

CONCLUSION

In the archives of the United States Supreme Court is the record of George Wilson, a man sentenced to die by hanging for a crime he had committed. His case came before President Andrew Jackson, who granted Wilson a pardon. To everyone's amazement, Wilson tore the pardon to shreds and threw it on the floor of his prison cell. The ensuing legal argument concerned the validity of a pardon that was refused, and the question arose as to whether or not Wilson should be freed or hanged. After great deliberation, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled as follows: "A pardon is a writing, the value of which is dependent upon the acceptance by the individual for whom it is intended." It was therefore decreed by the court that George Wilson be hanged until dead—not because a pardon was not offered, but because it was not accepted.

This is a perfect picture of the sinner who hears the gospel of Jesus Christ, knows that God has written a pardon for him, yet rejects Him and thus forfeits his right to the pardon. If you are without the Savior today, it is because you choose to be. Your choice to reject Jesus Christ automatically invalidates your pardon and sentences you to the lake of fire.

Each of us is confronted with a choice. We can admit we are sinners in need of a Savior and invite Christ into our lives, or we can choose to reject Him. In either case we will live in eternity by our choice. Those who have chosen to put their faith in Christ will rule and reign with Him during the millennial kingdom and then go into the eternal ages surrounding His throne. Those who reject Him will be cast into the lake of fire and separated from Him forever. As the apostle Paul put it: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

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BIBLE PROPHECY: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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BIBLE PROPHECY

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

TIM LAHAYE

THE 34 MOST-ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BIBLE PROPHECY

BIBLE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

YOUR QUESTION

1. How can we be certain Christ is coming again?
2. When will He come?
3. What is the rapture?
4. How is the “rapture” different from the “second coming”?

THE BIBLE'S ANSWER

1. The second coming of Christ is mentioned eight times more frequently in the Old and the New Testaments than His first coming. It is the second-most-mentioned doctrine in the entire New Testament, and is alluded to in 22 of the 27 New Testament books. (For more information, see Matt. 24:27; Luke 21:25-28; John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 3:13.)
2. The Bible gives many details associated with Christ's coming which have given rise to different interpretations. While there are disagreements about the *time* of our Lord's coming, there is little disagreement over the fact that He *will* return. The Lord promised us He would return, as did the angels and His disciples. Paul mentioned communion only twice in his epistles, and baptism 13 times, but he mentioned the return of the Lord 50 times! (see 1 Thess. 4:17; Matt. 25:31,32; Rev. 19:15-19; Zech. 14:4,9; Mark 13:33-37.)
3. The first phase of His coming is “in the air” for believers—a secret coming that will be a great blessing to all who participate in it, called by Bible scholars “the rapture.” It has come to mean the phase of our Lord's return just for Christians, who are “caught up” together with the resurrected saints who have died in Jesus (see 1 Thess. 4:13-18 and 1 Cor. 15:50-58).
4. The second phase of the Lord's second coming is His public appearance to earth, accompanied with power and great glory as well as the angels of heaven. We call this “the glorious appearing of Christ.” At that time “every eye shall see Him,” and those who rejected Him will mourn because they will finally realize who He really is and that it is now too late to accept Him by faith as Lord and Savior. The overwhelming number of references to the second coming in both the Old and New Testaments have to do with this phase of our Lord's coming. *These are not two comings of Christ but two phases of His one coming.* The first phase is for Christians, and the second phase is for the world of unbelievers. The two phases of His one second coming are in different places, at different times, for different people, and for different purposes (see Matt. 24:29-31; 25:31-46; and Rev. 19:11-21).