

## Matthew 17:1-13 “Jesus IS Coming Back”

7.9.17

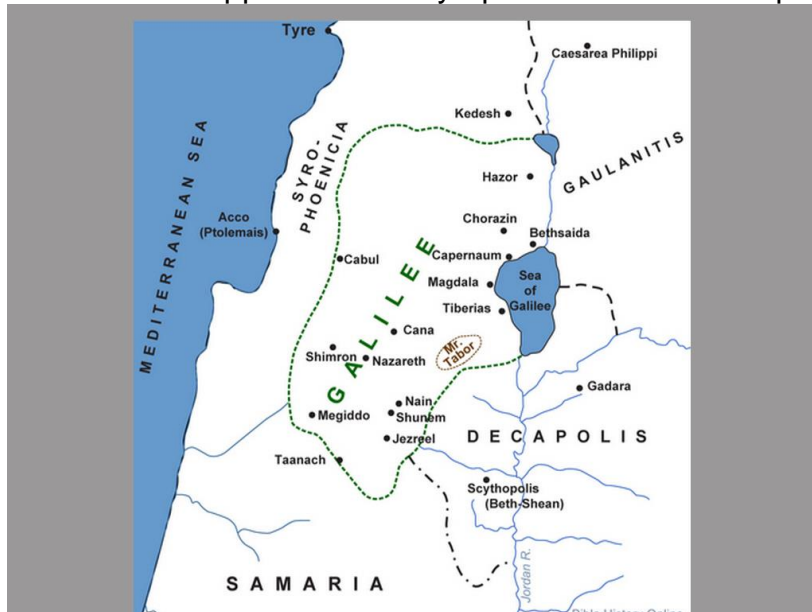
As you are making your way there, I want to ask you a question, “How many of you believe Jesus is coming back to this earth?” Perhaps the question might have caught you off guard, so I’ll ask it again, “How many of you believe Jesus is coming back to this earth?” Oh...He is coming back dear Church family. As sure as today is July 9<sup>th</sup> 2017, He’s coming back! We keep time by His birth and based upon the historicity of His first coming, we can be certain of His Second Coming!

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You see, in the New Testament, 1 out of every 25 verses, speaks directly to or alludes to the fact of the second coming of Jesus. That’s 320 times! Folks that’s a lot of talk about His second coming! In fact, there’s more verses in the NT on the second coming of Jesus than there is about the topics of Heaven, Hell, or even salvation. Church family, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is a big deal in the NT and for us as believers, and thus, the title of our message today is: “Jesus IS Coming Again.” (Bold and Underlined!)

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Now, before we read our fairly lengthy text this morning, let’s get up to speed so we’ll have a good understanding of what’s been happening with Jesus and His disciples. They’re in Caesarea Philippi. This is way up north. See the map.



Look at the top. Jesus has taken His disciples there to train and to teach them, away from the crowds of Galilee because He’s only got about 6 months to live. He’s got to make sure they are ready and prepared to take the message of the Gospel to the world when He is no longer here. All is going well in that Peter has rightly identified that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, the Messiah, the Christos...the Promised One who would come to bring salvation to all who would receive Him.

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But, everything changes when Jesus drops the hammer and tells them that He’s going to die. Peter can’t handle it and tries to encourage Jesus to take the easy way out. Jesus interrupts Peter’s rebuke and says, “You don’t know what you’re talking about...Get behind me Satan.” Peter didn’t realize he was trying to get Jesus to take the easy way out and yet, we all know that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. Jesus knew He had to die!

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And so it was in Caesarea Philippi that Jesus would begin to prepare His disciples for this...



What a tense scene it was there in CP, in that Jesus walked past Peter having said: Who-POG-oh Satanus,” and sat back down (perhaps in a setting like this)...



to prepare them for the suffering that would come. And so, Jesus knew they needed some encouragement, because this has been gut-wrenching for them to say the least.

Watch this play out as we read together

### **Matthew 16:24-17:13**

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. <sup>26</sup> For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. <sup>28</sup> Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

<sup>1</sup> And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. <sup>2</sup> And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. <sup>3</sup> And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. <sup>4</sup> And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” <sup>5</sup> He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” <sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. <sup>7</sup> But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” <sup>8</sup> And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

<sup>9</sup> And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.” <sup>10</sup> And the disciples asked him, “Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” <sup>11</sup> He answered, “Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. <sup>12</sup> But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him

whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.”<sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

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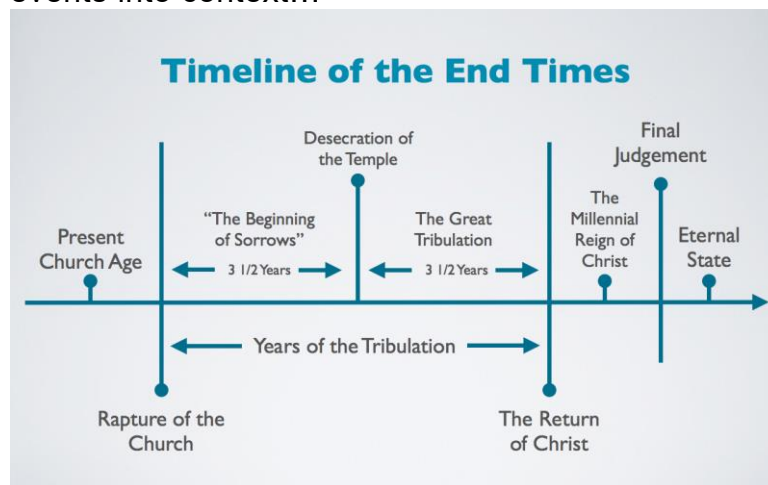
Now, I want to try to put into context what we’ve seen over the last several weeks in what Jesus has been teaching His disciples. For you see, He’s described something they’ve never heard before. What was that?

The ecclesia—the “called out ones.” We know that word in the English as the “Church.” Remember when Jesus acknowledged to Peter that he was right, He is the Christ and on that truth Jesus will build His CHURCH (ecclesia) and the gates of Hell will not stand against it.

You see, for these men who grew up steeped in Judaism, they didn’t understand the concept of anyone else being allowed into their deal of God’s promises...but, Jesus reveals the fact that anyone who chooses to believe in Him can become part of the family of God. Therefore, the Gospel is available to WHOSOEVER will call upon the name of the Lord.

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Now, I want you to take a look at this chart on the screens. It will help us to put the future events into context...



You will see, (far left), that we’re living today in what is known as the “Present Church Age,” and we know that the “Church Age” started right after Jesus left the earth and the Holy Spirit came on the Believers in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2). Listen...as you look at that timeline...one day, Jesus is going to come back and take His believers off this earth (that’s called the Rapture...see the BOTTOM LEFT).

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That ushers in what is known and described in the Book of the Revelation as the “Tribulation.” That’s 7 years of chaos that come on the earth as a man known as the Antichrist reveals himself. And it’s at the end of those 7 years, Jesus is going to come back and set foot on this earth in the same place He left it... the Mount of Olives... **Take a look at this picture.** That’s me and the group I traveled with to Israel in the fall of 2017...



In fact, as I mentioned last week: That's where I hope to be standing again in 2019 (probably the Fall of that year) with a group of you perhaps...from this church. I've already had 17 tell me they're interested in going so far. And we'll have an interest meeting this fall with more details, dates, costs, etc. But, that picture was made from the Mt. of Olives and they have a monument there where they believe Jesus ascended to heaven. See it...

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And it's at that very site that Jesus will come back at the end of the Tribulation period after what is called the Battle of Armageddon, and then, from there He will (according to the prophets Zechariah and Ezekiel), enter into Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate, that's here...

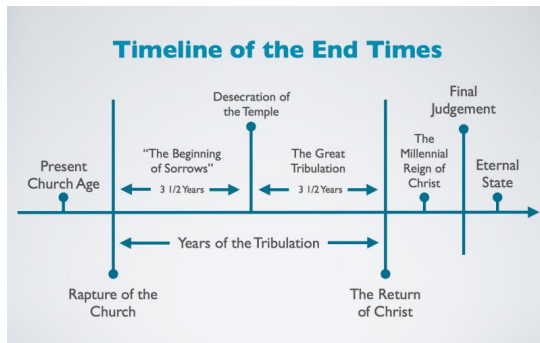


The Muslim, Ottoman Turks blocked it up in 1540, because they heard of the prophecy of the Messiah coming through that gate one day...but, Church...Jesus will blow through it like a knife through hot butter when He comes again! Nothing can stop Jesus!

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And so, (see the chart, right-hand side)...





...that will be the beginning of His Millennial (1,000) Reign on the earth...keeping His promise to the nation of Israel that He would rule and reign from the throne of David, from the Temple in Jerusalem.

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Now, I share all of this with you because (AGAIN), the disciples thought Jesus was going to set up His kingdom on this visit to earth. They didn't understand the Church Age at all...**AND** they didn't see how SUFFERING fit with the Messiah.

So, this is HEAVY STUFF folks and Jesus knew they needed some encouragement because this is so overwhelming. And so we see Jesus transition to speaking of His Kingdom and how that will come about! So, it's time for a PREVIEW...and that will require a trip to a mountain.

### **Matthew 17:1**

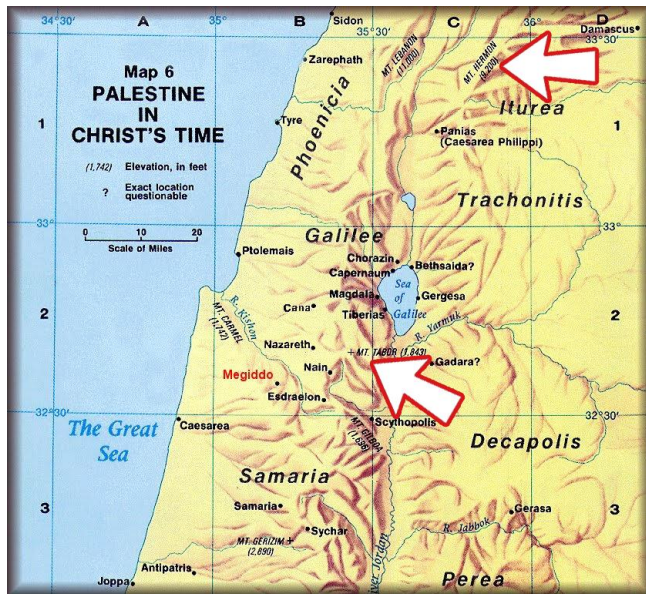
<sup>†</sup> And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

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So, Jesus let SIX DAYS elapse for this tough and difficult message to sink in for His disciples in Caesarea Philippi and then He left. And it appears He left the other disciples in CP except for Peter, James and John. You see, those three were always his inner three, the leaders of the Apostles. Remember, He will take them with Him deeper into Gethsemane in just a few months and they had seen Him raise Jairus' daughter from the dead.

And so, off they go to a high mountain. You might ask, "Which mountain?" Well, note that Matthew says that they went up to a "high mountain," and interestingly, so does Mark, in His Gospel account. However, in Luke's account, he just records they went up on "THE mountain..." So, what are the possibilities? See the map...

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See the two arrows. One points to Mount Hermon (elev. 9200 ft), near CP and the other to Mount Tabor (1900), right below the Sea of Galilee.

Early church tradition said Mt. Tabor was the site, while most scholars now say it was **Mt. Hermon** because it was “the mountain,” as Luke said (needing no other identification) because it was so close to CP (less than 15 miles away).

### **Matthew 17:2**

<sup>2</sup> And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

Can you imagine how Jesus looked? His face shining like the sun and his clothes white as light? Mark’s gospel records this:

### **Mark 9:3**

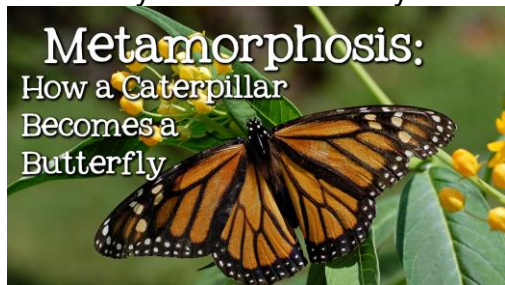
<sup>3</sup> and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.

Now, You may ask, “How is this possible?” Well, Matthew tells us Jesus was “transfigured.” That word in the Greek is:

### **Transfigured:**

Greek: **Metamorpho-ō**-to change into another form, to transform

What do you think of when you think of when you hear that Greek word? I think of this...



The change that a caterpillar goes through to become a butterfly.

Listen, this is SO AMAZING...Jesus' body was His literally changed right before their eyes. His eternal glory was being revealed to Peter, James and John. Can you fathom that! They were getting to see the glory of God radiating from Jesus' body and I'M TELLING YOU SOMETHING... Jesus somehow allowed Peter, James and John to see this and not die, for they were indeed looking on the deity of God and lived to tell about it! Truly, this experience changed their lives forever. They were never the same. In the first few verses of John's Gospel, the Apostle would record these words about Jesus:

### **John 1:14**

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Peter said this:

### **2 Peter 1:16**

<sup>16</sup> For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," <sup>18</sup> we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

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Think about it. For 2 ½ years they had seen Jesus teach and preach. They had eaten with Him and slept under the stars beside of Him. They've seen Him in all kinds of circumstances, BUT NEVER like this! Truly, the Shekinah glory of God was emanating from the inside-out from Jesus' body. This is the same glory that manifested itself in the OT with a fire by day and a cloud by night to protect the Children of Israel. You see, the veil has been pulled back and Peter, James and John were seeing the majestic deity of Jesus. And folks, it's the same essence that we'll see, one day, when Jesus comes again.

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The Apostle John would eventually write in the book of the Revelation this description of Jesus when He returns.

### **Revelation 1:14**

<sup>14</sup> The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire.

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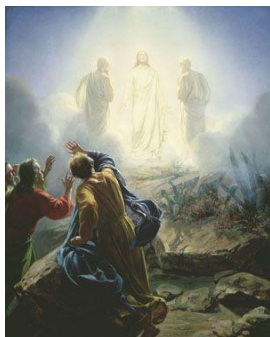
It's the same thing they were seeing... a glimpse, a foretaste of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and not only did Peter, James and John see Jesus, **they also saw two other men.**

### **Matthew 17:3**

<sup>3</sup> And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

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See the artist's depiction of this scene...



You say, “Why Moses and Elijah?” Well, it’s these two who represent the OT. Moses was the lawgiver and Elijah was the leader among the prophets and so what you have here is the fulfillment and the affirmation of the OT in Jesus Christ with the appearing of Moses and Elijah. Now get this, Luke tells us they were having a conversation. (The transfiguration is recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke’s Gospel accounts.)

### **Luke 9:30**

<sup>30</sup> And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup> who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

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Okay so here are Moses and Elijah and they’re talking to Jesus about His “departure” to Jerusalem and what He’d accomplish there. Guess what the word departure is in the Greek:

### **“Departure”**

Greek word: **Exodus**: exit, depart, close of one’s career

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Isn’t that what Moses led...an exodus. Sure! He led the people of God, (the nation of Israel), out of Egyptian bondage. And Jesus will lead ANY AND ALL who will receive Him out of the bondage of their sin because of His exodus from the tomb! And you see, this is another confirmation to Peter, James and John that Jesus is going to die. It’s what He’s been describing to them now for days in CP.

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**Now turn back to Matthew 17.** Understand now, that this scene is so magnificent that Peter says in verse 4:

### **Matthew 17:4**

<sup>4</sup> And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

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Now church family, I learned something interesting about this verse. Scholars tell us this event happened almost exactly 6 months before Jesus died, which would be at the Passover. Well, 6 months before the Passover, the nation of Israel celebrated **the Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths)**. Do you know what that is? It’s where the nation celebrates the season of time that God provided for them while they wandered in the wilderness desert for 40 years after they came out of Egypt. And they commemorate this event each year in the Jewish month of Tishri by setting up tents to remind them of God’s provision and goodness. So, Peter must have been thinking about this and thought what better way to celebrate the Feast of Booths than with Moses, who led the people during that time! Wow!

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But, Peter is interrupted by God...

**Matthew 17:5**

<sup>5</sup> He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

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Remember...we've heard this before...at Jesus' baptism? And so here again, God speaks from heaven and He says, "Listen to my son," for He is speaking the truth to you and He is above Moses and Elijah.

What is the reaction the 3 apostles? They hit the ground in fear.

**Matthew 17:6**

<sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.

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Church family, let me tell you something...we've somehow lost this awe of God. Peter, James and John were on their faces in awe of God. It made me think of Charlotte at the fireworks on Tuesday night. She was afraid of the noise, so I gave her earmuffs to wear.

and she watched the fire trucks go by with all the sirens and horns and she had a "death grip" on my shirt...

I'll tell you why? I believe she was a bit overwhelmed by the moment. Even though she was with me, she was still in "awe." Church family, the Greek word for "terrified" that Matthew used, means "to reverence or respect." Should we not have great reverence and respect for the Lord because of His magnanimous character and His complete holiness? After all, one day, we'll bow on our faces in heaven when we see Him. **But understand this**...because of what Jesus has done for us...we don't have to be afraid or terrified in the presence of God.

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**Matthew 17:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." <sup>8</sup> And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

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Jesus said: "Rise, have no fear!" I love that! And that's what Jesus will constantly say: "Don't be afraid." He'll say it to His disciples after the resurrection when He appears in His glorified body to them. And so, I'm so grateful that we don't have to live in fear, because Jesus is with us. Someone needs to hear that again today: "Rise, HAVE NO FEAR!" Jesus is near!

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And so they LIFTED UP THEIR EYES and saw but JESUS ONLY. I've underlined those 3 words in my Bible: **BUT JESUS ONLY**. I'm good with that. **Are you?**

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You see, Church family, as we close this morning, our time together is going to end. For Peter, James and John, their experience was over too. Peter, James and John looked up and Moses and Elijah and the bright whiteness of the deity of Jesus...well it's over! It's just "JESUS ONLY," and now they've got to come down that mountain and go back into the hostility of a sin-filled world, a world where Jesus is on the run because the Pharisees, a world where they know trials awaits...a cross...self-denial...pain...suffering.

And so, we too, we soon leave this place. You know, sometimes...oh how I wish we could just stay here and relish in the presence of the Lord and sing and worship with you, my brothers

and sisters in Christ...where it's safe and peaceful and good. But, we can't stay here can we?  
A lost and dying world awaits!

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Yes, I wish we could stay here...for me...this is a taste of heaven each week. But, we can't! But, I'm thankful for the glimpses we get now and again of the Lord's glory...here and perhaps in a sunrise or sunset, or a song on the radio, or the smile of child, or even my granddaughter like on Tuesday with her "death grip" on my shirt. Yes, we'll all be leaving in just a matter of minutes... The question is: Will we continue to trust Jesus when we walk out these doors...when we get back to life, or will we live in fear?

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Church family, we can't stay on the mountaintops, we can't build a tent in here...God stopped Peter from building tents... No...we've got to get back at, because we're ambassadors, God making His appeal through us. But, as we go, brothers and sisters in Christ, those of you who know Jesus, we don't have to be afraid. Because Jesus is with us and He simply says, "Rise, and have no fear." And you know what church, I relish in the fact that Jesus **IS** coming back! And it could happen at any moment...

**"Come Lord Jesus, (Even So Come)"**

All of creation all of the earth,  
make straight a highway a path for the Lord.  
Jesus is coming soon.

Call back the sinner wake up the saint,  
let every nation shout of Your fame.  
Jesus is coming soon.

**Chorus**

Like a bride waiting for her groom, we'll be a church ready for You.  
Ev'ry heart longing for our King, we sing.  
Even so come, Lord Jesus come.

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