

4-05-2026, COTR Texarkana

Title: Sunday's Coming

Purpose: Provoke people to believe in and follow Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin and the promise of eternal life.

Truth for Today: Jesus Christ's death on the cross offers us forgiveness for sin; His resurrection offers us hope for eternal life if we believe and follow Him.

Text: Matthew 28:1-6

Topic: Resurrection, Easter, Sin, Cross, Forgiveness, Eternal Life

## Sunday's Coming

- I. **Introduction:** I'm pastor John Miller. You're welcome here, whatever your background or beliefs whether you're in the sanctuary, watching online or in the overflow room.
- A. Today we'll go to the Bible and examine the 2 most important events in human history, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1) His death provides forgiveness of sin and escape from eternal judgment in hell. (2) His resurrection offers the promise of eternal life in heaven for those who believe and follow Jesus.
- Perhaps you aren't sure why the cross and resurrection are so important. I want to help you. We're relying more on Artificial Intelligence, AI, to help us make decisions. AI is a computer that learns to think like a human, e.g. Apple Maps, Siri, ChatGPT. AI is heralded as superior to human thinking because of its ability to look at all the facts and make decisions, perhaps even spiritual decisions.
- B. I recently listened to a podcast in which someone asked an AI system known as 'Claude', "If you were human and read the Bible, would you convert to Christianity?" **Words on screen** "Christianity stands out for best" (among all world religions, philosophies, the arguments for atheism and agnosticism) *explaining humanity, the world's brokenness, and the solution—especially if the resurrection is true.* If 'Claude' was a human, it sounds like he'd convert to Christianity. My hope is before we leave today, we'll all follow Claude's advice and believe in Jesus.
- C. Title: Sunday's Coming. My message is about Jesus' death on the cross on Friday and His resurrection from the dead on Sunday and **what it means for us.**
- II. **On Friday, Jesus died on the cross to offer us forgiveness for our sin.**
- A. 1<sup>st</sup> understand the problem of sin. Def. sin: doing wrong; going against God's ways. What's the big deal about sin? God to Adam, [**Ge. 2:17 (ESV)**]...of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil **you shall not eat**, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely **die**." **Ro. 6:23 (ESV)** For the **wages (NCV payment) of sin is death...**] i.e. the judgment we deserve for the wrong we did.
- Sin is the cause of (1) physical death, (2) a separation from God on earth, and (3) eternal judgment in hell. We can't fix our sin problem by being good or doing good things. Jesus, our Savior, did for us what we couldn't do for ourselves. He made a way so our sin could be forgiven and not judged.
- B. **Overview:** **Pic!** **Mt. 27:35–54 (NLT)** After they had **nailed him to the cross**, (9am) the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. (Predicted over 1,000 years earlier in Ps. 22:18. *Skeptics should consider fulfilled Biblical prophecy as proof.*) <sup>39</sup> The people... shouted...if you are the Son of God, **save yourself** and come down from the cross!"

1. Jesus didn't want to save Himself; He wanted to pay the penalty for our sin. Substitutionary atonement. Redemption. [2 Cor. 5:21 (NLT)] God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin (*NIV to be sin for us*) so that we could be made right with God through Christ.]
- C. [Jn. 19:30 Then he bowed his head and (*NCV he died*). Mt. 27: 51 At that moment **the curtain in the... Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.**] Pic<sup>2</sup>
1. The symbolism of the Ark and Mercy Seat and the torn curtain implied relationship with God is possible now if we believe and follow Jesus. Sin no longer separates us from God. [Hebrews 10:19–22 (NLT)]...we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the **blood of Jesus**...<sup>22</sup> let us go right into **the presence of God**...] We can have a real relationship with God now!
- III. Friday the power of sin was defeated; Sunday brought hope for eternal life.
- A. [Matthew 28:1–6 (NLT)] Early on Sunday morning... Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly there was a great earthquake! Pic<sup>3</sup> For an angel... came down from heaven, **rolled aside the stone**, and sat on it...<sup>4</sup> The **guards** shook with fear... and they fell into a dead faint. <sup>5</sup> Then the angel spoke to the women... "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> **He isn't here! He is risen from the dead**...]
1. Doctors can resuscitate a dead person, but the patient still dies later. Jesus is the only person in human history who died, came back to life and never died again. History records He was seen by 100's of people.
  2. The biggest question is where is His body because if He rose from the dead, everything He said is true. After examining all the possibilities, Claude's 'AI' arrived at the same conclusion Christian apologists and converted atheists have. He rose from the dead just like He said He would.
- B. **Relevance to us:** [John 11:25 (NLT)] Jesus told her (*Martha*), "I am the resurrection and the life. **Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying**] I.e. Jesus rose from the dead and if we believe and follow Him, we will, too.
- IV. Conclusion/ Response: I want to give you the chance to make the most important decision of your life, to become a committed follower of Jesus Christ.
- A. Jesus death on Friday offered forgiveness for our sin so we won't be judged on Judgment Day. His resurrection on Sunday offers us eternal life in a real place called heaven. 100's in this room and watching believe this; 'Claude' believes this, but **do you?** If you'd like to get right with God, I'd like to give you the opportunity now.
1. What do I have to do? (1) Believe in your heart what the Bible says about Jesus, (2) Be willing to turn away from sin, (3) Pray and ask Jesus to forgive you and commit to follow Him in your brand-new life. \*\*\*We'd like to pray with you.
- V. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.
1. Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992). *A handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* (p. 876). United Bible Societies.
  2. Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 720). W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

3. Wikipedia
4. Claude, AI...The Bible doesn't read like a comforting, made-up story—it's brutally honest about suffering, sacrifice, and the cost of following God. Despite being written over ~1,500 years by many authors, it tells one unified story with consistent themes and detailed prophetic connections. The resurrection is the central claim, and the disciples' willingness to suffer and die for what they said they witnessed is difficult to explain if it wasn't real. Christianity's view of human nature—both deeply broken and deeply valuable—matches reality better than other worldviews. Its message is unique: salvation isn't earned by effort but received through what Jesus has already done. Conclusion: Christianity stands out for best explaining humanity, the world's brokenness, and the solution—especially if the resurrection is true. Conclusion: Christianity stands out because *among world religions...The implication is, "Yes, I'd convert."*

## VI. Pictures

1. Jesus on the cross
2. The temple curtain and The Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat
3. An angel at the empty tomb

## VII. Supplemental Material

- A. Claude, AI...The Bible doesn't read like a comforting, made-up story—it's brutally honest about suffering, sacrifice, and the cost of following God. Despite being written over ~1,500 years by many authors, it tells one unified story with consistent themes and detailed prophetic connections. The resurrection is the central claim, and the disciples' willingness to suffer and die for what they said they witnessed is difficult to explain if it wasn't real. Christianity's view of human nature—both deeply broken and deeply valuable—matches reality better than other worldviews. Its message is unique: salvation isn't earned by effort but received through what Jesus has already done. Conclusion: Christianity stands out for best explaining humanity, the world's brokenness, and the solution—especially if the resurrection is true.
  1. Conclusion: Christianity stands out because *among world religions...The implication is, "Yes, I'd convert."*
- B. [Eph. 2:8–9 (NLT) <sup>8</sup> God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. <sup>9</sup> **Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done...**]
- C. The Jewish day actually began at sunset; it was the Roman day which began with sunrise.<sup>1</sup>
- D. I surrendered my life to Jesus on 8-15-76. I was raised in church and believed in Jesus but never committed my life to Him.
- E. (1) We believe the Bible is the literal, inerrant Word of God, (2) We believe Jesus is the only means of salvation from the judgment of sin, (3) We believe in the present day ministry of the Holy Spirit as we read about in the Book of Acts, (4) Missional/ Great Commission: We are committed to reach as many people as we can around the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

- F. 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT) For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin (*NIV to be sin for us*) so that we could be made right with God through Christ.
- G. Passover meal moises, Exodus 12:13 (NLT) But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a sign, marking the houses where you are staying. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt.
- H. [Hebrews 9:22 (NLT) For **without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.**] Why? Because life is in the blood. Jesus paid for our sins with His life-blood, He substituted our sin for His righteousness.
- I. We should understand the darkness as supernatural, leading up to the time when the Son of God breathed his last. It was not a local phenomenon, peculiar to Jerusalem and its immediate environs, for all three Synoptists tell us that it was *over all the land* (the word could mean “all the earth,” but the land of Israel seems more likely). They clearly mean that it was not a natural phenomenon but the result of divine intervention. Matthew is probably mindful of the darkness mentioned in Exodus 10:22 and Amos 8:9. Darkness is sometimes associated with the end of all things (cf. 24:29), and accordingly it has been suggested that we are to see such a meaning here. But nothing in the context leads us to think that Matthew has eschatological considerations in mind; furthermore, we should remember that the darkness was followed immediately by the cry of dereliction, which does not fit an eschatological situation. Darkness is associated with judgment in several places in Scripture (Isa. 5:30; 13:10–11; Joel 3:14–15, etc.), and it appears that we are to understand it here as pointing to God’s judgment on sin that is linked with the cross.<sup>2</sup>
- J. At a Christian funeral, we grieve but we don’t say good-bye. We say, ‘I’ll see you later’.
- K. John 1:29 (NLT) The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! **The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**”
- L. [Mt. 26:28 (NLT) this is **my blood...It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many.**] The blood represents life. Jesus gave His life for our sin.
- M. Matthew 27:51–53 (NLT) <sup>51</sup> At that moment the **curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.** The earth shook, rocks split apart, <sup>52</sup> and **tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead.** <sup>53</sup> They left the cemetery after Jesus’ resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people.
- N. Ro. 6:23 (ESV) <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but **the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**
1. Revelation 1:18 (NLT) I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.
- O. He rose from the dead just like He said He would. (Lee Stroebel, Harvard/ Yale educated, investigative journalist made a book and movie “The Case for Christ”)
- P. [Jn 19:28–30 (NLT) Jesus knew **that his mission was now finished...**]

1. What was the mission He finished? He came to fix what Adam messed up. He was becoming a substitutionary sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sin.