

GREAT BIBLE TRUTHS

24. The Last Things (1)



An Introduction

The world stage is being prepared for the return of Jesus Christ. This was foretold in the Old Testament, and promised in the New. Jesus himself said he would return, as we see in Matthew 24:30 and John 14:1-3. The last words written in Revelation 22 are "I am coming soon." However, according to scripture certain events must take place before Christ does return.

PREPARING THE STAGE FOR THE SECOND COMING

Although no-one knows the exact day or hour of Christ's return, we are given many signs that will precede his coming and make it clear that the day is near. Some of these have been apparent throughout history, but will be intensified the closer we get to the end times.

1. Great distress in the world: wars, earthquakes, famines, disease, intense anxiety, fear and problems. Matthew 24:7, Luke 21:7-11, 25-26
2. Great moral decay inside and outside the church. Jude 17-18, 2 Timothy 3:1-4
3. False doctrines. Men will deny the truth and lead others astray. Matthew 24:11, 2 Timothy 3:5. The Bible describes these ones as having the spirit of the antichrist, but there will also be one man who will be the antichrist, who will set himself up as God. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4
4. Persecution of the godly. Matthew 24:9-10, Luke 21:12, 16
5. Many in the church will turn away due to persecution, the increase of sin and false teaching. Matthew 24:12, 2 Thessalonians 2:3
6. Signs in the heavens: sun, moon and stars. Matthew 24:29, Luke 21:25
7. The Gospel will be preached to all nations. Matthew 24:14, Mark 13:10, Romans 11:25
8. The regathering of Israel into the land. Ezekiel 38:8, Matthew 24:32-34. This happened on May 14th 1948!

As you look at the list above you can see that prophecy is being fulfilled at a rapid rate. The coming of the Lord is drawing closer.

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

After the signs listed above Christ will return. How does the Bible describe this event?

1. Personal and Physical

Some say the Day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of the second coming, but the Bible makes it clear that Jesus will come again. Acts 1:9, 11

2. Visible

We are told that every eye will see Jesus. Revelation 1:7 compared to Matthew 24:30, Hebrews 9:28. There are two words used for the second coming, both indicating that it is literal.

- Parousia: this word is used for the coming of a friend, or someone's actual presence. This is the word that is usually used for the second coming. 1 Corinthians 15:23.
- Apocalypse: This means 'to reveal'. Christ who is now hidden from our view will be revealed to men. 1 Corinthians 1:7, 2 Thessalonians 1:7

3. Sudden and Unexpected

Though there will be signs, his coming will be sudden and unexpected to many. Mark 13:36, Luke 12:40. His coming is described like lightening in Matthew 24:27, a thief in 1 Thessalonians 5:2 and in Revelation 16:15, and as in the twinkling of an eye in 1 Corinthians 15:51. The world will be unprepared as it was in the days of the flood. Matthew 24:38

4. Glorious and Triumphant

Christ will come from Heaven as we see in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, and in the clouds with power and great glory. Matthew 24:30, Matthew 26:64. He will be accompanied with his angels and the saints. Mark 8:38, 1 Thessalonians 3:13. His glory will be revealed to the world and all will acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. 1 Peter 4:13, Philippians 2:10-11



People often say that Christians have been talking about this for hundreds of years, but nothing has happened. How would you respond to that?

Knowing that Christ will return, what difference should this make to the way we live? Luke 21:34-36, 1 Peter 4:7-11, 2 Peter 3:11, 14



Just as the prophecies about the first coming of Jesus were fulfilled down to the last detail, so will his second coming. The Bible tells us that he is delaying his return so more can come to know him. He does not want anyone to perish. Let's use the opportunity we have to share with others the gospel and pray for our family and friends to come to know him.