

The Coming King

This study takes a look at the return of Jesus.

Acts 1:6-11 (NIV)

So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority."⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

What was the point of the angel's rebuke?

The disciples were looking intently into the sky as if expecting to see Jesus reappear. The angels appeared to inform them to stop expecting his immediate return and to go about the mission Jesus just instructed them to fulfill – to tell the whole world about him.

In what way did the angel imply Jesus will return?

The angel implied Jesus would return in the same way they saw him go – visibly, through the clouds. This was simply affirming what Jesus had already told them.

Matthew 24:30-31 (NIV)

At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Why do you think it is taking so long for Jesus to return?

2 Peter 3:8-9 (NIV)

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

What was Peter's rationale for Jesus taking so long to return?

God is holding off returning in order that more people can turn to him.

If God were to return right now, how many people would we regret not having taken the time to talk to about him? God is giving us that time right now.

Matthew 24:14 (NIV)

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Summarize what Jesus is saying must happen before he can return? Why?

How many nations (people groups) have yet to hear the gospel preached to them?

Ministry organizations differ in how they define an unreached people group and determining the number of groups under any definition is extremely difficult. Generally speaking, an unreached people group is an ethnic group of people where extremely little or no representation of Jesus Christ exists in that community.

One estimate: over 6500 <http://www.joshuaproject.net/>

Have you ever heard someone predict when Christ is going to return?

What is your opinion about how close we might be to Jesus' return?

Mark 13:32-33 (NIV)

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.

In the following passage, underline and then share some of the signs that will be evident right before Christ returns.

Matthew 24:3-51 (NIV)

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

⁴ Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹ "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

¹⁵ "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand-- ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. ¹⁸ Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. ¹⁹ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ²⁰ Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again. ²² If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. ²³ At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. ²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. ²⁵ See, I have told you ahead of time.

²⁶ "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. ²⁷ For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

²⁹ "Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'

³⁰ "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

³² "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ³³ Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. ³⁴ I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

³⁶ "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

⁴² "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

⁴⁵ "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' ⁴⁹ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. ⁵¹ He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

What are some of your reactions to the above passage?

What are some of the "birth pains" that you see already increasing?

What are some of the signs we are still waiting to see unveiled?

- The abomination that causes desolation. (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11)
The abomination will be some form of blasphemy against God established in the temple in Jerusalem.
- Great Distress unequalled in all time.
- The sun and moon darkened

Revelation 19:11-16 (NIV)

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

What reactions does this description of Jesus evoke in you?

How does the picture of Jesus in these verses contrast with how you perceived him in the gospels?

In what ways might this passage complete the picture you have of Jesus?

What role will believers play after Christ returns?

2 Timothy 2:11-13 (NIV)

Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him.

Revelation 5:9-10 (NIV)

And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Revelation 22:4-5 (NIV)

They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

How should we live in light of the fact that Jesus will be returning and we will reign with him?

2 Peter 3:11-13 (NIV)

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

What do you think reigning with Christ will be like on the New Earth?

Isaiah 11:6-9 (NIV)

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

We will be able to do everything Jesus did while on earth, and more. The result of the “image of God” being spread through the whole earth is that the whole earth will live in peace and harmony as we represent Jesus’ rule. We will be able to rule all nature including animals, plants, mountains, etc. They will submit to our commands, just as they did with Jesus.

After describing the return of Christ, Paul writes these words:

1 Thessalonians 4:18 (NIV)

Therefore encourage each other with these words.

How can we use these words of Christ’s return to encourage one another?

How might being reminded of Christ’s return affect how we live now?

The angels rebuked the disciples who were gazing into the sky to remind them to get back to the task Jesus had called them to fulfill. Sometimes we need the same reminder. We often get so sidetracked by our jobs, family, interests and life’s busy schedule that we miss the only real reason God has left us here. We are here to continue the mission to proclaim Jesus to every nation under heaven until all people groups have had the chance to respond. We need to be constantly reminded not to get distracted by lesser things.

What might you need to adjust in your life to align yourself with the truth that Christ is going to return?