

3

The Coming of the King



“Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, ‘Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe’” (Revelation 14:14, 15).



An Amazing Fact: While all of Europe was expecting an Allied landing in Nazi-occupied France sometime in 1944, the Germans were utterly deceived about when, where, and how the invasion would actually happen. The British had created a fake battalion of inflatable tanks, phony artillery pieces, plywood aircraft, and dummy boats in Northern England to convince the Nazis that the invasion would occur near Dover. Thus, the Germans were completely surprised—and ultimately defeated—when the Allies stormed Normandy in what would be the largest and most successful military deception in history.

Did you know that one of the first things Jesus emphasized regarding His second coming was that people should be on guard against deception? “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many” (Matthew 24:4, 5). Most Christians agree that Christ will return someday, but most have also been tricked about *how* He will return. Are they being led to unwittingly embrace a false Christ?

Scholars estimate that there are more than 1,800 references in the Bible about Christ’s return, including the incredible prophetic picture portrayed in Revelation 14—meaning that there is more than enough information to determine the truth about the Second Coming. It is vital for us to understand the certainty and the circumstances connected with

Jesus' return so that we are not duped by the devil, who will someday soon impersonate the return of Jesus to deceive the whole world.

Surrounded by what often seems like a world of endless pain, strife, and injustice, you may be tempted to doubt that Jesus' return will ever happen (2 Peter 3:3, 4). But would Jesus, who willingly died to save you, ever forget or change His mind about rescuing those who believe in Him? Jesus will come back to rescue His people!

Indeed, the Second Coming will be the climactic event of all human history. And you are about to find out why and how it will happen ...





When you see a blank, look up the passage in your Bible and write in the missing word.

1. Who is sitting on the white cloud in Revelation 14:14?

Revelation 14:14. *I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the _____ of _____, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.*

Acts 1:11. *Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same _____, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.*

ANSWER: Jesus is the One sitting on the white cloud, returning from heaven to the earth. It will be like the way He departed from the earth after His resurrection (Acts 1:9).

2. Will Jesus come quietly when He returns?

1 Thessalonians 4:16. *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a _____, with the voice of an archangel, and with the _____ of God.*

Jeremiah 25:30. *The LORD will _____ from on high, and utter His voice from his Holy habitation; ... He will give a shout, as those who tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.*

Psalms 50:3. *Our God shall come, and shall _____ keep _____; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very _____ all around Him.*

ANSWER: The Second Coming will be tremendously loud—nothing will be quiet about it! Many assume that the description “a thief in the night” in 2 Peter 3:10 characterizes Jesus’ return as quiet. But the context is

clear: “The heavens will pass away with a great noise.” The Second Coming will be like a thief only because it will sneak up on those who are not watchful (Matthew 24:42, 43).

3. What other physical events will accompany Jesus’ return?

Revelation 16:18. *There were noises and _____ and lightnings; and there was a great _____, such ... as had not occurred since men were on the earth.*

ANSWER: Some believe that the Second Coming is merely symbolic or will take place only in people’s hearts. But the truth is that the entire natural world will be announcing it!

4. Who will see Jesus when He returns?

Matthew 24:30. *The sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then _____ the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

Revelation 1:7. *Behold, He is coming with clouds, and _____ eye will see Him.*

ANSWER: Every living person, wicked and righteous, will see Jesus’ return. A “secret” gathering of God’s people—like the one depicted in the *Left Behind* series—is not biblical. (See “The Truth About the Rapture” at the end of this lesson.)



5. Who will be with Jesus when He returns in the clouds?

Matthew 25:31. *When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy _____ with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.*

ANSWER: All the good angels of heaven will be with Jesus. The brightness of one angel caused the Romans guarding Jesus' tomb to fall to the ground (Matthew 28:2-4). Now imagine the brightness of *all* of heaven's angels during the Second Coming—it will be too bright for anyone to miss!

Jesus' return will be like lightning flashing from one horizon to the other (Matthew 24:27). Nothing secret about that!

6. What will happen to the righteous at Christ's return?

1 Thessalonians 4:16. *The dead in Christ will _____ first.*

1 Thessalonians 4:17. *Then we who are alive and remain shall be _____ together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*



1 Corinthians 15:52, 53. *The dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be _____. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

Matthew 24:31. *He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will _____ His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

ANSWER: First, all those who have died saved by Jesus will be resurrected. Then those Christians still living will rise to meet them in the air. Immortal, perfect bodies will be given to all the righteous. Our sin-sick bodies will be changed into incorruptible bodies, like that of Jesus (Philippians 3:20, 21). Isn't that wonderful?

All the righteous will then ascend to be with Jesus and travel to their heavenly home (John 14:2, 3; Hebrews 11:16). Your guardian angel (Matthew 18:10) will probably be the first to greet you. What a blessed thought! No wonder the Bible calls the Second Coming the "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13).

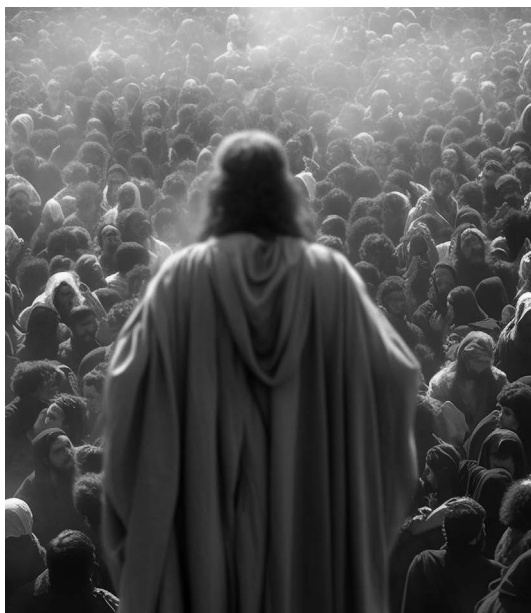
7. What solemn warning did Jesus give about His second coming?

Matthew 24:5. *Many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will _____ many.*

Matthew 24:24–26. *For _____ christs and _____ prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to _____. ... Therefore if they say to you, "Look, He is in the desert!" do not go out; or "Look, He is in the inner rooms!" do not believe it.*

ANSWER: Christ directly warned about deceptions regarding His return, and ever since, many have indeed claimed to be Christ or a reincarnated Jesus. God's people must resist the temptation to go see miracle workers claiming to be Jesus.

But the Bible spotlights one end-time false christ, Satan, "who opposes and exalts himself ... so that he sits as God in the temple of God,



showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4). Just before the Second Coming, Satan, disguised as Jesus, and His demons will pour out mass deception upon “the whole world” (Revelation 12:9), and many will be deceived. You don’t have to be one of them.

8. How can we be sure we will not be deceived?

Isaiah 8:20. *To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this _____, it is because there is no light in them.*

Matthew 24:25. *See, I have told you _____.*

ANSWER: God’s people will not be deceived because they will know from the study of God’s Word how Jesus will come (Acts 17:11). Jesus forewarned us that anything related to His return that disagrees with Scripture is a counterfeit and must be rejected.

9. What can we know about when Jesus will return?

Matthew 24:33. *When you see all these things, know that it is _____—at the doors!*

Matthew 24:36. *Of that day and hour no one _____, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*



ANSWER: Setting dates for Jesus’ return is out of harmony with the Bible; only God knows the exact time. However, God has revealed signs that indicate that Christ’s coming is near. Here are just a few:

- War and Conflict (Matthew 24:6, 7): A quarter of the human population resided in areas involved in conflict in 2022.
- Natural Disasters (Luke 21:11, 25): In 2022, the natural disasters in the United States alone displaced more than three million adults.
- Moral Degeneracy (Matthew 24:12; 2 Timothy 3:1–5): Many need look no further than their own communities to see the fulfillment of this sign.



- Christian Persecution (Matthew 24:9): Although the largest religion in the world, Christianity is also the most persecuted religion in the world.
- Rise of Unbelievers (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 3:3, 4; Jude 18): In America, the percentage of practicing Christians has nosedived to just 63 percent, while unbelievers rose to 29 percent. In 2022, 49 percent of Gen Z identified as unbelievers.
- Worldwide Gospel (Matthew 24:14): Christ will return once the final proclamation of His good news is preached “to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6).

It is evident that Christ’s return is near! For more comprehensive lists of last-day signs, see Daniel 12:4; Matthew 24:4–31, 36–39; and 2 Timothy 3:1–9.

10. Will there be an opportunity to repent at the Second Coming?

Revelation 22:11, 12. “He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; ... he who is righteous, let him be righteous still.” ... “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My _____ is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”

ANSWER: No. Christ’s coming signifies “the end of the age” (Matthew 24:3). Jesus will have His rewards with Him already! While people are saved only by the grace of Jesus, the Bible indicates that the saved will receive rewards based on their conduct in their earthly lives (5:12; 16:27).

Time and again, the Bible demonstrates that God does not withhold salvation from any who seek it. He constantly “gave ... time to repent,” only people “did not repent” (Revelation 2:21). They chose not to be saved. Make your decision today!

11. What will happen to the wicked when Christ returns?

2 Thessalonians 2:8. The lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will _____ with the breath of His mouth and _____ with the brightness of His coming.

Revelation 19:21. And the rest were _____ with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse.



ANSWER: The wicked who are alive at Christ’s coming will be slain—with His “sword,” a symbol for God’s Word (Hebrews 4:12). “With the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked” (Isaiah 11:4). The wicked who had already died will remain dead until the second resurrection.

While the saved are gathered in the sky to meet Jesus, the wicked—petrified with fear—would prefer for the mountains to fall on them rather than to see Jesus (Revelation 6:15–17).

12. What is the primary purpose of the Second Coming?

John 14:3. *If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and _____ you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

ANSWER: Jesus is returning to Earth to fulfill the long-awaited promise of ultimate salvation for His children. Since His ascension to heaven, Christ has been making a home ready for you (John 14:2).

13. Since we are living just before the Second Coming, how should we relate to this glorious event?

Matthew 24:44. *Therefore you also be _____, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

ANSWER: The Bible calls for each person to make their decision for or against Christ today, while they still have time to hear the voice of His Holy Spirit. He’s calling for you—don’t delay!

14. Jesus is coming in the clouds very soon. Will you plan now to be ready to meet Him?

Answer: _____





Lesson 3 Supplemental Material

The Truth About the Rapture

Is the widely embraced theory of a secret rapture—like the one depicted in the *Left Behind* series—true, or is it one of the many deceptions about the Second Coming? Let's test it against what the Bible says (Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21). The secret rapture theory is based on the following points:

1. The rapture is silent.
2. The rapture is invisible.
3. The rapture leaves the wicked alive for a second chance at salvation.
4. God removes the righteous to protect them from the tribulation.
5. The Second Coming will occur in two stages seven years apart: a secret rapture and an actual glorious coming.
6. Within this seven-year interim, the Antichrist will be revealed, bringing about the tribulation.

The first three points are disproved by questions 2, 3, 4, and 10 of this study. Here is a brief examination of how the rest of these points measure up against God's Word:

4. God does not remove the righteous from tribulation. The secret rapture theory presumes a time of extreme tribulation not based on any clear verses in Scripture. The Bible tells of multiple periods of tribulation,

or trouble, but never are the righteous raptured away from these. They are only “removed” on “the last day” of the world when they ascend to heaven with Christ (John 6:40; see also 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17). If anything, the Bible records that the righteous are protected *through* tribulation by the Almighty (Exodus 11:4–7; 12:12, 13; Psalm 91:5–12; Daniel 3:20–28).

5. The Second Coming occurs in a single, complete stage. Jesus comes back to Earth; the righteous dead are resurrected and ascend to where Christ is waiting in the sky (1 Thessalonians 4:16); then the righteous living join them; and they all ascend to heaven together (v. 17). That’s it. The righteous are raptured—and not secretly—at the Second Coming.

The secret rapture theory contends that the seven years introduced in Daniel 9, described as a prophetic “one week” (v. 27), proves an interim between two stages. Yet a simple study reveals that these seven years reference Christ’s *first* coming—when He, the “Messiah,” was “cut off” on the cross, “not for Himself” but for our sins (v. 26).

6. Since there is no seven-year interim, neither the Antichrist nor the tribulation can come during it. The Antichrist has actually been active for centuries and is doing his nefarious work *now*—not in some distant future (1 John 4:3). And there will be a last, great tribulation (Daniel 12:1) *during* the end times (11:40), not *after* Christ’s coming at the end of the world.



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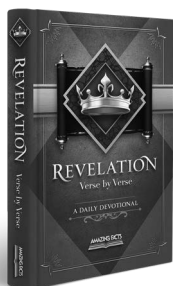
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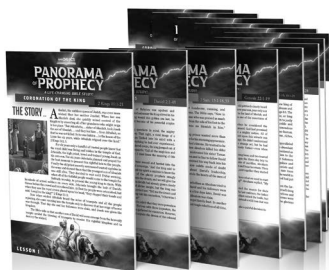


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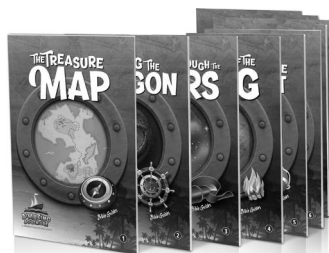
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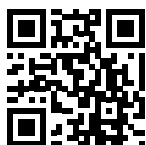
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Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Revelation 14:6–12

