



“Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh,” Matthew 25:13.

Look! Jesus Is Coming

Lesson Aim: To stimulate renewed commitment to reaching sinners in view of His imminent return.

L312. Date: November 1974. **Text:** Acts 1:10-11; Luke 17:22-29.

Topic: Christ: Return of.

The goal toward which all human history is moving is the personal return of Jesus Christ to the earth. That is the surest event yet to transpire in human history. His first coming is a matter of recorded history. His second coming is a matter of recorded prophecy. It is as sure that He will come as it is sure that He came. Jesus is coming!

The Christian is not waiting for death; he is waiting for the return of Jesus. The Bible makes it quite clear that we shall not all sleep” (die), but living saints will be upon earth when Jesus comes (1 Corinthians 15:51; I Thessalonians 4: 15). Would it not be wonderful, if Jesus should come during the present generation, while we are yet alive?

All Bible-believing Christians agree that Jesus will return. There are differences of opinion, however, concerning the details of events surrounding His return. (1) The “premillennial” position is that the world will grow worse until Jesus returns to cancel the power of Satan and set up a kingdom of righteousness upon earth which will endure for a thousand years. (2) The “postmillennial” position is that things will grow better, through the influence of the gospel, until there are a thousand years of peace and happiness upon earth at the end of which Jesus will return. (3) The “amillennial” position is that things will grow worse until Jesus returns to bring it to an end, but that there will be no millennial reign by Christ upon earth either before or after His coming. The official position of the Baptist Missionary Association of America is premillennial. (Editor’s Note: In the

Doctrinal Statement of the Baptist Missionary Association of America, adopted at a later date, the millennial position held by brethren or churches is expressly declared to not be a test of fellowship in the association).

Today's study aims "to stimulate renewed commitment to reaching sinners in view of His imminent return."

I. JESUS IS COMING!

Even a casual reading of the Bible reveals that Jesus will return to earth. The only person who would deny the fact would be one who rejects the Bible.

Jesus Himself promised His return. **"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself . . ."** John 14:3. **"Behold, I come . . . behold, I come . . . Surely I come,"** Revelation 22:7, 12, 20. Take Jesus' word for it. He is coming again!

Angelic messengers promised it. **". . . 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.

Inspired apostles wrote of His return. Paul wrote, **"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven . . ."** I Thessalonians 4:16. John added, **"Behold, he cometh with clouds . . ."** Revelation 1:7. Peter wrote of some skeptics who asked, **"Where is the promise of his coming?"** He discussed the subject and concluded, **"Nevertheless we, according to his promise . . . look for such things . . ."** II Peter 3:1-14. Jude added, **"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints . . ."** Jude 14.

One of the most certain facts of divine revelation is that Jesus Christ will return to the earth in great glory!

II. JESUS IS COMING SOON!

The exact time of His return to earth is unknown. We do not know the date, nor can we determine it by study (Matthew 25:13). Do not err in trying to set dates. Do not be misled by anyone, however impressive his arguments, who has worked out a time schedule. No man knows; no angel knows. Only the Father knows the timetable (Mark 13:32).

The coming of Jesus is at hand. It may happen without warning. Since we know not what hour the Lord comes, we should be ready every hour (Matthew 24:42-44). He could come this very hour! Jesus stands at the door as if ready to enter this instant (James 5:9). Are you ready should He come

today?

Jesus will come unexpectedly for most people. His coming will be as unexpected as the entrance of a thief into a house when the owner is unaware. Farmers will be planting crops in expectation of future harvest. Businessmen will be investing their money in expectation of future profit. Lovers will be pledging marriage vows in expectation of a future home. At that very moment, Jesus will return!

Jesus' soon and unannounced return challenges us to be prepared. **“Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is,”** Mark 13:33. Live each day as if it were the day when Jesus would return. That way, **“... when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him ...”** I John 2:28.

III. JESUS IS COMING PERSONALLY!

At this point the Bible is quite emphatic. Upon His ascension, the angels announced, **“... 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. The Apostle Paul declared, **“... The Lord himself shall descend from heaven ...”** I Thessalonians 4:16. He, Himself, will come. Be ready to meet Him.

Jesus will come in visible form. The disciples looked with their natural eyes and saw Him ascend into heaven. If He returns “in like manner as ye have seen Him go,” He must return in a form visible to the natural eye. So will it be. **“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him ...”** Revelation 1:7. As a flash of lightning is seen from one part of the sky to the other, so will Jesus appear visibly (Luke 17:24).

Jesus will return with the body in which He departed. His return will not be “a spiritual manifestation” as some claim. **“They shall look upon me whom they have pierced,”** He predicted through His prophet. They will see the marks of crucifixion in His body and ask, **“What are these wounds in thine hands?”** Zechariah 12:10; 13:6. The body of humiliation in which He was crucified will be the body of glory in which He will return.

Jesus will return with great glory “in the glory of his Father with his angels,” Matthew 16:27. His sign will appear in heaven, when He comes, and it will be “with power and great glory,” Matthew 24:30. His first coming was in humility; His second coming will be in glory. What a day of glory that will be for the Lord and for His believing children!

IV. JESUS IS COMING TO EARTH!

The day of Pentecost was not the second coming of the Lord Jesus. The death of a Christian is not the second coming of Jesus for him. The Bible declares that Jesus will return to earth and reign for a thousand years.

There will be two phases to His coming. (1) He will come in the air; saints will be resurrected, changed, and caught up to meet Him there. That is the “rapture.” (2) Seven years, later He will descend to earth with the saints to reign for a thousand years over all creation in peace. That is the “revelation.”

The rapture—Three sounds will mark His return: the victor's shout, the voice of the archangel, and the sound of the trumpet of God. Such audible demonstrations will accompany His calling believers to meet Him in the air.

The first event will be the resurrection of believers who have died: “. . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first,” I Thessalonians 4:16. No person will go before and leave the dead believers behind. They will rise first.

The second event will be the translation of living believers. “Then (that is, after the dead saints are raised) we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds,” I Thessalonians 4:17. Living saints will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.

“. . . We shall all be changed,” 1 Corinthians 15:51. Our “fitted-for-earth” bodies shall be transformed into “fitted-for-heaven” bodies. Corruption will change to incorruption; dishonor shall change to glory; weakness will change to power; natural bodies shall change to spiritual bodies (I Corinthians 15:42,44). **“And as we have born the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly,”** I Corinthians 15:49.

How long will it take for all that change to occur? **“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye . . . for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed,”** I Corinthians 15:52. How can such a change come so quickly? The Bible answers, “. . . according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself,” Philippians 3:21. For seven years, believers will be in the air with the Lord Jesus. They will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to be judged in view of rewards (II Corinthians 5:9, 10). They will participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-10). During that same period, the earth will experience a time of great distress called The Great Tribulation. At the end of seven years, Jesus will come to earth.

The revelation—Jesus will come to earth with all His saints

(Revelation 19). All the people of the earth will see Him and will wail because of Him (Revelation 1). He will overthrow all enemies of righteousness, subdue the power of sin, and bind the devil that he may be cast into a bottomless pit (Revelation 19:11-16). Then for one thousand years, Jesus will reign upon the earth in peace and righteousness with His saints (Revelation 20:1-6).

The return of Jesus will be completed with the rapture and the revelation. Following the thousand-year reign, there will be a last rebellion of evil, judgment of the unsaved, and eternal destiny. Time will be no more. Jesus will have accomplished the full victory gained at His cross and in His resurrection. Be sure you are ready for His return today.

I am ready for the coming of the Lord Jesus. My heart rejoices in the prospect. I could well wish that He would come today.

Is such an attitude selfish? What about those who are not saved? What about the people with whom the Holy Spirit is now dealing? What about those who have never heard the gospel? I shall leave the time of His return to the Lord and be busy until then, helping to bring others to trust Him.

How can we prepare for His coming? (1) We can be sure we are truly saved. (2) We can be busy witnessing that others may know Him, too. (3) We can stand faithfully by the Word of God as apostasy increases. (4) We can share the hope of His return to the consolation of many others. (5) We can be watchful and anticipate with joy His soon return.

Until the time of the rapture, may He keep us, **“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,”** Titus 2:13.

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus,” Revelation 22:20.

Questions

1. What is the second coming of Jesus?
2. Do you hold the premillennial, post-millennial, or amillennial position? Why?
3. What does John 14:3 mean?
4. What does Acts 1:11 say of His return?
5. What did the apostles teach about Jesus' return?
6. Why do you believe Jesus will return soon?
7. Why do you believe He will return personally?