

Resurrection
Ascension
Second Coming

Resurrection

*5. And He rose on the third day
according to the Scriptures*

Rose on the Third Day

- ✦ ***“And He rose on the third day”***
- ✦ Mary came seeking Him but the tomb was found to be empty. *“They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him.”* (John 20:13).
- ✦ What did the angels tell her?
Not to fear, that He had risen and said, *“Go tell His disciples that **He is risen.**”* (Matt 28:7)
- ✦ Jesus met up with His disciples. *“saying, All hail! and they came and took hold of His feet.”* (Matt 28:9)



Resurrection

- ✦ What did Jesus do after the He rose?
- ✦ Showed himself to the Apostles for **forty days**. During this time He **taught them the mysteries** of the Kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3)



According to Scriptures

- ✦ Why ***“According to the Scriptures”*** ?
- ✦ The Resurrection was fulfillment of prophecy of **both OT and Jesus**.
- ✦ Shows the consistency of Bible in pointing to Christ and His Resurrection.
- ✦ Both Peter and Paul point this out in Acts.
- ✦ Saint Paul: *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins **according to the Scriptures**, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day **according to the Scriptures**,* (1 Cor 15: 3-4)

Resurrection

- ✦ What was the state of Jesus after His death and **before** His Resurrection?
- ✦ He descended into Hades
- ✦ Hymn of Church: *In the grave as to the flesh, **in hades with thy soul**, as God, in paradise with the the thief, and on the throne wert thou, O Christ, together with the Father, and the Spirit, filling all things, Thyself uncircumscribed.*

Hades

- ✦ Is this in Scripture?
- ✦ *"He (Jesus) was put to death in the flesh, but he was raised to life in the Spirit, in which also he went and **preached to the disobedient spirits who were in prison in the days of Noah** when God waited patiently while the ark was being built...For this is why the gospel was **preached even to the dead** so that, although they have already been judged in the flesh like men, they might have life in the Spirit like God."* (1 Peter 3:18-20; 4:6)



Doubts?

- ✿ What are some things the doubters say?
 - ✿ He died as a criminal in disgrace & Apostles fled
 - ✿ Apostles stole the body and lived a lie.
 - ✿ Mythical Story.
- ✿ Were **many eyewitnesses** who proclaimed the truth even when severely tortured and then killed.
- ✿ Peter in Acts 2,: *"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs. . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. . . this Jesus hath God raised up, **whereof we all are witnesses.**"*

Many Witnesses

- ✦ Night lit by full moon.
- ✦ Heavy stone had been rolled away.
- ✦ Testimonies from angels, Peter, John and Thomas, as well as other apostles.
- ✦ Some ran to sepulcher and saw burial clothes
- ✦ Others handled His hands and feet, and beheld the prints of the nails.
- ✦ Women were witnesses who took hold of His feet and witnessed the mighty earthquake. They also saw the burial clothes
- ✦ Spot marked today by Church of Holy Sepulcher built by St. Constantine.

Many Witnesses

- ✿ *"Even as they delivered them unto us, which **from the beginning were eyewitnesses.** . . ." Luke 1:2*
- ✿ *"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, **which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled.** . . ." 1 John 1:1*
- ✿ *"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." 2 Peter 1:16*
- ✿ How is it possible 11 men who forsook all, were beaten, jailed and even went so far as die for this truth could do it knowing it was a lie?

Many Witnesses

- ✿ We also have historical accounts by Roman and Jewish historians.
- ✿ Professor Thomas Arnold, former chair of history at Oxford, and author of famous volumes, *History of Rome*, stated,
- ✿ *"I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, than the great sign which God has given us that **Christ died and rose again from the dead.**"*

Pascha Hymn



- ✦ What is Hymn we sing on Pascha until His Ascension in our Church services?
- ✦ *Christ is risen from the dead! **By His death He has conquered death, and to those in the tombs He has bestowed life eternal.***
- ✦ The Resurrection is the Good News of our Christian faith. When you are **certain** about your own resurrection you have eternal hope and can withstand anything.
- ✦ Why we must work to **mature** our faith. Deal with our doubts. With this comes the peace we seek.

Resurrection

✦ Questions?

Ascension

6. He ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father

Ascension

- ◆ **“He ascended into Heaven.”**
- ◆ *“...as they were looking on, He was **lifted up**, and a **cloud took Him** out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.*

(Acts 1:9-11)



Ascension

- ✦ Happened 40 days after Resurrection. Why 40 days?
 - ✦ 40 days is not always taken literally in the Bible - means considerable but limited time period.
 - ✦ Provided proof of His Resurrection.
Appeared to them many times in different circumstances establishing reality of His resurrection without doubt.
 - ✦ Jesus needed time to instruct His disciples for when He would no longer be with them.

Ascension

- ✦ Why did He choose to **Go Away**?
- ✦ Jesus tells us, *“It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you”* (John 16:7).
- ✦ He is saying that His human form on earth will be replaced by the presence of the **Holy Spirit**.
- ✦ Ascension is but a prelude to day of Pentecost in 10 days.

Ascension



- ✦ Why ***“seated at the right hand of the Father”***?
- ✦ Not a literal statement, must be understood spiritually
- ✦ Right hand is hand of strength and preferred in antiquity.
- ✦ Shows He has the place of highest honor in heaven sharing in the sovereignty of the Universe.
- ✦ Christ has one and the same majesty and glory with God the Father.

Ascension

✦ Questions?

Second Coming

7. *And He will come again, with glory,
to judge the living and the dead; His
kingdom shall have no end.*

Second Coming

- ✦ He *comes again* from heaven *with glory*.
- ✦ He who is now invisible will be visible to all.
- ✦ “*the very God and Lord of the universe will shine at this time in the **glory of His godhead.***” St Symeon the New Theologian

Comes in Glory

- ✦ How will Second Coming differ from First?
 - ✦ First Coming He came in **extreme humility**, as man. *“He endured the Cross, despising shame.”* (Heb 12:2).
 - ✦ His divinity hidden in flesh.
 - ✦ In Second Coming he comes to judge and renew, attended with a host of angels, **receiving glory**.
 - ✦ Christ tells us in a parable, *“When the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.”* (Matt 25:31)
- ✦ At His First Coming we said, *“Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.”* and we will say the same at His second coming.



Second Coming

- ✿ What will it be like?
 - ✿ His Ascension when the angels said, *“This Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so **come in like manner** as ye have seen Him go into Heaven.”* (Acts 1:11)
- ✿ A **mystery** that cannot be fully comprehended by our intellect or described by physical terms.
- ✿ How can we speak about this event?
 - ✿ Symbolically: What is spoken about this event are not things of the senses.

Second Coming

✦ At this time **world will come to an end** and created **world will be remade anew.**

✦ Christ says, *“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my voice shall not pass away.”* (Matt 24:35)

Things will come that are **better** than the present world. A **glorious renewal** of creation.



Second Coming

- ✦ St Gregory of Nyssa tells us that all will be **centered around God** and nothing will remain outside of Him.
- ✦ God will be *“all in all”* and Christ will reign in the souls of the people whom he has redeemed.
- ✦ Final victory over Antichrist, light over darkness, Paradise over Hell. The final annihilation of Death.



Paul: *“Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?... But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (1Cor 15:54-7)

Cosmos remade

- ✦ What is this Paradise that is coming?
 - ✦ **Eternal life** and the **Kingdom of God**.
 - ✦ **Not a place** but a state of the soul.
 - ✦ Paradise and Hell only exist from man's perspective - Not God's.



Saint Isaac the Syrian says, “*Paradise is the **love of God**, wherein is the enjoyment of all blessedness.*”

Our experience of God will be different, as Saint Isaac says, “*according to the **measure of our excellence and worthiness.***”

- ✦ God's love works according to our spiritual condition.

Second Coming

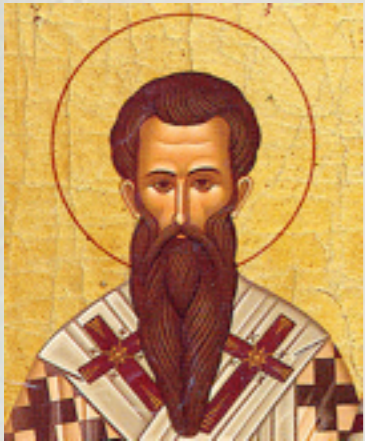


- ✦ Saint Gregory the Theologian teaches,
- ✦ Future life will be “*light for those whose mind is purified*”, of course “*in proportion to their degree of purity*”, and we call this the Kingdom of Heaven.
- ✦ **Darkness** “*to those who have blinded their ruling organ*”.
- ✦ So, eternal life is **light** for those who have **purified** their nous - according to the depth of that purity - and **darkness** for those whose nous is **blind**, who have not been illuminated by this life and not attained deification.
- ✦ God is **both** paradise and Hell as we take His uncreated energy in accordance with **purity** of our **heart and soul**.

Second Coming

- ✦ Paradise is also said to have many rooms (John 14:2)
What does this mean?

- ✦ Not to be understood literally.
Rooms are not places but different **degrees of closeness** to God.



Saint Basil, *“Some will be honored by God with **greater privileges**, some with lesser, for star differs from star in glory.”*

- ✦ Bottom line: Some will repose in a more supreme and exalted state, and some in a lower state.

Comes in Judgment

- ✦ Creed: ***“He Comes to judge the living and the dead.”***



Christ said, *“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”* (John 5:28-29)

- ✦ What does “judgment” mean?

Second Coming

- ✦ Are we to **fear** His Second Coming and judgment?

- ✦ Depends

- ✦ How about if you have **true faith**?

- ✦ Christ says, *“I will come again and will **take you to myself**, that where I am you may be also..”* (John 14:3)

- ✦ Saint Paul says, *“There is **no condemnation** to those who are in Christ Jesus.”*

Who should be in fear?

- ✦ Those who **doubt**, who **reject** His teachings or **fail to follow** them. They will be **condemned**.

- ✦ Practically isn't it the other way around?



Second Coming

- ✦ Difference between Psychological fear and spiritual fear.



*What leads to psychological fear and human despair is **not orthodox**. In contrast, what is genuine and orthodox leads man, through spiritual fear, **to hope in God**, to repentance and prayer.* Metropolitan of

Nafpaktos Hierotheos

- ✦ Final Judgment will have more the character of **revelation** and manifestation of our **spiritual state**.

Second Coming

- ✦ How are we judged?
 - ✦ We have already been judged **in this life**.
- ✦ When we live a life of love and respect of His commandments, keeping them out of love of Christ, living a life of repentance, we become united with His light - it is **in this life** we pass through judgment.
- ✦ How should we experience the Presence of Christ?
 - ✦ with **joy and delight**.
- ✦ If we are fearful, what does this imply?
 - ✦ a poor relationship

Second Coming



- ✦ Remember parable of the **ten virgins** (purity of soul) with oil lamps (illumination of soul) where 5 called foolish had theirs go out because they did not have enough oil (good deeds)? (Matt 25:1-13)
- ✦ What happened to them?
- ✦ Also parable of **wedding banquet** where those without proper garment were bound and cast into fire. (Matt 22:1-14)
- ✦ Shows future judgment is **not a legal process** but is Christ's **revelation** of our **inner spiritual condition**.
- ✦ Do we have the right “garment” or are do we have sufficient “oil”.

Second Coming

- ✦ Christ gives another parable where He separates the sheep from the goats (Matt 25:31-46)
- ✦ Nature of Sheep?
 - ✦ follow and are gentle.
 - ✦ They follow like we must follow Christ
 - ✦ Symbolize righteousness, gentleness and forbearance of those who are able to walk path of virtues.
 - ✦ Christ also know as Lamb of God and good shepherd.
- ✦ Nature of Goats
 - ✦ Goats are independent and rebellious and feisty.
- ✦ Judgment revealed based on love of Christ and way of life.



Second Coming

- ✦ You must learn the **way**! Prepare yourself with deep **faith**.
- ✦ Our preparedness can be measured based on how we love and care for our brethren who face difficulties and are in need.



Christ says, *“for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.* (Matt 25:35-36)

Second Coming

- ✿ We obey Christ out of our **free choice** and **love**.
Fear of Judgment is only a beginners stance.
One who ignores the teachings and fails to do His will lacking love of God.
- ✿ True lovers of God do not fear death or Second Coming because they are **prepared** with purified souls.
- ✿ At this time their **kinship** with Christ will be revealed.

Second Coming

- ✦ All will be illuminated according to their faith, practice, hope, love, purity by Christ and Holy Spirit.



Paul: “...*your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ **who is our life** appears, then you will also appear with him in glory.*” (Col 3:3-4)



St. Symeon says, “*those who do not have the **Holy Spirit shining like a torch in their spirit and dwelling inexpressibly in their hearts are committed to eternal darkness.***”

- ✦ way of life will be revealed, **purity** of soul made known.
- ✦ Those who are condemned have chosen “*darkness*” based on non-participation or non-communion with God.

Final Judgment

- ◆ Questions on **Final Judgment** or **Illumination** of our spiritual condition?

Nonbelievers

- ✦ Is it possible for nonbelievers to be saved?
- ✦ For sure, there is **no salvation outside Christ**
- ✦ Does not mean that everyone who failed to meet Christ during earthly life is deprived of the possibility of being liberated from hell, for even in hell the message of the Gospel is heard.
- ✦ Clearly, one who deliberately rejects Christ and the Gospel makes a choice for the devil, is guilty of **self condemnation**.

John says, "He who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

(John 3:18)



Nonbelievers

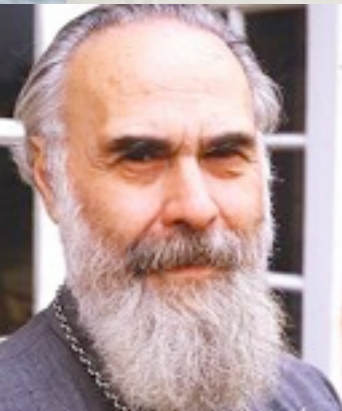


Clement of Alexandria writes, *“Imagine that the Gospel was not proclaimed to those who died before Christ’s Coming. Then both their salvation and the condemnation is a matter of crying injustice.”*

Those who have not heard the Gospel cannot be treated as those who deliberately rejected Him.

- ✦ This is why Christ preached in Hell so that every person created by Him could make a choice for good or evil.

Nonbelievers



Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (Bloom) affirms possibility of salvation outside of Christ:

Take the words of Saint Paul, about the Gentile who are instructed by the law written in their heart; that the Jews are instructed by the law of Moses; while Christians follow the law of Christ.”

- ✦ Don't we believe all must come to Christ?
- ✦ *“They might not come because this is conditioned by **historical circumstance**. You cannot doubt a person's eternal salvation only because he was born in Central Africa in a period when there were no Christian missionaries. This would make salvation conditioned by geography and history.”*

Nonbelievers

- ✿ *In the non-Christian world there are many who came to such a degree of knowledge of God that only the name of Jesus is missing.*
- ✿ *Can one imagine that when such a person upon his death appears before the Lord, he will not say: "Here is the one who I sought throughout the whole of my life, here is the answer to all my questions"?*
- ✿ Question is not simply about salvation outside Christ, but rather **In Christ** for those, who for one reason or another, died outside the Christian faith.

Hell

- ✿ What is Hell?
- ✿ Paradise and Hell are not a place but a condition of the soul.
- ✿ Hell is condition of our separation from God, our inability to love.
- ✿ Does a loving God condemn people to eternal damnation?
- ✿ How do we reconcile the image of a harsh Judge with the image of God as Love?

Hell



Saint Isaac the Syrian gives some comforting answers:

*No one would be deprived of **God's love**. There is **no place where it does not exist**. All who choose evil instead of good deprive themselves of God's mercy.*

- ✦ *This very same divine love which is source of bliss and consolation for the righteous in Paradise becomes a source of torment for sinners.*
- ✦ *Those who are punished in Gehenna are scourged by the **scourge of love**.*

Hell

- ✦ *Its appropriate to think of sinners in Gehenna as deprived of the love of God. **Love... is given to all.** But the power of love works in two ways:*
- ✦ *It **torments sinners**, even as it happens here when a friend suffers from a friend;*
- ✦ *but it becomes a **source of joy** for those who have observed its duties. Thus I say that this is the torment of Gehenna: bitter regret.*

Hell

- ✿ Who torments?
 - ✿ Not God, but ourselves.
 - ✿ Can those who **deliberately refuse** to follow the way of love, who do harm to their neighbors, who **deny Christ**, reconcile themselves with Supreme Love when they encounter it face to face?
- ✿ If we are outside this Love in our **daily life**, will we not be able to find a way to be **inside it** when we face death?

Hell

- ✦ This is the “*valley of the shadow of death*” of Psalm 23:4. Jesus calls it the condition of our soul or the place of “*the outer darkness,*” (Matt 22:13) or “*the hell of fire*” (Matt 5:22)



St. Basil says Hell is “*alienation from God for abundance of sin and disposition opposed to good.*”



Suffering in Hell is awareness of **separation from God.**

- ✦ Images in Scripture like fire or ice, scorching furnaces or burning lakes are only **symbols** of one’s suffering that results from the inability to fully participate in God.
- ✦ Can you see the power in Love of God?

Hell



- ✿ Remember the story of Lazarus and the rich man?
- ✿ This separation is “*great gulf*” that the rich man saw in this story told by Jesus.
- ✿ *he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’*
- ✿ *But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.*
- ✿ *And besides all this, between us and you there is a **great gulf** fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’* (Luke 16:24-26)

Hell

- ✿ Why do we pray for the dead including those who may be held in Hell?
- ✿ We pray for them believing that salvation of all people is in the hands of God. We ask for His mercy.
- ✿ Do we know if Hell is the inevitable fate of all sinners?
- ✿ What is God's aim?
 - ✿ *“desires **all** to be saved (1Tim 2:4),” “not wishing that any should perish, but that **all** should reach repentance (2Peter 3:9).”*
- ✿ There is always **possibility** of a liberation from hell. Our prayers are important.

◆ Questions?

Universal Salvation?

- ✦ Does this mean there is a universal salvation?



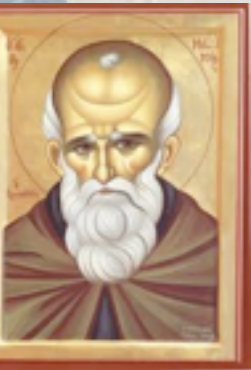
Paul says, “*For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall **all be made alive...***”

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

- ✦ *For he must reign until he has put **all his enemies** under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death...*
- ✦ *When **all things** are subjected to him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to Him who put all things under him, that God may be **everything to everyone.*** (1Cor 12:22, 24-6, 28)

Universal Salvation?

- ✦ God's intention is to save **all** peoples but this is **not a necessity**.



Maximos the Confessor tells us that everyone is **free** to accept or reject salvation offered by Christ. Salvation will not be compulsory for anyone: it is those **who wish** to follow Christ who will be saved.



As St Isaac the Syrian emphasizes, above all God is immeasurable and boundless love. In God there is no revenge or retribution, but only love and mercy.

- ✦ Even when He chastises he does so for purpose of salvation, not retribution. We can only speak of God's mercy, not justice.

Universal Salvation?

- ✦ Why does God allow suffering?
- ✦ Suffering has as its goal salvation. Through suffering we are purified leading us to perfection where we can enter into the Kingdom of heaven.

Universal Salvation?



He writes, *“Sin, Gehenna and death do not exist with God, for they **are effects**, not substances.*

- ✦ ***Sin is the fruit of free will.** There was a time when sin did not exist, and there will be a time when it will not exist.*
- ✦ ***Gehenna is the fruit of sin.** At some point in time it had a beginning, but its end **is not known.***
- ✦ ***Death**, however, is a dispensation of the wisdom of the Creator. It will rule only a short time over nature; then it **will be totally abolished.***

Universal Salvation?

- ✿ There is view among Church Fathers that there is universal salvation but it's not a necessity.
- ✿ No common view as to when or how it will be worked out.
- ✿ Not heretical to think of **possibility** of the salvation of all and continue to pray and hope for that.
- ✿ View clearly expressed by saints Paul, Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor, Isaac the Syrian and John Climacus.
- ✿ Spirit of truth teaches **love towards all**.

When Will He Come?

- ✦ Not known. We have to be ever ready.



Peter says, *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

- ✦ *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.”* (2 Peter 3:9-10)
- ✦ *Watch therefore, for you know **neither the day nor the hour** that the Son of man will come.* (Matt 25:13)
- ✦ Some will watch in loving anticipation and others in fear.

Signs?

- ✿ Scripture:
- ✿ *“Wars and rumors”;*
- ✿ *“Famines and pestilences and earthquakes in diverse places”;*
 - ✿ *“Fearful sights from heaven”;*
 - ✿ *“Mighty storms”;*
 - ✿ *“Many shall be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another”;*
 - ✿ *“Iniquity shall abound, love of many shall wax cold”;*
 - ✿ *“Gospel shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come.”*

Signs



Paul: *The Lord Himself will descend from heaven **with a shout**, with the voice of an archangel, and with the **trumpet of God**.*

- ✦ *And the dead in Christ will rise first.*
- ✦ *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*
- ✦ *And thus we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:16-17)*
- ✦ What is Christ's true sign?
 - ✦ The Cross. There shall be a sign of a luminous Cross that should go before our Lord.

His Kingdom Has No End

- ✦ What is meant that Christ's *kingdom shall have no end*?
- ✦ The kingdom of glory is eternal.
- ✦ Christians with **faith and love** look forward to the ultimate victory of Christ and should not focus on the turmoil that precedes it.
- ✦ End-times have already begun and may last for along time.
- ✦ What is Christ's kingdom?
 - ✦ Whole world, all believers, all blessed in heaven.
Kingdom of nature, of grace, and of glory.

His Kingdom Has No End

- ◆ The end of the world will mean **liberation** for humanity from all evil and suffering.
- ◆ It will be a **transformation** to another mode of existence that we cannot know as yet.

His Kingdom Has No End



- ✦ Saint Paul says, *Behold, I tell you a **mystery**: We shall not all sleep, but we **shall all be changed**— in a moment, **in the twinkling of an eye**, at the last trumpet.*
- ✦ *For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be **changed**.*
 - ✦ *For this corruptible must **put on incorruption**, and this mortal must put on **immortality**.*
 - ✦ *So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “**Death is swallowed up in victory.**”* (1Cor 15:51-57)

Second Coming

◆ Questions?