

Christ's Second Coming: Comfort *or* Consternation?

Q&A52 asks how Christ's return to judge the living and the dead *comforts us*. However, we may initially be filled with *consternation* (fear, fright, alarm) when we think about His return. Let's look at these two possible responses.

1. Source of Consternation

A. the **glorious appearing** of JX

- i. Rev.1:12-17a – “12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. 14 His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength. 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.”

B. the **cataclysmic nature** of the event

[cataclysm' = a sudden (ie. unexpected), powerful, violent event causing widespread destruction]

- i. Isaiah 13:9ff – “9 See, the day of the Lord is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. 10 The stars and the constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. 11 I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity.... 13 I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger.”
- ii. Isaiah 24:3, 18-20 – “3 The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered.... 18 And it shall be that he who flees from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who comes up from the midst of the pit shall be caught in the snare; for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth are shaken. 19 The earth is violently broken, the earth is split open, the earth is shaken exceedingly. 20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut; its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again.”
- iii. Joel 3:15-16a – “¹⁵The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. ¹⁶The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake.”
- iv. Amos 5:18-20 – “18 Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! For what good is the day of the LORD to you? It will be darkness, and not light. 19 It will be as though a man fled from a lion, And a bear met him! Or as though he went into the house, leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him! 20 Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?”
- v. Luke 21:25-27 – “25 And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26 men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”
- vi. 2 Peter 3:10 – “10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.... 12 ... the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat.”

C. the **sinful nature** of our humanity

- i. Matthew 12:36 – “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.”
- ii. Matthew 24:31-46 – Parable of the sheep and the goats
- iii. Hebrews 4:13 – “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.”
- iv. 2 Corinthians 5:10 – “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

- v. Revelation 20:12 – “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.”

2. Source of Comfort

A. the day of judgment *has already taken place* for those trusting in Christ's death on the cross

i. **Day of Judgment #1 – Christ's death on the cross** (*past*)

- darkness falls during the middle of the day (Luke 23:44)
- rock-splitting earthquake shakes the ground (Matthew 27:51b)
- Roman soldiers and centurions, the toughest and bravest of men, were terror-stricken (Matt.27:54)

ii. **Day of Judgment #2 – something Christians can eagerly anticipate** (*future*)

- the **condemnation** of all Christ's enemies (who are also our enemies)
 - Matthew 25:41 – “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”
 - 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10 – “6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.”
 - Revelation 21:27 – “Nothing impure will ever enter into it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful...”
- the **salvation** of all Christ's children (all who have faith in His sacrificial death as atonement for sin)
 - Q&A52 – “I turn my eyes to the heavens and confidently wait as judge the very One who has already stood trial in my place before God and so has removed the whole curse from me.”
 - Colossians 2:13b-14 – “He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross.”
 - Joel 3:15-16b – “¹⁵ The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. ¹⁶ The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.”
 - Luke 21:25-28 – “25 And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26 men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”
 - Titus 2:13-14 – “¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

Conclusion

The joy and the glory of heaven as we enjoy the presence of God!