

THE PROMISE OF HIS RETURN

After (Jesus) 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."

Acts 1:9-11 (NIV)

❖ Signs of His Coming

Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁶ Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. ⁷ When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁸ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains."

Mark 13:5-8 (NIV)

1. There will be APOSTASY and APPEASEMENT in the Church.

"At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other."
Matthew 24:10 (NIV)

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

2 Timothy 4:3 (NIV)

2. There will be an INCREASE in PERSONAL EVIL.

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God--⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NIV)

3. The message of Christ and His Church will be REVILED and SCOFFED at.

First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires.

2 Peter 3:3 (NIV)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

Genesis 3:1 (NIV)

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.

Genesis 3:4 (NIV)

❖ The Time of Jesus' Coming

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."

Matthew 25:13 (NIV)

1. The time of Jesus' coming is SOON.

"Behold I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

Revelation 22:7 (NIV)

2. The time of Jesus' return is known only by the FATHER.

"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Matthew 24:36 (NIV)

3. The time of Jesus' return will catch most OFF GUARD.

For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 (NIV)

❖ The Coming of Our Lord

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

John 14:2-3 (NIV)

1. The GREAT worldwide TRIBULATION that introduces the END.

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 (NIV)

2. The RAPTURE of His CHURCH.

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the call of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, all the Christians who have

died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷ Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with him forever. ¹⁸ So comfort and encourage each other with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (NLT)

3. The VISIBLE RETURN of CHRIST.

“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ²⁶ Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ²⁷ At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Luke 21:25-28 (NIV)

Every knee will bow ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Philippians 2:10-11 (NIV)

4. The THOUSAND-YEAR REIGN of CHRIST.

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. ² He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. ³ He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. ⁴ I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵ (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Revelation 20:1-6 (NIV)

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 (NIV)

❖ Are You Ready?