

JESUS SAID... "I WILL COME AGAIN"

John 14:1-3

14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

The events we see occurring on the horizon of time are sure indications to Bible believers that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Pre-eminently above every thought, desire, and plan of the saint is the purpose and determination to be ready for this great event.

Heaven's greatest investment has been made in the church, and according to the Scripture, our Lord will return again to receive His people unto Himself. In Hebrews 9:22-28 we have a beautiful description of His appearing to put away sin. There we read of His appearing for us in heaven as our Intercessor, high priest, Mediator, and Advocate:

"And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

It is this appearing that we now anticipate at any moment.

The Promise of His Coming

In a dark, troubled moment in the lives of Jesus and His apostles, just as Judas had walked out on the Lord, the beautiful soul-soothing words of promise began to fall from the lips of the Master Teacher.

"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 world does not know the scriptural terminology used to express the coming of the Lord, so they use such statements as "Something has got to happen,"

or “There has to be some kind of change take place soon.” As they cringe in fear of some impending holocaust, war, or famine, we lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth nigh, and our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

Although we are over 2000 years removed from the time of Jesus’ ascension, the formation of the church, and the angelic announcement that He would return, we still earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. We affirm upon the authority of the Scriptures that Jesus Christ is coming again. May nothing ever dull the power and excitement of that promise, and may our hearts and hands reach out to a sea of human souls who are not spiritually ready to meet God in the judgment.

The Purpose of His Coming

There are many events to take place prior to and at the second return of Jesus Christ, each of which relate to His purpose. While there are several interrelated purposes and aspects of His return, the primary and foremost purpose will be to take the church out of this world to be with Him forever.

John 14:1-3 declares to us the *promise* of His return and also the *purpose*: “I will come again . . . that where I am, there ye may be also.” Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a place for us. It is His desire and pleasure for His people to be with Him. Not only do we find comfort in the promise, but also in the purpose of His coming. It is good to know that the Lord wants us in a better world, a clean, sin-free environment, where death, sorrow, pain, and crying are forever absent. When He comes again, there will never be another physical separation from His church as there was from His apostles when He ascended on high.

The primary purpose of His coming is to take the church out of the world to the place He has prepared for them. The other purposes are connected to, and interrelated to, this primary one.

The Purpose of His Coming

- It is the time of the presentation of the pure, undefiled, chaste, espoused virgin to Christ
(II Corinthians 11:2).
- It is the calling to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb those who have made themselves ready
(Revelation 19:6-9).

- It is the presenting to Himself a glorious, holy, church that has been sanctified and cleansed by the Word, not having spot, wrinkle, blemish, or any such thing (Ephesians 5:25-27).
- It is for the changing of our vile body and the fashioning of it like unto His glorious body (Philippians 3:20-21; I John 3:1-3).
- It is the crowning of those deserving glory and honor, each in their respective places and positions (I Peter 5:4; II Timothy 4:8; I Corinthians 9:25; James 1:12).
- It is for the testing and judging of every man's work to see how and what he has built upon the foundation (I Corinthians 3:9-15; Revelation 22:12).

The Bible is very explicit in describing how He will come. We know from Acts 1:9-11 and I Thessalonians 4:13-18 that

How Will He Come - Acts 1:9-11 & I Thessalonians 4:13-18

- He will come in clouds and that the saints will meet Him in the air.
- This appearing will be unannounced except for the sounding of the trumpet, which will be heard by those who are ready.
- His coming will be sudden and very quick.
- We are, therefore, commanded to watch and be ready (I Corinthians 15:51-52; Mark 13:32-37; Revelation 22:12-21).

Mark 13:35-37

35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

The Signs of His Coming

There are so many certain, positive, and undeniable signs and indications that Jesus Christ is coming again that there is no reason to be speculative or to present distorted views about this truth. The Bible has clearly outlined for us positive indicators of this glorious event. With a worldwide interest in prophecy and the rapid fulfillment of God's Word, there have also been many unfounded rumors, misquotations, dates set, scare tactics, and even untruths concerning the signs of His coming. As true Bible believers, we do not have to resort to such wresting of Scripture in order to get people's attention and prepare them for His return. The revealed things belong to us and need to be declared. At our very best, however, we still see through a glass darkly and only know in part. But when He permits us to see clearly as face to face, we shall know even as we are known (I Corinthians 13:12; I John 3:2).

One of the most evident signs of Christ's return has to do with the nation of Israel. Israel is likened to three different kinds of plants in the Scripture:

- Vine—Psalm 80:8-19; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 2:21.
- Fig tree—Jeremiah 24:1-10; Matthew 24:32-33.
- Olive tree—Jeremiah 11:16-17; Romans 11:1-36.

In God's Word we see the planting (founding) of this people and their gradual decline and degeneracy until the time they are dispersed nationally by Nebuchadnezzar in approximately 606 B.C. Although they were regathered to the land and restored to some extent as a nation, they were cut off spiritually and blindness in part came on them because of their rejection of Jesus Christ and the gospel (Romans 11:1-36). Again they were scattered among the nations.

In spite of their decline, fall, and rejection of Christ, God has promised restoration, life, and glory to this downtrodden people (Ezekiel 37; 38). In our time we have seen the budding forth and the beginning of this scriptural restoration, from May 14, 1948, even until this present time. The events surrounding Israel alone are enough to clearly warn us that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh! This is one reason that at this very moment world attention is focused upon one of the earth's smallest nations, Israel.

Jesus referred to history to teach us of His return. The Lord used at least two historical

accounts and warned us that when we see the development of these identical events in our time we would know that His coming is near. In **Matthew 24:37** Jesus declared,

Matt 24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Luke 17:28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot..

Luke 17:30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

This is one of the historical events. The other had to do with Lot and his family. As Jesus looked back, He rehearsed these events and made them prophetic of His second return.

It is left to us to examine the times of Noah and Lot and compare them to our day. The outline below indicates the characteristics of the two periods.

NOAH'S DAY

(Genesis 6:5; Matthew 24:36-39)

- The wickedness of man was great.
- The imagination of the thoughts of his heart was evil continually.
 - Eating
 - Drinking
 - Marrying
- Giving in marriage

LOT'S DAY

(Luke 17:28-37; Ezekiel 16:49-50)

- Ate
- Drank
- Bought
- Sold
- Planted
- Buildded
- Pride
- Fulness of bread
- Abundance of idleness
- Not strengthening the hand of poor and needy

- Haughty
- Committed abominations

The record of the overthrow of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah is found in Genesis 19:23-29; Deuteronomy 29:23; II Peter 2:6-8. The signs are vivid and clear, and they indicate that we are approaching the coming of our Lord.

A third sign has to do with the church, the household of faith. In Matthew 24:43-51, we are given an insight into the prevailing spiritual climate that will exist among God's own people at the time of His return. Two types of servants are given as well as two different attitudes toward the promise of the Lord's return.

Matt 24:43-51

43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

49 And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

There is the faithful and wise servant who is "so doing" right up until the Lord calls him. This man is looking for his Lord and loves His appearing. He stands watching, praying, living holy, and diligent in everything. It is this type of person who meets the Lord in the air when the trumpet sounds.

The second man is an evil servant who comes to believe in his heart that the Lord has delayed His coming. Being thus convinced, he mistreated his

fellow servants, he sated his appetite with much food, and he drank with the drunken. Our terminology for this spiritual condition is “backsliding.”

Walking together through the world, and perhaps often going to church together these two very different kinds of servants represent two prevailing attitudes and lifestyles at the time of Christ’s return.

Since these characteristics can be seen today, they serve as another sign of the soon return of our Lord. Some will be ready: some will not. Which kind of servant are we?

A fourth area that points to the time of Jesus’ return is that of society. A comparison of the Word of God with our world’s social climate shouts to us from every corner of the earth that “Jesus is coming soon!” Many passages of Scripture describe perfectly the social climate that exists right now. Undoubtedly, the ungodly characteristics listed in I Timothy 4, II Timothy 3:1-5, and II Peter 3:3-4 have existed in every generation since Adam, but their prevalence today must be seen as an affirmative sign for us.

2 Tim 3:1-7

3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

There are seducing spirits, doctrines of devils, hypocrisy, men loving themselves, boasters, blasphemers, people who are disobedient to parents, multitudes who are unthankful

and who are unholy; we have the “despisers of those that are good” along with traitors and lovers of pleasures. There exists a form of godliness that denies God’s power; and scoffers are easily found in our society.

Guarding Our Lives

Our attitude toward the things of life must be proper, for we could become preoccupied with things and circumstances and miss the rapture of the church. The coming of the Lord will be as a snare upon the whole world because of men's lack of preparation for this event. Since we are living in a world that has little thought for judgment or the coming again of Christ, we are warned of the Lord to take heed to ourselves that the worldly spirit does not captivate us (Luke 21:34-36).

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

The Lord warned that we must guard our hearts against becoming “overcharged with surfeiting.” - This phrase means excessive, overdoing, overindulgence. A prevailing condition of our time, this desire for the extreme and unnatural captures the attention of men. This is a heart condition, a serious malady and spiritual disease that will cause a person to miss the Lord's coming.

Another warning is that of drunkenness. This is also a condition of the heart and may have little or nothing to do with intoxication by means of alcoholic beverages. It seems to refer to a dulling of the spiritual senses through means of success and over-involvement in material affairs. Many are so caught up in what appears to be good and legitimate activities that they lose their sense of direction. People in this condition become insensitive to scriptural and pastoral instructions and find themselves so involved that there is no time for church functions, church services, worship, prayer meetings, fasting, and Bible study.

We must be careful that the cares of this life do not detract our attention away from the coming of Christ. Our involvement in providing for the needs in this life can become so intense that we are pulled away from God. Cares of this life can destroy our readiness for His coming. They can become a snare. Jesus said that it was the “care of this world” (Matthew 13:22) that becomes a thorn to choke the life of the Word from us.

Watching and Waiting

The first appearing of Christ caught the world and its religious leaders unexpecting and unprepared. So will the second appearing be for many. The evil servant in Matthew 24:48 had a false sense of plenty of time to get ready. He based his judgment and decision on the premise that the Lord had delayed His coming. The last days will also produce scoffers asking,

“Where is the promise of his coming?” (II Peter 3:3-4).

The intensity of our servitude to God and our attendance to the house of God should be increased so much the more as we see that day approaching (Hebrews 10:25). Jesus Christ’s ascension is compared to a man taking a far journey, leaving his house and giving to his servants authority, every man a job, and a parting command to watch (Matthew 25:14-30).

The day and hour of his return is not revealed, but a promise is made that he will come again.

Watchfulness and prayer are key words for the saint’s life. There are secret things that belong to God (Deuteronomy 29:29), and one of these is the time of the return of Jesus Christ. It is unscriptural for anyone to set a date when the Lord is to return, for God has retained this knowledge to Himself (Acts 1:7; Mark 13:32). We are not to predict a day but to watch every day.

After Paul wrote the beautiful and enlightening chapter of I Corinthians 15 on the resurrection, he admonished the believers to be:

- *Steadfast*—denotes being seated, firmly fixed.
- *Unmoveable*—firm, stable.
- *Abounding* (in the work of the Lord)—be in excess, be superfluous, excel, have abundance.

The motive to do these things is that we know that our “labour is not in vain in the Lord” (I Corinthians 15:58).

Knowing what the future holds is not nearly as important as being prepared for whatever the future holds. Once we are prepared, then we are to watch and wait for the time of the return of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

There is a span of time referred to in the Scriptures as the “last days.” These days do not necessarily refer to the closing out or cessation of time prior to eternity. Rather, they refer to a season encompassing a period of moral and spiritual declension where evil abounds so strongly that the love of many will wax cold. In the process of these last days, the Lord will suddenly descend and call the dead and living saints forth to meet Him. The fulfillment of scriptural signs indicates that we are near the coming of the Lord for the church.

John 3:5

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Acts 2:37-40

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.