

He Is Coming Soon

"Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same 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).

There they stood, the followers of Jesus, staring into the sky. They deeply felt the loss of the one they dearly loved. Surely, their minds drifted back to the Master's last message before Calvary.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

The heavenly messengers reminded them that this same Jesus would return in the same way. Their words serve as a constant reminder to us. He is coming soon!

The reason we believe in the return of Christ is because Jesus promised it, and He never lies. The Word of God records His promise(s) and is forever settled in heaven (Psalms 119:89).

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19).

"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God" (2 Corinthians 1:20, *NIV*).





There are nearly 300 references to Christ's return in the New Testament. No one knows for sure when He will come (although many have falsely predicted His return, only to be embarrassed).

Warren W. Wiersbe in *Be Dynamic* advised, "Regardless of what views different people may take of God's prophetic program, Christians agree that Jesus is coming again and that He can come at any time. This in itself is a great motivation for faithful Christian service (Luke 12:34-36)."

"Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13).

The early church stayed alert as they expected Christ's promised return. Christians continue to watch and wait for His return. It is easier to wait if we have something to do. Have you ever waited to see the doctor? (Were you not thankful for the book you had to read?) What about waiting for the bus to arrive? (Wasn't it nice to have a friend to talk to during the long wait?)

There are four main things to do while waiting for the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

-  Watch (Matthew 24:42, 25:13; Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36).
-  Be ready (Matthew 24:44).
-  Serve (Matthew 25:31-46).
-  Be faithful in church attendance and abiding in the Word. (Hebrews 10:25).

"And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28, *NIV*).

While waiting, we must continue to serve our Master in the unfinished task of world evangelism. We should also encourage one another toward perfection and faithfulness. Herein lies two major functions of the body of Christ: evangelism and encouragement.

"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

Preacher, Preach the Word!

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:1-2).





"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5:2-4).

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord . . . Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:7-8).

Hope Is Coming

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:12-13).

Ralph Reynolds explained the Christians' hope.

-  Blessed hope (Titus 2:13).
-  Comforting hope (1 Thessalonians 4:18).
-  Lively hope (1 Peter 1:3).
-  Purifying hope (1 John 3:3).

Looking Forward

We look forward to the coming of the Lord, not death. He can come at any moment—in the twinkling of an eye. He will come back for those who are ready, not those who are getting ready. At that time, Jesus will receive His bride, the church.

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27).

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:1-4).

Caught Up with Jesus

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent

them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

"Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed . . . Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 58).

These passages refer to the "catching away" of the church ("the called out ones"). It is frequently called the "Rapture" (although the word is not in the Bible). This term is taken from a Latin word meaning, "to transport from one place to another." It is when Jesus will come in the air to catch away His prepared church. Imagine the reaction of a sin-sick world when millions of men, women, boys, and girls suddenly disappear.

There are three views of when the snatching away will take place.

Pre-tribulation	Before tribulation.
Mid-tribulation	Middle of tribulation.
Post-tribulation	End of the tribulation.

Ron Rhodes in *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* stated, "The different views of the rapture may disagree over the timing of end-time events, but they all agree on the *big picture*: there will be a rapture and we will live forever with Jesus in heaven."

C. S. Lewis admonished us to live each day as though it were our last, but plan as though the world might last a hundred years.

The important thing is not when He is coming, but that we are ready when He comes. To be ready, we must be:

- 📖 Baptized in Jesus' name (Acts 2:38).
- 📖 Filled with the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11, Colossians 1:27).
- 📖 Holy (Hebrews 12:14).
- 📖 Looking for His return (Hebrews 9:28).

The Promise Is Coming Again

The Old Testament prophets proclaimed, "The Promise is coming!" ("Jesus is coming.") The writers of the Gospels announced, "The Promise is here!" ("Jesus is here.") The writers of the remainder of the New Testament assure us, "The Promise is coming again." ("Jesus is coming again.")

Literal Return	Acts 1:11
Visible Return	Hebrews 9:28 Revelation 1:7
Forthcoming Return	Matthew 24:42
Personal Return	Acts 1:11
Glorious Return	Titus 2:13
Bodily Return	Matthew 24:29-30

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21).

"The period of restitution of all things" refers to the earthly reign of Jesus Christ. Following the great tribulation (Revelation 7:14, Matthew 24:21), the church will reign with Christ for one thousand years (Revelation 20:4). This period is called the "Millennium."

A family had lived for years farming on someone else's land and sharing the profits of the harvest. One day, the father announced, "I'm tired of working so hard and sharing the profits with the owner. We should start saving money to buy our own land."

The family saved money for years. One day the father announced, "We have enough money to buy our own land. Tomorrow morning I will travel to the big city and see the owner of a plot of land that is close to here."

His small son begged, "Daddy, I have never been to the big city before. Please let me go."

"No, Son. You will need to stay here with your mother. It is a long journey."

The child continued to beg until the father complied, "You can go on one condition. You must do everything I tell you."

The little boy quickly agreed. Father and son rose early the next morning and departed for the capital. They walked briskly down the muddy village road and joined a taxi. The traffic into the city was like nothing the boy had ever experienced. Finally, they reached their destination.

As they left the taxi, the father explained, "Son, I am going up into this tall building. I

want you to stay right here until I return. Do you understand?"

The boy nodded, and the father disappeared into the building. The boy stood obediently waiting for his Daddy. After what seemed like eternity, the boy felt a raindrop on his forehead, then another, and then a steady stream of rain. Everyone, except the faithful little boy, scurried for cover. Someone passed by and ordered, "Boy, get out of the rain. You will catch a cold."

The boy stood there like an unbendable soldier. A lady stopped in her large car and spoke to him, "Son, you need to come in out of the rain."

The boy explained, "I can't. My father went up into that big building, and he told me to wait right here until he returns."

The lady pleaded, "Come in out of the rain. Your daddy did not know it was going to rain when he asked you to wait here."

The boy persisted, "Daddy did not say it would not rain. He only said that he would come again. I will remain here until he comes!"

Jesus has gone into heaven to prepare a place for us. He never promised it would not rain (or we would not have problems), but He did say, "I will come again!"

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

The wait is not always easy and seems long, but we will stay right here and watch. When He comes, I will be ready. Will you?

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12).

Study Questions

1. What promise did Jesus give His followers before going to Calvary?

2. Why do we believe in the return of Christ?

3. How many New Testament references speak concerning the return of Christ?

4. There are many views concerning the end time, but what do all Christians agree upon?

5. What are four main things we should do while waiting for the return of Christ?

6. Who is our blessed hope?

7. According to 1 John 3:3, what will every man who has this hope do?

8. What is meant by the "Rapture"?

9. What are the prerequisites for those who will be caught away?

10. What did the Old Testament prophets proclaim concerning the Promise?

11. What do the Epistles and Revelation tell us about the Promise?

12. What are the three major views of when the snatching away of the church will take place?

13. What is meant by the "Millennium"?

