be Gospel-centered in our End-time prophecy

- Christ's return is part of Salvation/the Gospel: Heb 9:28; Ac 17:30ff
- End-time prophecy is focused on Christ: Rev 1:1ff; 19:10; 22:16ff
- Examples: 1) share that Jesus is the only Way to heaven/the Father and that He is the only One coming back to judge & to save; 2) when you think about the gospel, think about the cross and His return; 3) when you think about end-time prophecy, keep your eyes on Jesus more than modern day events or the anti-christ.

3. A Summary Statement (EFCA Statement of Faith #9): The Doctrine of Christ's Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.