

Episode 263

Speaker 2

Welcome to the Got Questions podcast. We're continuing our series on the end times today. If you go back and listen to, I think, the very first episode, you stated that our theme for the whole thing was sort of, Amen, come Lord Jesus, one of the final verses in the book of Revelation. And today's episode, we're there. We're finally there. We're at the second coming of Jesus Christ. That'll be the topic we'll be discussing today. Joining me as always is Kevin, the editor-in-chief of Got Questions Ministries, and Jeff, the managing editor of BibleRef.com. So, guys, I know you two are excited alongside me to finally be here. Not that we're not enjoying the series. It's that previous episodes, we're talking about abominations and battles and seals and trumpets and bulls and antichrist and false prophet and all these horrible things. And now we get to what we're all longing for.

Shea Houdmann

And one of the other early episodes was on the rapture. In that episode, we kind of discuss the difference between the rapture and the second coming. So that'd be really good episodes for background on why we view those as two distinct end times events.

Shea Houdmann

But today, we're focusing on the second coming itself. And there's several passages in the New and Old Testaments that talk about this. But the major ones, as we've kind of been going through the book of Revelation, it's in Revelation 19. I'm going to read verses 11 to 16 to you. Again, this is Revelation 19, verses 11 to 16. Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, the one sitting on it, is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written on that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is the Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. And on his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Shea Houdmann

So, Jeff, the second coming of Jesus Christ, why is this so important? Why is it seemingly the one eschatological event that virtually all Christians agree

on? And, I don't know, why is it so important? Why is it something we say, Amen, come Lord Jesus, to?

Jeff Laird

I think it forms one of the two anchor points at the end of God's whole story. We've talked before in this series about how eschatology end-time study is not especially fascinating to me. Sometimes it's exactly the opposite. But one of the reasons that it's worth studying is actually because of this exact moment. And the reason that I don't worry necessarily so much about the little details in eschatology is because of a moment like this. It's very clear from Scripture that at some point in time, Christ is going to come back, and he's going to win this ultimate victory.

Jeff Laird

So, pretty much whatever happens before that, even if I'm wrong or I don't understand it, well, if I'm on his side, then I know I'm going to be in pretty good shape. But there's pretty much agreement that the second coming is going to occur just because it's so crystal clear in Revelation. I mean, there's no doubt whatsoever that Jesus is returning and there's going to be big things happening.

Jeff Laird

There's more questions about the issue of whether that's going to happen once, twice. So, when we talked about the rapture, we talked about the idea that some people think that the second coming and the rapture are the same thing. They're really different. I'd encourage people to go back and sort of look at those.

Jeff Laird

There's also confusion over the idea of Jesus coming to earth, his first coming, or what we call the first advent, and then the second. And we really do see that those are two separate things. And that actually is an important thing for us to understand because there are predictions throughout the Bible, even in the Old Testament, that bring up this idea that the Messiah, the one who's promised, is going to come here and he's going to be suffering. He's going to experience bad things when he's here. But also that this Messiah is going to rule forever and reign forever.

Jeff Laird

So, the stuff that we read in Revelation is important because that's the fulfillment of that side of prophecy. The people who saw Jesus face to face when he was walking on earth sort of had those different prophecies mingled together. And they kind of had this uneasy tension where they didn't really understand how there could be the suffering and the victory all at the same time. They knew there was going to be ultimate victory, but they just didn't

understand exactly how or when. And that was one thing that caused a lot of confusion.

Jeff Laird

But after Jesus experienced what he did, he was crucified, buried, resurrected. After that, all that stuff suddenly became clear, where it was easier to say, now we understand. He's coming in human form to suffer as the suffering servant, and then he's going to be coming back later. So, you really see two separate sides of this. And understanding that there's two separate sides of this helps make sense of a lot of prophecy, makes sense of a lot of what Jesus did the first time he was on earth. It makes a lot of sense of what's going to happen after.

Jeff Laird

It's also interesting because it forms such a contrast. Jesus came the first time as this helpless, anonymous, little baby who was ignored and abused and neglected by the world, and ultimately murdered by the world. And almost nobody knew when it was happening that it was happening. The second time he comes, it's going to be something that everybody's going to know. And he's coming back as the King with all the power and the glory and all that stuff. So, I think we'll probably dig in today in some more details about where we see those things in the Old Testament. But just understanding that that moment is one of the two major endpoints to the story, the other being when the final, final judgment occurs, which is something that happens after one more event, the Millennial Kingdom, that we'll talk about in a different episode. But this is that moment where sort of the victory is proclaimed and everything is proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that this is it. This is the end and this is where it's going. So, it's important, it's interesting, and it's the thing that gives us an anchor to say, regardless of whatever else goes on, we can put our hope in this happening, and that's a good thing.

Kevin Stone

It is a great thing. This is such an exciting episode to do because this is such an exciting event to talk about. We anticipate the Lord Jesus' return, and it is going to be the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, Titus 2, verse 13. And it fulfills a lot of prophecies, Jeff, like you were saying. A lot of the Old Testament prophecies hint at the second coming of Christ, and we have portions of Zechariah and Isaiah that talk about the kingdom that will be established. Well, all of that has to happen after his return, his second coming, because he did not establish the kingdom or set up his glorious throne over the whole world at his first coming. He came to save. He came to take care of the sin problem first, and then he's coming back in power. What a contrast these two comings will be. His first coming as that Lamb of God,

ready to sacrifice himself for the sins of the world, and the second coming as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, who is going to be setting up his kingdom here on earth.

Kevin Stone

Jesus promised us that he was going to come again. John 14 and verse 3, he says, I will come back and take you to be with me, speaking to his disciples. I'm going to come back, I'm going to take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am. And also in Matthew 24 and verse 30, Jesus is speaking to his enemies. He says, You will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Also Mark 14, Jesus says the same thing. You're going to see him coming. You're going to see the Son of Man coming. He's going to be coming in power. He's going to be coming in great glory. And Revelation 19, where we're talking about the picture of Jesus and that vision that John has, his eyes are like burning fire, blazing eyes, and he's got that sharp sword that's proceeding from his mouth.

Kevin Stone

So we've got a picture of one who sees all and who's going to take care of business and one whose word is powerful. He speaks and his enemies are destroyed. And this is Jesus, our Savior, who is coming back to take care of his people. He's going to be righting all wrongs, setting things straight. And I just can't, I can't hardly wait.

Jeff Laird

I want to make a point here that I'm thinking of something that C.S. Lewis said. And in broad strokes, C.S. Lewis said that a lot of myths and legends are echoes of truth, so that when we see these things, they're almost like low-grade prophecies, predictions of things that we just sort of know are coming and know is going to happen. And I'm thinking about how in popular culture, we often have these massive dramatic scenes in movies where somebody shows up at the right time to rescue.

Jeff Laird

In the Return of the King film, there's an epic scene where an army of allies shows up and there's this stirring scene when you see them come over the hill. There's the scene from Avengers Endgame that people think of, you know, on your left, where all of a sudden it's right at the worst possible time and then the rescue appears. And what happens at the second coming from Revelation 19 is like that on steroids. It's the ultimate arrival of that power, that ally, who's going to be here. So I just, as you're discussing it, Kevin, I'm thinking to myself, it reminds me of that idea that that is something that we sort of have an echo for, or a longing for, is that dramatic moment where, you know, the hero shows up and we're going to get it eventually.

Kevin Stone

I like that Aramaic word that we see in Scripture, maranatha, which means, oh come Lord, or the Lord is coming. And I don't think we say that often enough. Maranatha. Oh, he's coming again. Nice.

Shea Houdmann

I mean, Kevin, we say it every Palm Sunday. Is that not enough? In Revelation, I think the context of this fits really in with what Jeff was talking about with like at the last second, the dramatic entry, so to speak. So previous episode, the last thing we talked about was the battle of Armageddon. So it's at the end of the bold judgments where the armies of, not clear entirely, the armies of the Antichrist versus or alongside other armies, ultimately these armies are seeking to annihilate Israel once and for all. And then that's when the second coming occurs.

Shea Houdmann

It's like the battle to end all battles, the possible destruction of the world, the word Armageddon has come to mean basically the end. This is the last battle that basically wipes out everything. And Jesus comes then to end that battle very easily, according to Revelation 19, destroys the armies that are set against him, destroys the armies that were trying to destroy Israel.

Shea Houdmann

And then as we go on in the book of Revelation, we know this is when Jesus sets up his 1,000-year kingdom. So it goes from the worst possible moment to Jesus comes to then now a thousand years of perfect rule on the earth, basically Eden reestablished, but over the entire, except for the fact that there'll still be sinful human beings running around. But just seeing the context of when the second coming happens, that much more powerful in that Jesus prevents the armies from destroying Israel, defeats the armies, clean start. It's the perfect entrance for Jesus in his second coming. And as Jeff was saying earlier, the first coming, the suffering servant, the Messiah who died for our sins and rose again, second coming, the conquering king. Like in this passage, it talks about on his thigh was written king of kings and Lord of lords. So this is when Jesus fulfills all those prophecies referred to the conquering Messiah, the prophecies that the Jews expected but missed the separation between the two. This is a blessed hope, as Kevin was referring to, of the glorious appearing of Lord Jesus Christ.

Shea Houdmann

In Acts, a very simple passage, Jesus ascends up into heaven. Disciples evidently are just standing there like staring. Whoa, what's happening? An angel appears. Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus who has taken up from you into heaven will come in the

same way that you saw him go into heaven. So just this reassurance that yes, Jesus is gone, as in he's no longer physically present. He will come again, and it will be amazing. It will be the fulfillment of prophecy. It will be the establishment of his kingdom. It will be everything Christians for now 2,000 years have hoped and longed for.

Kevin Stone

I am intrigued by the names that Jesus has given in Revelation 19. In the passage that you read, of Jesus' return, he is given three names, and then another one is alluded to. So he is called Faithful and True, the rider on the white horse that comes, the Son of God who's coming back into the world in his return, a triumphant return. He's called Faithful and True. He is faithful in so many ways, but I think specifically because he promised that he would return, and here he is. He has been faithful to keep his word. He is a promise keeper, and he is also called True in that phrase. And what a contrast with the Antichrist that he is coming to defeat, because the Antichrist is a man of lies. His whole kingdom was built on deceit, and here is the one whose very name is Truth, and the True One is coming. He's bringing the truth with him. He is the truth, and truth is always more powerful than the lie. Here is the Faithful and True.

Kevin Stone

He is also called—this is verse 13 of Revelation 19—he's called the Word of God. And as we know, the Word of God always accomplishes exactly what God wants it to. And so, when God created the universe, he did so by speaking. He spoke a word. Let there be light. There was light. Here is the one whose name is the Word of God, and he is accomplishing everything that God wants him to do. He is God's will in action. He is the Word of God.

Kevin Stone

And then in verse 16, he's called the King of kings and Lord of Lords. Absolute sovereignty. It goes along with those many diadems or many crowns that he has in this same passage. But he is the ruler of everything. King of kings, Lord of lords. There is no place on earth, no place in the whole universe even, where he is not reigning and ruling. He is the one and only sovereign, the potentate of all the universe.

Kevin Stone

Then verse 12 alludes to another name, but nobody knows what it is. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. So, there's still some mystery involved, and this is very curious to me. It makes me wonder, what is this name? We're obviously not meant to know, but what part of Jesus' character is being held back from us right now? We maybe will see it later. We

will maybe learn more when the time comes, but for right now, it's the name that only he knows.

Jeff Laird

That is one of my favorite passages, and that verse 11 is one of the biggest reasons for it. You notice that he doesn't start with saying, I saw a rider on a horse and he has a name that only he knows. It starts off by saying, he is faithful and true. That's an immediate connection to us as people. In other words, the first thing that comes across when John sees Jesus is that this is exactly what was promised. He's showing up for that reason, and to me, that's the goosebumps kind of thing. That's the first thing that he's identified with. It is him coming back as a conquering king, but the first and immediate impression for his church is, I told you I was coming back, which is just awesome that that's the first thing that we get when he comes back.

Jeff Laird

For me, the name that nobody knows, I think that's interesting too. I wonder if that's possibly an allusion to the whole idea of the Trinity, and the idea that this is still part of a God who is a little bit beyond human understanding. He is faithful and true. He is the Word of God, and at the same time, he's God. There is something about his nature and his self that only he can really understand. Very often, I read that passage, and I feel all the feels, all the emotions, especially because it chooses to start that way. I love that it starts off with him coming back as faithful and true, because it just emphasizes the idea that this is such a great thing, a promise that is being fulfilled when he returns.

Shea Houdmann

Absolutely, Jeff. Same with me. So many things about this passage that make me want to read it again and again. It's the reminder that in the end, God wins, and since we're on his team, we win. This is the beginning of God, through Jesus, making all things right, of all the evil things that evil people have done that seemingly have gone unpunished. This is the beginning of God expressing his justice on sin. We'll get to that in a couple of episodes when we get to the great white throne judgment, but this is, in a sense, the beginning of that.

Shea Houdmann

It's the thing that Christians have been longing for, to think that our brothers and sisters now for 2,000 years have been longing for Jesus' return, and it hasn't happened yet, and it may not happen in my lifetime. Great if it would, but Christians all throughout church history have been thinking it was in their lifetime, but we've been longing together for a really long time now. So many

things about this passage. It's kind of like a finally. Not a finally as in, why did you take so long? A finally is a celebration. Yes, it's here. Praise God. Maranatha, as Kevin said earlier. It should be such an encouragement. Yes, what's going on in this passage is not great in the sense of all the armies who are arrayed against them are going to be destroyed. People are going to die. It's pretty awful in how some other passages describe this event, and yet the end result is the King is here, the perfect King who will rule in a perfect way and who is our Savior and will be our Lord of lords and kings for all of eternity is here, worth celebrating, worth worshiping, worth the huge cry of both relief and also joy, and yes, finally, it's here.

Jeff Laird

A parallel I think sometimes we can look at with this is, like you were saying, this is the beginning of that final moment. Sometimes if we see a court case and we're hoping for justice to be done, the first thing that we get in the court case is the verdict, and that's something that you celebrate when it's a just verdict, but you don't know what the sentencing is yet. So it's not fully over, but when the guilty verdict comes in, you know that it is now official, and the second coming is a little bit like the guilty verdict. There's still judgment to come, but it's that moment that says this is the official declaration of what is happening. The very, very final dispensation of everything happens later, sort of like sentencing at a trial, but this is that moment where it's the exclamation point that says it's right here.

Jeff Laird

And I have a lot of sympathy for some of the confusions that we have in trying to understand this, because when you look at what the Bible says about the two advents, the two comings of Jesus, you can start to understand why when Jesus was on earth, there was a blending and a mingling of these that wasn't fully understood. It's not crystal clear until you've actually seen it happening and going on. So in Micah and Isaiah and Daniel and Zechariah, you see this suffering servant who's here, and he's going to experience things. He's going to be cut off. He's going to be abused, but then in Deuteronomy and more parts of Zechariah and Amos and Jeremiah and Joel, you see this conquering king, and it's easy to understand why people like the disciples assumed that the conquering king was the dominant side of that, that maybe the suffering is just a little part of it, a temporary thing, and then it turns into all of this.

Jeff Laird

But now with hindsight, you can see those things, and you can understand, okay, it makes sense that they're separated, and that gives us this thing to look forward to in the future. And what's cool about that is what we're looking forward to in the future is so much more definitive than what had been

promised before. It is much more concrete in what's going to happen. So that is something that's also important about this, is that this is a very specified kind of hope. And again, still questions about what the Bible says about it, but great to see that you can see the threads of it in the Bible, even as you understand why it was hard to fully grasp until after Jesus' earthly ministry.

Kevin Stone

A lot of people wonder, what is taking him so long? I mean, we probably ourselves have at times gotten a little bit impatient, saying, well, if he would just come back, you know, things would be great. Why is it seemed to be such a delay? It's been 2,000 years, over 2,000 years since Jesus walked the earth, and he still hasn't returned yet. Well, I think a couple things that we have to keep in mind is, one, God is so patient with sinners. 2 Peter 3, verses 8 and 9 brings this out. Don't forget this one thing. Peter says, Dear friends, with the Lord a day is like a thousand years. A thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise.

Kevin Stone

So there it is. Don't start thinking that God is dragging his feet here. He's not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. So the more time that passes before Jesus' return, the more chance that people have to repent, turn to Christ in faith, and be saved. This is the goodness of God that is showing in his patience.

Kevin Stone

Also, a lot of people point to Revelation 22, verse 7, where Jesus says, Behold, I am coming soon. English standard version there. The new King James says, Behold, I am coming quickly. That word really makes us wonder. How can Jesus say, I'm coming quickly? How can he say, I'm coming soon? And it hasn't been very quick from our way of reckoning, and it hasn't been very soon.

Kevin Stone

Well, it all hinges on this Greek word, *tachu*. This word *tachu*, according to Strong's, can be defined as without unnecessary delay. It can also have the idea of immediacy or suddenness, like a surprise. And so if we take that definition of the Greek word, it would make perfect sense. Jesus says, I am coming without unnecessary delay. Don't start thinking that I'm delaying this for no reason. I am coming again. You can bet on it. And it's going to happen suddenly. It's going to happen in a surprising way, as in the days of Noah. Everybody's eating and drinking and going about their daily business, and yet here he comes. It's going to be surprising for a lot of people. So we trust God's timing. The Father has not given us any hint as to when Jesus' return

will be. Not even the angels, Jesus said. Not even the angels know the timing of this. It is something that is in God's heart, and it is in God's timing, and we trust in him, and we know that he knows best.

Jeff Laird

In English, we see the same thing, the word that's sometimes used is imminent, and we say his return is imminent. In common usage, we tend to think of that as meaning it's going to happen in the next moment or two, which is not what imminent means. Imminent just means it can happen at any second.

Jeff Laird

So when you see a structure that's dangerously tipping and leaning back and forth, you can look at that and say the collapse is imminent. It could sit there for another week. It could sit there for another day, but it's that close to actually happening, and that's where the return of Christ is.

Jeff Laird

When he says nobody can know the day or the hour, that eases, I think, some of the question of why the delay, because he's saying it's not going to be something that you're going to be able to predict with that level of specificity. It's also worth bringing up that there's two sides to that whole idea. One is that I haven't had to wait very long. I've only had to wait as long as I've been aware of what's going on. So from a personal standpoint, the wait isn't that long. And then the other side of it is I have absolutely no idea how much time is left. So when Jesus says, be ready so that when it happens, you're where you need to be, I have no reason to think that I've got—I have no idea when it's going to happen, and that's okay, because I know what's going to happen.

Shea Houdmann

For sure. I like that point, Jeff. Like I said earlier, the Christians now have been waiting for nearly 2,000 years for the second term, but me, myself, I've been a believer for 33 years. So really, not that long a time. And then the emphasis on imminency and how that's been confused and how it turns into even an apologetics issue, like, he's coming quickly, he's coming soon, and where is he? And then Jesus addresses that in that passage that Kevin brought up earlier. It's not slow. Here's the reason God is not wanting anyone to perish but all to come to repentance. It's great reminders for us.

Shea Houdmann

One closing thought. Earlier in Revelation chapter 6, the first horseman of the apocalypse is someone else riding in on a white horse. We believe that that's the Antichrist, that he's coming as the ultimate imitator of Christ. But we shouldn't have been—or not we, the people at that time should not be

fooled. They have Jesus' words in Matthew chapter 24, verses 23 and following, that if anyone says to you, look, here's the Christ, or there he is, do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. So to say to you, look, here he is in the wilderness, do not go out. To say, look, he's in the inner realms, do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Shea Houdmann

In other words, it will be obvious. When the Second Coming happens, there'll be no doubt about it. And looking at what's going on right before Revelation 19 and then what happens in the actual Second Coming, it will be impossible to miss. Everyone will know that this is the Second Coming of Christ, the arrival of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Many who will be celebrating his coming, and there are many who at that moment, it will be the ultimately too late realization.

Shea Houdmann

But again, Kevin, Jeff, thank you for celebrating the anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ alongside me. This is a lot of episodes building up to this, and now we're in the next few episodes, we get to see what comes next. And it's not all perfect by any stretch, but the world starts to turn around. It points us to the thousand years, the eternal state, the new heavens and the new earth, and being ruled by Jesus Christ, the perfect King.

Shea Houdmann

So it's been the Got Questions podcast on what is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and kind of like, why should we celebrate it? The Bible is very clear. Got questions? The Bible has answers, and we'll help you find them.