

# The Horizon of Christ - Part 10

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The coming again of the Lord Jesus is the central theme of the Bible, and it will bring redemption, the church's rulership, and the final phase of history.*

**Duration:** 37:29

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:15, Daniel 12:4, Matthew 24:14, 1 Corinthians 15:25, Philippians 3:10, 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 22:7

**Topics:** "Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the signs of the near approach of the Lord's coming. One sign is the increase of knowledge in the world, with deep secrets being revealed and becoming common knowledge. This intensification of knowledge is seen as an indication that the end is near. Another sign is the intensification of evil and godlessness, with the speaker expressing concern over the state of youth and the increase in crime. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the grace of God and the gathering of believers from different nations and peoples.

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## Transcript

For those who have joined us for this evening only, may I just repeat that we close our season around the Lord's table, the special object of giving testimony to that wonderful grace of God drawing to himself many out of different nations and peoples and tongues, quite a few of those are represented in our gathering at this time. The meeting will not be prolonged for that, we shall seek to get through in good time for those who have to leave and travel. Now, as from what I said this afternoon that there were two remaining peaks on the horizon of Christ to be considered and from certain intimations in our singing this evening, I take it that you have arrived at your own conclusion as to what it is that we come to this evening as the final epoch, the final peak in the cycle of the mission and work of our Lord Jesus, that is his coming again.

There is a very real sense in which the coming again of the Lord Jesus, his return, horizons everything else and we come to that conclusion from the word of God itself. It may surprise some of you, though not those who know their Bibles well, that this matter of the coming again of the Lord Jesus is given a larger place in all the Bible than any other matter. You might like or want to challenge me on that, but I've said it quite deliberately.

You may not be able to corroborate it from your knowledge, but there it is. It is really in some form or another mentioned through the scriptures more often than anything else. And that fact, if it is true, if it is a fact, really does mean that this is the horizon over everything, coming again.

Of course it isn't spoken of as that, but you can clearly see it in types, in figures, in symbols, in analogies, in parable, in song, in metaphor, in prophecy, in narrative, in doctrine, in exhortation, and in appeal. Every one of those and all of those relate to the coming again of the Lord Jesus. It encompasses the Bible.

You're hardly into your Bible. You're hardly into your Bible. The great, terrible thing that happened in the garden is not finished before the Lord is saying to the serpent, seed of the woman shall bruise your head, shall bruise your head.

And while that was partially true in the cross of the Lord Jesus, it has not been fully accomplished until he comes again. The word is to the church, God shall bruise Satan under your heel, shortly, and that shortly relates to his coming. So this thing comes right into view, the beginning of the Bible.

And you know quite well that the end of the Bible is just that. I come quickly. I come quickly.

And all the way between Genesis and Revelation, we have this manifold intubation, suggestion, or indication that this is the end. This is the end. Again, you do not get far into your Bible, in the book of Genesis, before you get on to Enoch and his prophecy.

Behold, he cometh with ten thousand. So you go on. I'm not going through the Bible.

Don't be worried about that. I'm only indicating to you that this is the thing which horizons everything and is, after all, the circle within which all the activities of God and interests of God are pursued and fulfilled, even unto his. In the next place, you will find that every fundamental doctrine of Christianity is bound up with the coming again of the Lord.

Redemption began. It's only consummated in his time. Redemption has begun within the heart of believers from the first through the centuries.

It is to be completed in the completed church and holy nation, and then in the creation itself. The creation is to be delivered from the bondage in which it is found, under which it is groaning. And it will be at Christ's coming that the creation itself shall know its full redemption.

And as a part of that creation, we, ourselves grown within ourselves, waiting to win. Waiting. Our own full redemption, and as the crown of our spiritual redemption, the redemption of our body.

At his coming, redemption, which is a great doctrine through the Bible, is completed in this creation. The whole doctrine of sanctification is given to us in the light of his coming. Why, why should we be holy? Why should we walk before the Lord in holiness? Why the whole doctrine of sanctification? It is consummated at his coming.

It is unto his coming. We have got to walk here in this life, in the light of his coming. And some people think that it doesn't matter very much about now and how they walk.

When he comes, it will all be alright. They'll be completely changed, willy-nilly. But you know quite well that the weight of the Bible comes right down upon this.

That he that hath this hope within him purifies himself, even as he is pure. It's a motive for holiness. It's the coming of the Lord, an object for sanctification.

Walking with the Lord is a great doctrine in the New Testament and the Old. Walking with the Lord. And in a figurative and symbolic way, this is consummated in his coming, when we shall walk with him in white.

As symbolism, walk with him in white, given to the saints, white raiment. That is the consummation of sanctification at his coming. There is very much throughout the whole Bible about fellowship with the Lord in his sufferings.

How much there is about the sufferings of the saints on this earth, all the way along, because they are the Lord's. Because they are the Lord's. They suffer in a peculiar way, because they are the Lord's.

We won't say they, we suffer too, in a peculiar way, just because we are the Lord's. A lot we should escape if we were not the Lord's. A lot of people leave the Lord because they want it easier, and they can have it easier, less suffering.

But to know the fellowship of his sufferings has a very great deal of scripture linked with it, of encouragement, of comfort, of exhortation, and so on. At his coming, all this teaching and all this experience of the sufferings of the saints will be consummated, will be ended. There shall be no more pain.

There shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor death. His coming will bring the end to all suffering. And so one could go on with the many, many aspects of teaching in the word of God, the great doctrines of the Bible, enumerating them, that you'll see that in every one, this is true, that every fundamental doctrine is in some way linked for its accomplishment, its consummation, all its value, with the coming again of the Lord.

And in that coming, all that will have its final fulfillment, all that the cross means for him, for us, for the church, will be vindicated at his coming. There is partial vindication. He is seeing through the ages, through the centuries, something of the travail of his soul.

But there is a great deal yet to be made up of the sufferings of Christ, and there's a great deal more for the cross to do, and there's a larger vindication of his suffering and death of his cross, and that full vindication of him and the offering of himself will come to him and to us who share his cross with his return. It's like that. And another thing about his coming, it will be then that the church, that elect body chosen in him before the foundation of the world, for a special purpose, will come into that special purpose, which is rulership over this world.

We are so familiar with that concept, with that truth, but that is the crowning thing of the Bible record, represented again in the high symbolism of the city, the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. The symbolism is of the governmental center of this universe through the eternal ages. That city is naught else but the church.

At his coming, the church will take its place, the place which the prince of this world, powers of Satan now occupy, as the world rulers of this darkness, the host of wicked spirits, the prince of the power of the air. That place will be taken by the church. It is to reign with him.

It is to govern with him. It is to be over this earth in good, for good, in glory, in benefit, what the present powers are for evil and for good. That is the calling, the vocation, and the destiny of the church according to God's eternal election.

And the church will, at his coming, enter upon the rule which Satan now exercises, when he is cast out of the air, cast down into the pit, and his rule is ended. Christ, in his church, will take that place. Recall to that, and of course we could dwell very much upon it, and what it means, what it involves, how much of our present education is because of that calling and vocation in the ages to come.

But a lot is interpreted by that, how we are being taught now spiritual ascendancy, how we are in the battle for spiritual ascendancy over the forces of evil. We are in that now. The consummation of all that will be when the church takes its eternally elected place to rule with Christ in this creation.

That will take place when he comes again, again, at his coming to reign the universal reign of righteousness and peace on this earth. That will be established. That for which men have striven and failed all through the ages.

For which they are striving today, perhaps more than ever, and finding the frustration and the defeat and the problem of world peace, a state of righteousness too great for them. And it will be so. It will be so to the end.

But at his coming, reign of righteousness, reign of peace on this earth, will begin. Righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. It will be then that this creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, corruption, into the glorious righteousness and the peace which always followed righteousness at his appearance.

Now, I could go on for a very long time on what's going to happen when he comes back. It's not my intention to do so. I promised you that we shall not prolong this gathering, but this note must be struck as the final and crowning note of such a consideration as that with which we have been occupied through these hours of these days.

Now, these are all things which are taught in the word of God, and you probably know them, with many others. But I do feel that it is necessary for us to come closer to this thing because of how we are involved, not only in the glorious end and climax, but how we are involved in the final movement toward that end. That climax.

And we are involved. But the word of God indicates very clearly and very definitely some of those things which will point to the imminence of his coming. The imminence of his coming.

That is, that his coming draweth nigh. I suppose we are very practically involved in some of the aspects of this matter. Every time you get into your motor car or into an aeroplane, you are involved in one of the final themes of this dispensation.

I hope that won't frighten you. But you will call to mind that the scriptures definitely state and prophesy that at the end, many shall run to and fro. Was there ever a time when men are running to and fro in the earth as they are today? If a week passes without someone from one part of the world rushing to another part of the world to try and solve some of this world's deep problems, it's quite unusual.

They are just doing it. New York, Moscow. London, India.

To and fro. This feverish movement. Running to and fro.

How descriptive that is. A man who prophesied that probably never had any idea of jet planes or aeroplanes at all. Or of motor cars and speedy vehicles.

But the Lord knew. The Lord knew. And it is not just straining interpretation, imagining things.

Here we are. Our papers, every morning, are occupied with something of this. Many running to and fro.

Implying, implying that there is feverish concern, feverish anxiety, causing this tremendous activity. An intensification of activity in this creation and in this universe. And isn't that what's happening? Isn't that what's happening? The speeding up of movement.

The rush. And hurry. And anxiety.

And strain. Like that. This running to and fro which involves us all in greater or lesser degree in some way or other.

That is, the intensified movement of our time is something that is indicative of us hastening toward a climax. Might well ask the question, where is all this going to end? Where is it going to end? If we go on like this? Go on like this? Where is the end going to be? Well, the Bible says that that is indicative of the near approach of the Lord. Many shall run to and fro.

And the next part of the statement is, and knowledge shall be increased. No, I need to stay with that. What, in the last five years? Ten years? Increase of knowledge? In this universe? Deep secrets that have always been hidden there? Brought out? Uncommon knowledge now? Things that some of us in our younger days would have thought were real fabulous fables.

We were told that this would happen. Told this would happen. All this intensification of the increase of knowledge.

How it's been packed in, isn't it? Packed in. Concentrated. And the Bible says that that is a mark that the end is near.

Dispensation is coming to its end, and the end is the coming of the Lord. The intensification of anxious, excited, distracted movement, and the quest for knowledge, and knowledge that men would be well without. After all, it's only the full development and consummation of that bid for knowledge in the God.

All right, says the Lord, you shall have it. But you shall have it to your own undoing. And the end brings us to that.

Intensified activity. Then the Bible tells us that another sign of the near approach of His coming will be the intensification of evil and godlessness. Again, that is not something that needs to be argued and labelled.

Things have got right out of hand. I cannot understand it. Why our youth, our youth, our teenagers, just run amok in evil.

Why young men, plenty are being sent to the gallows. Why are prisoners becoming overloaded with criminals? And what is more, outside of them, apart from the crimes, look at the godlessness. I don't know how you felt on Friday.

Perhaps we're a bit old-fashioned, or we'd be called a bit old-fashioned. But on this very Friday, which throughout all Christendom, and this so-called Christian country, things were just carried on without any thought whatsoever for what that day represented. Business, trade, and everything else, just as though Christ had never died, as though this day had no significance whatsoever.

While we are not really greatly concerned to keep up the religious calendar and these things, we do feel that the remembrance is something which ought to be secretly guarded. The godlessness, not only at such times, but on the Lord's own day and generally. How iniquity abounds.

How evil in this world is intensifying. How godlessness is spreading. Well, the word says that's how it will be at the end.

Quite distinctly, and quite definitely, an intensification of evil. Again, the word tells us that there will be at the end an intensified brightening of the two kinds of seed. Well, there it is on the sowing of the evil one.

His seed is brightening. There's an intensification. Let both grow together until, until, until the harvest.

And the mark then by which you'll know is the intensification of the nature of each. An intensifying process which will declare itself at the end. And while we are all here so easily able to discern the intensification of the evil seed, are we not today, perhaps as never before, in such, in such a large way, in the presence of this intensifying process where the children of God are concerned? Like that? Perhaps here in the West, we know something about it in our own spiritual life, in our own faith.

Things are getting pretty, pretty severe, aren't they? Getting intense for us. Spiritual, spiritual life is becoming more and more difficult. Trial of faith is becoming increasingly great and strong and deep.

And the Lord is proceeding with this intensifying process. There was a brother here last night, who spends much of his time behind the Iron Curtain. And he was telling me, having been there quite recently, he said, a wonderful thing of God is being done behind the Iron Curtain.

He said, you'll find a quality of Christians that you'll never find here in the West. He said, you may pity them and be sorry for them, but there's another standpoint. They have a knowledge of the Lord in their hearts that very few in this part of the world have.

And it's all because of the intensely difficult situation in which they're found. That, in China, in Russia, in Siberia, and elsewhere, is ripening the saints. While we may not be knowing the same kind of conditions and circumstances, I don't think, dear friends, that you and I who really do seek to go on with the Lord are finding things becoming easier.

The spiritual life, indeed, very much more difficult. We are being intensified by the very conditions, spiritual conditions, at the end. And so it says, the two seeds will come to rightness, to fullness, by an intensifying process and stream, trial of faith, the faith of the believers.

And all this, much more, comes within the compass of a mighty intensified activity on the part of the powers of darkness to contradict all that is true of Christ. Now think about that. All that we have been saying about the Lord Jesus.

Put your finger upon one point only. God raised him, and set him at his own right hand, far above all rule, and authority, and principality, and power, and every name that is named. Do you ever, do you ever

wonder how far that is true? May I dare say that? Just look at this intensified activity to counter and contradict the absolute supremacy of the Lord Jesus in this world.

That's what's going on. Simply to deny the truth that he is Lord of all, and Lord of lords. If you look at things, you look at things, and look at your own experiences, you might find plenty of ground to say, is he really on the throne? Is he really far above all rule and authority? The devil seems to have a good deal of liberty and power.

He is doing very much as he likes. He is seeking to establish a great contradiction to the truth of Jesus Christ. And what is true in that connection is true in everything else.

True in everything else. There can be found material for raising questions about everything concerning the Lord Jesus, if you are disposed to look for it. But this is what is going to happen.

This is just what is going to happen when the Son of Man comes. Shall he find the faith on the earth? The point in that question, where everything, everything will seem to contradict faith in the supreme and ultimate truths of the Lord Jesus. I know it is.

I don't want to dishearten you. But here it is, an intensifying movement in every direction and connection. The word of God says, is a clear indication that the end is near.

Perhaps the final phase is gathered into that one statement, woe unto you that dwell upon the earth. For Satan is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows his time is short. Because he knows his time is short.

Evil powers, active in a way unparalleled, pressure from that realm, as never in history, he's got to be in a hurry. He's got to do a lot in a short time, because he knows that it is a short time. But these are indicated signs that the coming of the Lord draws near.

But we can't end on that, can we? We can't close on that side, on that note. His coming, which is pointed to, indicated by all these things, is going to settle the whole question. Which is pointed to, indicated by all these things, is going to settle the whole question, fully and finally and forever, as to who is Lord, as to where the truth is, and who are the Lords.

Because you have these two glorious things revealed at his coming. First of all, he is manifested, he is revealed in all the value and the virtue of what he is and what he has done. But his coming is not only his coming in personal glory, it says, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believe.

I always come to that statement. With amazement, amazement and deep wonder, principalities and powers of a higher order, intelligences that will be watching, are looking on, and form the great audience and the great spiritual galleries of this theater, are going to point to the saints and say, isn't he marvelous? Just look at him, in what he is in them, and marvel in all them that believe. That's what will happen when he comes.

I'm sure we are quite prepared to believe that, except that if we are going to be really glorified together with him, it's going to be something for angels and all other intelligences to marvel at. You and I, being what we are, changed into his own glory, glorified together with him. My, that's something to marvel at, to be marveled at in all them that believe.

Crowned then, and you see, with a very, very comprehensive, far-reaching, many-sided matter, coming of the Lord, can only just be pointed to and indicated as near at hand by some of those very evident fulfillments of the word of God. Lord give us joy in the prospect that his coming draweth near.

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