

# The Coming Again of the Lord Jesus

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The coming again of the Lord Jesus is to complete the redemption of man, to make good all that He came for and all that He did at His first coming.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:20, Romans 8:19

**Topics:** "Second Coming Of Christ", "Hope in Redemption"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the significance of the second coming of the Lord Jesus, explaining that it is not merely an event but the consummation of redemption. He highlights that Christ's return is essential for completing the work of redemption, revealing the sons of God, and delivering creation from corruption. The sermon underscores that the coming of the Son of Man is a fulfillment of God's plan for humanity, showcasing the relationship between Christ's incarnation and His return. Sparks encourages believers to anticipate this event as the ultimate hope for both the Church and the world, affirming that Christ's coming will finalize the triumph over sin and death. He calls for a renewed joy and expectation in the hearts of believers regarding the imminent return of Jesus.

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## Transcript

So we come to the last note of the octave of redemption: The Coming Again of the Lord Jesus. No attempt has been made to give a comprehensive presentation of any one of these aspects of redemption, but only to provide, if possible, a concise answer to the question asked about every one of them: Why this...? Why that...? That is particularly true of this last aspect. I shall not attempt for a moment to cover all the ground of the Lord's second coming.

Why, then, the Coming Again of the Lord Jesus? The coming of the Lord is most commonly thought of as an event; something that is going to happen at a given time, as an item in a programme; just an event that will one day take place. Of course, so far as it goes, that is true; but it is quite important that we should know why it should take place--why He will come again. Let us be clear that God could effect almost all the things associated with Christ's coming without His actual coming. For instance, if it is a matter of taking Christians to Heaven, He could do that without Christ coming to fetch us; and there are many other things like that that God could do directly and quite independently. But the Scriptures show us that they are all bound up with and centred in the personal coming of Christ, and it is that fact which gives point to the question. Why should it be like that? Why should it be a matter of Christ coming back again?

The Consummation of Redemption

The answer is really found in all that we have been saying in the foregoing studies. The coming again of the Lord is just His own consummation of all that. To the apostles, He said, as He went from them: "I am with you... unto the consummation of the age" (Matt. 28:20). 'I am with you until the summing up of the age': that is the meaning of the words. Then what is it, in this age, that will be summed up at the end? It will be all that we have been saying about Him in these pages. Let us very hurriedly pass our eye over it, in order to see the summation in His coming.

The first and the final coming are clearly united in purpose and realization. The first stage of redemption with which we were occupied was the Incarnation of God's Son--His coming in man-form into this world; and we indicated that in that Incarnation there were three purposes. One, the redemption of man by Man. By man sin came: by Man sin must go. By man came the consequences: by Man those consequences must be destroyed and put away. This is the whole point of His becoming Man. Two, the redemption of man: the re-constituting of man, to make him the kind of man that God intended, but which he had so grievously ceased to be. Three, the perfecting of man for glory. Those were the three things bound up with His coming in man-form in the first instance.

The second phase was His earthly life. We summed this up by saying that, being here from birth and infancy, to full, mature manhood, through every trial and testing and fiery ordeal, right up to the last moment on the Cross when the fires were heated seven times, He presented to God a body without a mark of sin, or failure, or breakdown. "A body didst thou prepare for Me", He said (Heb. 10:5); and, having passed through every possible kind of trial, He presented it back to God, without any taint, without any loss of spiritual character. He presented it back to God, a whole burnt-offering (Heb. 9:14), acceptable, well-pleasing to God. He represented the Man that God is after, from beginning to end living a life that was absolutely triumphant over all that which humanity has to meet; and thus He became the pattern Man according to God's heart, the Man that God is after and is going to have.

"The Earth Is The Lord's"

There was something of very great meaning in the Son of God, as Son of Man, putting His feet upon this earth. In an earlier study, we quoted the 24th Psalm. You notice that it begins with: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof". That is the beginning of the first stanza. The second stanza begins (v. 3): "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" and the answer comes: "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; Who hath not lifted up His soul unto vanity, and hath not sworn deceitfully." He--He is the One! Then the third stanza (v. 7): "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory shall come in" (A.S.V.) Do you see the movement? The earth is the Lord's: and He has put His feet on the earth, He has actually stood on this earth. He has lived His life here without defiled hands or heart, and therefore He, and He alone, is the One Who is fit to ascend into the hill of the Lord. Because He has come here and so lived and so triumphed, the everlasting doors are flung open: He can enter in.

Now the point is this. The earth is the Lord's, and He has put His feet down on this earth, and has said: 'This earth belongs to this kind of Man, and Heaven will attest it!' That is the meaning of the 24th Psalm. And that is why, when He had lived the life, gained the victory, and risen triumphant, He said to His disciples: 'Go into all the world: go and put your feet down in all the earth, and claim it. It is My inheritance, by right of creation, by right of redemption. You go and put your feet on it: it belongs to Me. That is all in the course of redemption.'

The Cross was the making effective of that redemption that was the purpose of the Incarnation-- making effective the redemption of that earth upon which He put His feet and lived His triumphant life. By His Cross He took the earth out of the hands of the prince of this world, and took it back into His own rightful possession. "Now", said He, "shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31).

In the Resurrection He is in possession of that, and for forty days He is establishing the great fact that He is alive. He is alive! He "became dead": He is "alive for evermore": He has "the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev. 1:18): and He is establishing that in the nucleus of His Church, in their very being, for all time.

And then He goes to glory in their presence: and the whole thing--the Incarnation with its meaning, the life with its glorious triumph, the Cross with its wonderful destruction of the work of the Devil--the whole thing is taken and put beyond the reach of anything here, men or devil, to touch it or alter it. It is put in Heaven. You remember what He Himself says to us about Heaven: "where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:20). It is beyond. "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). It is up there; nothing here can interfere with it. That is the Ascension.

The Spirit came as the Spirit of the glorified Christ in Heaven, sent forth to bring--potentially--all those values from Heaven to earth; to take up the work of making them good in believers for this dispensation.

The Church was born as the vessel, the "one new man". Let us be careful, in this connection, that we do not speak of the Church as being Christ incarnate again. The Spirit came to indwell the Church: to make the Church, as the Body of Christ, His counterpart, for expressing all the work that He Himself had done and taken to glory.

### The Second Coming

At last He is coming again! Why? To finish it all! To complete the redemption of man! To complete all that He came to do the first time, in every realm. The eighth chapter of the letter to the Romans deals with this consummation of redemption in two respects.

First, the manifestation, the revealing, of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19). They have been secret, they have been hidden; only among the Persons of the Godhead is it known who are Christ's; but they are going to be revealed, disclosed. That is the consummation of redemption: the bringing out and manifesting of the sons of God; making them known, displaying them in glory. I always think that that is a very wonderful word of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians on this very point: "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed..." (2 Thess. 1:10). There is the completion of the purpose of the Incarnation: redemption, reconstitution, perfecting, glorifying, all brought to fulness in His coming. "Marvelled at in all them that believed": that phrase always fascinates me. What does it mean? Surely, that all onlookers, all intelligences looking on, as they look at the saints, will say: 'Look at them! Isn't He marvellous?!' "Marvelled at in all them that believe", "when He shall come". It is the consummation of the work and purpose of the Incarnation, and the consummation in believers of the whole meaning of His earthly life.

But then Romans 8 touches the other aspect of redemption. 'The whole creation', we are told, is waiting for this "revealing of the sons of God", and 'groaning and travailing in pain together' as it does so (v. 19,22). "The creation itself", says the Apostle, "shall be delivered..." (v. 21). He put His feet upon the earth and said: 'It is Mine'. He has come to this earth, lived on it and triumphed on it, and won the victory for it

and over it; and now at His coming it is redeemed, as the consummation of redemption. "The creation itself" is "delivered from the bondage of corruption". But it is not only the creation that is to be delivered. Our bodies are to come into the benefit of this consummation of redemption. "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for... the redemption of our body" (v. 23). The physical bodies of believers are to be "delivered from the bondage of corruption".

All this is what He came to do. All that He wrought in Himself, all that was true of Him, He is now making good in believers. I know that these words apply primarily to His Deity, yet there is a secondary application of them: "It was not possible that He should be holden" of death (Acts 2:24); "Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption" (v. 27). Because He was the Holy One, it was not possible that He should be held and kept down by death, for that is the penalty of sin. As I say, primarily that relates to Him as the Divine Son of God, incorruptible and sinless; but now He delivers believers from sin and corruption, and therefore from death, and makes good in them the thing that was true in Himself. He is not making them into Deity, but through grace He is conferring upon them all the values of His own triumph. And that includes physical redemption.

Do you see why the coming again? to make good all that He came for and all that He did at His first coming. And that is not all. In the Cross, while He was there dealing with the whole sin question--and in Himself He dealt with it fully and finally--He was, even more than that, dealing with the whole Satan question. We have sought to emphasize the fact that the real battle of the Cross was in that cosmic realm of principalities and powers. That is where the real battle went on; and it was a terrific battle, with every evil, sinister, dark thing of the kingdom of Satan. And it was there that the full triumph of the Lord Jesus was won. His coming again is to make that triumph absolute, final; to bring the Church into the good of His triumph.

We are in the battle; and it is very true that, the more you stand on the ground of Calvary, of the Cross, the fiercer the battle becomes. Satan hates that Cross. If you really stand in spirit on the ground of the Cross, you are in for a battle: he will do anything to move you off that ground. The Lord Jesus will come back just to finish off that whole conflict for the Church as He did it in Himself--or perhaps we should say to finish it in the Church as He did it for the Church. When He comes, that will wind up, once and for all, the reign of Satan, the kingdom of darkness. That is why He is coming.

"The Coming Of The Son Of Man"

Let me just emphasize one point again: it is the "coming of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24:27,37,39). That is how He put it: "the coming of the Son of Man". I am sorry that Sankey changed those words in that hymn of his that we sometimes sing:

'Oh, wondrous day! oh, glorious morning,

When the Son of God shall come'.

The Lord speaks, and the Scriptures speak, of the coming of the Son of Man, not of the Son of God. It is true, it is the Son of God Who is coming; but you understand the very real point here. It was Man for man, as Man, all the way through; and it will be that at the end. The Incarnation has no significance, if it is not Man for man. The earthly life has no meaning if it is not Man for man. The Cross has no meaning if it is not Man for man. The same of the resurrection, the same of the ascension and enthronement: it is the Man in the glory. "We behold... Jesus"--Jesus, that is His human title-- "crowned with glory and honour" (Heb.

2:9). It is Man for man in Heaven. The Church is the birth of the "one new man" by the "Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven" (1 Pet. 1:12b). And the coming again is Man for man: it is Man consummating this whole thing in relation to man, and man entering into his inheritance in Christ. All this marvellous thing is for man--for you and for me! He is coming as the Son of Man.

There are immense things bound up with that title. It denotes relationship to the human race: all His work for the human race, and His representation of the human race in Heaven. The present appeal is to men, on the basis of all that. Oh, what a caricature of it all has come about with 'Christmas!' Think of it in the light of what we have said about the Incarnation, the redemption, the re-constituting and the glorifying of man: where does that come in, in the common Christmas of our time? The Devil has just switched the whole thing over, and made it a contradiction of its real meaning. He has used it as a means to draw out that other man, the old man, into glutting himself for his own gratification. And so in everything else--the thing has been given a wrong turn. In the coming of the Lord Jesus that will all be put right.

But, in the meantime, His appeal to us--to man--is on the ground of this, that He came for our redemption. He came to make us different, to reconstitute us: He came to perfect us after His own image: He came to glorify us. He has shown in His own life here that it can be done. It has been done in a Man. It can be done, for He has done it. We are told: "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8b). He came to destroy the works of the Devil, and He has done it in His Cross. He is appealing to us on a very, very large ground. This is all redemption: redemption is a tremendous thing. We have a great redemption, because we have a Great Redeemer. We have been thinking of the time when He is coming to put the last great touches to it all, to give the final touch to this whole wonderful redemption--of man, of the earth, of the whole creation: "when He shall come to be glorified in His saints" (2 Thess. 1:10).

I believe I speak for more than myself, when I say that there seems to be something in the air that says His coming must be near. We seem to feel that it cannot be far off. As the Lord's children, we "groan within ourselves" more than ever; and there is an increasing groan in the whole creation. The travail in this creation is becoming almost unbearable. This earth needs redeeming; God only knows what will happen to it, if it is not redeemed. But however that may be, there is something in the spirit of the true child of God which says that His coming is drawing nigh. It is the only hope--there is no hope in any other direction. Everybody recognizes that, saved and unsaved alike. Unless God Almighty intervenes, there is no hope for this world.

Ah, but He is going to intervene! He is going to intervene in His Son, and there is the hope. And so the Apostle speaks of that "blessed hope"--the "appearing of the glory of our... Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13). May the Lord fill us with new joy in the very contemplation of His near coming, to complete all that which He has begun.

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