

DENIED AGAIN

By Mike Fortune

1. With pretense (Luke 22:66-68; Matthew 26:25; Luke 22:47; Matthew 16:13-17; Mark 14:71; Matthew 26:59-63)
2. Of the hereafter (Luke 22:69-71; Luke 22:69 NKJV; Matthew 26:64; Daniel 7:13-14; Isaiah 25:9; Revelation 6:15-16; Revelation 19:11-18; Matthew 24:27-28; Revelation 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 12:29; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 5:28-29; Daniel 12:2; Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; John 11:23-27; Revelation 20:5-6; Acts 1:9-11)

When I was in 8th grade, and self-conscious about my voice cracking because it was changing, I didn't like reading out loud. But one day for part of my English class my teacher asked me to do so. But I declined. So he asked me again. To read out loud in class. And once again, I said no. So he sent me to the principal's office for insubordination. Which was sort of funny because he was also the principal. And his office was in the back of the same classroom. People could see me sitting in there through the glass window. And even if they couldn't, people talking in third person is always kinda funny isn't it? Go the principal's office. See, I was still listening in English class! Anyway, when he was done teaching, he came into the office and asked me why I wouldn't read. I told him my voice is cracking and squeaking all over the place. And he never asked me to read out loud again. But the religious leaders interrogating Jesus kept asking.

At daybreak, Luke 22:66-68 says

Luke 22:66-68

66 At daybreak all the elders of the people assembled, including the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. Jesus was led before this high council, 67 and they said, "Tell us, are you the Messiah?" But he [Jesus] replied, "If I tell you, you won't believe me. 68 And if I ask you a question, you won't answer."

They weren't battling puberty. They were battling pretense. As was Judas. Remember what he actually asked Jesus regarding his betrayal in Matthew 26:25?

Matthew 26:25

25 Judas, the one who would betray him, also asked, "Rabbi, am I the one?" And Jesus told him, "You have said it."

Even before the last supper began, Matthew 26:14-16 indicates that Judas had sought out the religious leaders and agreed to betray Jesus. It says, “14 Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests 15 and asked, “How much will you pay me to betray Jesus to you?” And they gave him thirty pieces of silver. 16 From that time on, Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.” All of which occurs before his infamous question: “Lord, is it I?”

The pretense continued in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 22:47

47 As the crowd approached, led by Judas, one of the twelve disciples. Judas walked over to Jesus to greet him with a kiss.

Which is a painfully personal form of betrayal. That Peter didn’t see coming. Even though he was the first person to proclaim that Jesus was the Messiah. Matthew 16:13-17 records that

Matthew 16:13-17

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.” 15 Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.”

Fast forward three and a half years and as we noticed last time, Peter is suddenly swearing and cursing about Jesus. Denying he even knows Him. Has ever followed Him. Or is even from Galilee. Mark 14:71 says

Mark 14:71

71 Peter swore, “A curse on me if I’m lying—I don’t know this man you’re talking about!”

So you can deny Jesus from a distance and among others. But you can also deny Jesus with pretense. Which means: an attempt to make something that is not the case appear true. Synonyms include posing, faking, and acting. And that’s exactly what these religious leaders were doing too. Pretending they were interested in learning the truth about Jesus when they were not.

But Jesus saw right through them. He knew they had already decided he was guilty. Luke doesn't record the pre-trial, convened illegally in the middle of the night first before Annas, the ex-high priest, but John 18:13 does. And then Matthew 26:59-63 explains what happened next. After Annas sends Jesus to Caiaphas, the current high priest.

Matthew 26:59-63

59 Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council were trying to find witnesses who would lie about Jesus, so they could put him to death. 60 But even though they found many who agreed to give false witness, they could not use anyone's testimony. Finally, two men came forward 61 who declared, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the Temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

"Of all that Christ had said, the priests could find nothing to use against Him except these words. Here Romans and Jews, Pharisees and Sadducees, could agree; for all held the temple in great veneration. Thus Christ's words were misstated. In the figurative language of prophecy, He foretold His own death and resurrection" (adapted from The Desire of Ages p.705).

But John 2:21 clarifies, "21 When Jesus said "this temple," he meant his own body." "And if Jesus' words had been reported exactly as He spoke them, they would not have secured His condemnation even by the Sanhedrin. Had Jesus been a mere man, as the Jews claimed, His declaration would only have indicated an unreasonable, boastful spirit, but could not have been construed into blasphemy" (adapted from The Desires of Ages p.705).

And Caiaphas knew it. So

62 Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Well, aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?" 63 But Jesus remained silent.

Paul Maier, in his excellent book *In the Fullness of Time*, explains that legally Jesus did not have to reply since no proven evidence had yet been introduced. They could barely find two witnesses to lie well enough to agree! So Jesus, seeing right through their pretense, says nothing.

But then the high priest said something that Jesus will never deny. Caiaphas demands of Jesus, 63 "In the name of the living God—tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

And when placed under oath Jesus does not refuse to testify to the truth. He cannot and will not deny that He is the Messiah, the Son of God. But they didn't believe Him. Do you? And if you do, what are you going to do about it? Who do you say that He is? Point number one: Jesus was denied. Again. Not just by Judas. And Peter. But also by all the religious leaders in the church of his day. All of them by pretense. Posing, faking, and acting like they were interested in Jesus. And the hereafter. But they were not. Which is what Jesus points out next in point number two.

Luke 22:69-71

69 But from now on the Son of Man will be seated in the place of power at God's right hand. 70 They all shouted, "So, are you claiming to be the Son of God?"

And Jesus replies in Mark 14:62, "I am."

Or similarly in Luke 22:70, "You say that I am." 71 "Why do we need other witnesses?" they said. "We ourselves heard him say it."

I like the way the NKJV conveys verse 69. It says

Luke 22:69 (NKJV)

69 Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God."

But wait there's more. Listen to what else Jesus said in Matthew 26:64 right after that.

Matthew 26:64

64 Jesus replied, "And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven."

You see the difference? Matthew's account cranks up the consequences by emphasizing not only Jesus' right to rule over those trying him but by reminding these earthly rulers that they would be answering to him when He comes again. The Son of Man coming in the clouds reference comes from Daniel 7:13-14. Which states

Daniel 7:13-14

13 As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that

people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

Jesus' ministry is prophetic from beginning to end. So in spite of how it seems, despite all their pretense, Jesus was reminding them that He was the real ruler in that courtroom after daybreak and that He was going to come again at God's right hand and on the clouds of heaven.

Titus 2:13 calls Christ's return the blessed hope. The word for blessed in Greek means happy so we have a happy hope which why Adventist Christians like to sing "We have this hope!" We can't wait for Jesus to come again! We long for His kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. And when He comes, we will be as happy to see him as the people described in Isaiah 25:9.

Isaiah 25:9

9 In that day the people will proclaim, "This is our God! We trusted in him, and he saved us! This is the Lord, in whom we trusted. Let us rejoice in the salvation he brings!"

But if you're posing, faking, and acting like you love Jesus now, when you really don't, Jesus will see right through you too. But when Jesus comes again, it will be too late. Revelation 6:15-16 makes that clear.

Revelation 6:15-16

15 Then everyone—the kings of the earth, the rulers, the generals, the wealthy, the powerful, and every slave and free person—all hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. 16 And they cried to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb."

The coming of Christ for those who do not believe in Christ or abide in Christ is gonna be a rude awakening. Listen to these sobering words in Revelation 19:11-18.

Revelation 19:11-18

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. 12 His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself. 13 He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses. 15 From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike

down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. 16 On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords. 17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, shouting to the vultures flying high in the sky: 18 “Come! Gather together for the great banquet God has prepared. Come and eat the flesh of kings, generals, and strong warriors; of horses and their riders; and of all humanity, both free and slave, small and great.”

Sorry to ruin your fellowship lunch, but God loves us enough to tell us the truth about the catastrophic consequences coming for the rulers of this world denying Christ. Notice nobody is exempt. Kings and generals cannot buy their way out of their fate. All of the wicked small and great will become food for vultures flying high in the sky. And in case you think I’m being overly dramatic, think again, because Jesus implies something similar in Matthew 24:27-28.

Matthew 24:27-28

27 For as the lightning flashes in the east and shines to the west, so it will be when the Son of Man comes. 28 Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near.

I don’t think that verse about vultures and corpses coming right after the verse describing Jesus coming again is an accident do you? Whether the vultures and corpses (NKJV) are referring to the approaching signs of the times (NLT) or the catastrophic consequences of the wicked dying when Jesus comes, they’re there. No wonder the nations of the world will mourn.

Revelation 1:7

7 Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see him—even those who pierced him. And all the nations of the world will mourn for him.

This verse in addition to Jesus’ own words under oath to the high priest Caiaphas in Matthew 26:64, “That you [Caiaphas] will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven” reveal to readers an apparent special resurrection of the religious leaders who denied and crucified Christ.

The Bible is saying everyone alive when he returns will see him. Even those religious leaders who denied him and convicted him and crucified him. They will be resurrected to see the catastrophic consequences of their denials and the Bible says those consequences will be eternal.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

7 When the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power.

Notice the Apostle Paul doesn't say they will be punished with eternal torment. The Bible doesn't teach that. That's a medieval teaching introduced into Christianity by the Catholic Church and universally adopted by most Protestant Christian churches today. But fire in the Bible is not unquenchable or eternal or everlasting. The consequences are. I have a twenty page paper on that if you're interested, contact me or the church office and we'll give that to you.

Hebrews 12:29

29 For our God is a devouring fire.

That's why when Jesus returns 2 Thessalonians 2:8 says

2 Thessalonians 2:8

8 Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming.

So the righteous will be happy to see Jesus return in power and glory. But the wicked will be unpleasantly surprised and destroyed by the brightness of his coming. Because our God is a consuming fire, wicked people cannot stay in His purity and holiness and live. God gave Moses a glimpse of the pre-incarnate Christ by hiding in the cleft of a rock and got lit up like a light bulb so bright he had to wear a veil afterward (cf. Exodus 33:22; Exodus 34:34). Matthew 26:4 says the guards fell over like dead men when one angel appeared. What do you think is gonna happen when Jesus returns with all his mighty angels in flaming fire as 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 says?

So in flaming fire, the wicked will be killed by the brightness of Christ's coming. And prophecy says there will be vultures flying high ready to eat the corpses of those great and mighty men who deny Jesus' right to rule when he returns. So let us take these verses about the catastrophic consequences of rejecting Jesus just as seriously as we take the heart warming ones about accepting Jesus. And since Jesus brought it up, let us now clarify what happens when Jesus comes again.

2 Thessalonians 2:1

1 Now, dear brothers and sisters, let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet him.

Let's begin by simply saying that I'm not making this up. The Adventist church is not making this up. Jesus Himself said in John 14 that He will come again.

John 14:1-3 (NKJV)

1 Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

He is coming to reunite us with Him and take the righteous to heaven to be with him where He is. So according to Jesus, when the righteous die, they don't go to heaven right away. We know this is true because Jesus told Mary in John 20:17 that he had not yet ascended to the Father in Heaven. So if Jesus Himself didn't die and go to heaven, why would his followers? Peter makes the same point in Acts 2:34. So let's not be ignorant of what the Bible actually says about what happens to those who die.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NKJV)

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

Some folks including the translators of the NLT we usually use misunderstand this verse. Interpreting it as if Jesus is bringing the souls of people in heaven with him back to earth to be reunited with their bodies which is simply not the comparison. Look at verse 14 again. The comparison is about Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection. The point Paul is making is that if Jesus died and rose, we will too. When we die? No! When Jesus returns.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For 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.

When Jesus returns, it's gonna hearable and seeable. It's gonna be loud. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then 1 Thessalonians 4:17 says

17 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. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Dying and going to heaven and watching your loved ones struggle or suffer or miss you would not be heaven for them. No, Ecclesiastes 9:5 says the living know that they will die but the dead know nothing. But more significantly, we live in a world today that doesn't even care about the second coming or the resurrection of the dead. Why? Because most of it believes you die and go to heaven and if you believe that, who cares about the second coming of Christ or the resurrection of the dead? Do you see how this false teaching of the immortality of the soul has undermined two of the most important doctrinal pillars of Christianity?

But 1 Timothy 6:16 says only God is immortal and 1 Corinthians 15:52 says we don't "put on" immortality until "the last trump" when Jesus comes again. Respectfully, the Reformed Westminster Confession of Faith is theologically incorrect when it says, "After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls..." (<http://reformedanswers.org/answer.asp/file/40570>). That's not what Genesis 2:7 says. We know this is true because the first four uses of נֶפֶשׁ nephesh translated soul in Genesis 2:7 KJV is previously used to describe sea life in Genesis 1:20, great sea life in Genesis 1:21, land creatures in Genesis 1:24, and birds and land creatures in Genesis 1:30. The same word for soul in Genesis 2:7 is also used to describe the animals that were saved on Noah's ark in Genesis 9:8-11. So I hope and pray that Disney is right and that all dogs go to heaven, but you cannot use Genesis 2:7 to say so.

And if we do not emphasize the literal resurrection of the dead when Christ comes again, 1 Corinthians 15:17 says your faith is futile. There's a reason one in every twenty five NT verses refers to the coming of the Lord. It's important to Jesus! Who said in John 5:28-29

John 5:28-29

28 Don't be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son, 29 and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.

Surprise surprise there are actually two resurrections. Just like there are two judgements. One for the righteous. And one for the wicked. The Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20 takes place after Jesus returns and after 1,000 years of the saints reigning with Christ in heaven. But the one in Daniel 7 we studied this week in Sabbath school occurs while a little horn political religious power still exists on earth. So that judgment scene has to be before Jesus comes. But for now, notice that Jesus, like Daniel teaches that there are two resurrections as well.

Daniel 12:2

2 Many of those whose bodies lie dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace.

And the apostle Paul agreed. He said under oath in Acts 24:15

Acts 24:15 (NKJV)

15 I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."

When Christ comes, that's the first resurrection. And all the dead in Christ from Adam to present day will rise. But as 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 says

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

51 But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! 52 It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed.

So the dead in Christ will rise when Jesus comes again. They will be given immortality because nobody has it now. Then, we that are alive and remain when Jesus comes will be translated and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. But what happens to the wicked dead?

The wicked dead will stay dead. Will see that in a second when we read Revelation 20:5-6. But what happens to the wicked living when Christ comes again? Scripture reveals that wicked living will be slain by the brightness of Christ's coming. Leaving nobody left on earth for the devil to tempt during the Millenium for 1,000 years.

This is what Jesus' followers used to believe. Before the Scottish Presbyterian minister Edward Irving translated in 1827 the Catholic priest Manuel de Lacunza's commentary

on Revelation from Spanish into English. Lacunza's commentary was actually based on the Jesuit priest Francisco Ribera's commentary from 1585. But John Darby found Irving's English version of it and started preaching it so well that Cyrus Scofield included his notes about it into the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909. Which made it way to the United States. And ever since, Christians have been thoroughly confused about the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead.

But Martha wasn't confused in Jesus' day. Listen to what she tells Jesus in John 11:23-27.

John 11:23-27

23 "Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else [righteous] rises, at the last day."

But that's not all she understood. Listen to what else Martha believed.

25 Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. 26 Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?" 27 "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God."

Do you see how Jesus connects what you believe about the resurrection and his return with what you believe about Jesus being the Messiah? You can't pick and choose your theological conclusions. It's not like cable TV where you can unbundle whatever you want and just take the internet. Jesus is saying it all matters because it is all related. And newsflash: maybe Peter wasn't the first or at least the only one to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Apparently, Martha did too! She says in John 11:27, "27 "Yes, Lord, I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God."

And after Jesus comes again, after the first resurrection, Revelation 20:5-6 says 1,000 years later

5 The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years had ended. 6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection.

Do you want to be a part of the first resurrection? I do. If I die before Jesus comes again. But like Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, what I really want is to be alive and remain when Jesus comes again!

Maybe we will be that generation 1 Peter 1:10 says the prophets longed to see. And God willing Jesus chilling, we will be. If we don't deny Jesus. Or the hereafter that his angels confirmed. Let's conclude with Acts 1:9-11. After Jesus died and rose and spent 40 days teaching the disciples

Acts 1:9-11

9 After saying this, he [Jesus] was taken up into a cloud while they [the disciples] were watching, and they could no longer see him. 10 As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"

Even so, come Lord Jesus.