

Core pt 7- the Return of Jesus

Ryan Abernathy / General

Core / Mt 25:31–46; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11; Revelation 20:7–21:5

The return of Jesus. Nothing has sparked more speculation, consternation, and agitation than those four simple words. It has spawned fear, laziness, excitement, hucksters, book series, movies, art, music...the list is endless.

What is sad, is that it has spawned very little of what it has intended to over the years- passionate obedience from His followers in anticipation that His return is imminent and time for people to come to Jesus is short.

This morning, I want to look at three key passages related to the return of Jesus that speak to 3 vital truths- the timing of Jesus' return, what will happen when He comes, and what the results of His return will be.

Let's start with [1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11](#)...

This passage starts with a firm reminder, that before Jesus returns, followers of Jesus will still die. That's not going to stop- and Paul says this because some believers thought Jesus would return so quickly that they would never face death. That wasn't true, and it led Paul to write specifically to address the timing of the return of Jesus.

First, he notes the return of Jesus will be obvious. Not hidden (v16-17)

Second, he says the return of Jesus will creep up on people- without warning but in 2 distinct ways- (v2-3)- (the thief v the pregnant woman)

1, 2 Thessalonians (2) The Manner of the Lord's Return (5:2–3)

Also Paul did not apply the implication of the thief analogy to believers. They were, in fact, specifically excluded. The Lord's coming will not be as a thief in the night for members of the church (v. 4). ***Believers expect it, though they do not know when the day will arrive.***

Only unbelievers will be taken by surprise by the fact of the Lord's return. The clause "while people are saying, 'peace and safety' " is not a prediction of a particular time in human history so much as a prediction of an attitude. The words need not describe idyllic times but arrogant or self-deceived people

1, 2 Thessalonians (2) The Manner of the Lord's Return (5:2–3)

Their moment of judgment comes as a shock, befalling a people who feel secure. It is like the arrival of a thief, unexpected and surprising. These are the very characteristics of that day that should not apply to the church, for *the church knows a day of judgment is approaching (v. 4) and therefore should remain faithful and vigilant*

1, 2 Thessalonians (2) The Manner of the Lord's Return (5:2–3)

There will be no delay, no opportunity to take care of neglected business. There will be no second chance, no opportunity for additional preparation before meeting the Lord. It is this very point that is the basis of the exhortations to be alert and prepared in vv. 4–11

Third, he tells us that followers of Jesus will have nothing to fear on the day of His return (v4-5)

1, 2 Thessalonians (3) The Christian Life Anticipating the Return (5:4–11)

Since the gospel has enlightened believers; they are not in darkness. They know the day of the Lord is coming, thus its arrival will not "overtake" (NASB) them like a thief.

Finally, he implores us, as a result of these truths, to be BUSY doing the work that God has called us to do! (v6-11)- armor and alertness

1, 2 Thessalonians (3) The Christian Life Anticipating the Return (5:4–11)

Since believers know that the day of the Lord is coming, they should not act like people who are unaware of this fact. Paul included himself in the injunction “let us not sleep” (NASB),¹¹⁰ a present subjunctive (katheudōmen) implying consistency in the Christian’s behavior. *In Mark 13:32–37 the disciples were also warned not to let the master find them “sleeping” (katheudontas) when he returned (v. 37). The “others” who do sleep are unbelievers oblivious to the approaching day of judgment and so unprepared* (cf. “the rest of men,” 4:13). In contrast, believers should remain “alert and self-controlled” (v. 6). Both of these verbs are also present hortatory subjunctives; Paul was appealing for consistent vigilance. The first word, translated “let us be alert,” means “to stay awake.” ***Literally, it is that which is expected of a watchman who must not sleep at his post. It was often used metaphorically of the preparedness of those awaiting the Lord’s return***

1, 2 Thessalonians (3) The Christian Life Anticipating the Return (5:4–11)

Putting on” is also used of “putting on Christ” and of living according to Christian ethical standards (Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). It does not connote shallowness (as a garment might hide the person underneath) but evident and genuine transformation (cf. 1 Cor 15:53, 54). The recognizable garb of the Christian ought to be behavior expressive of faith, love, and hope. *These central Christian virtues are foundational for the living of a distinctly Christian life. “Faith and love” are placed together as modifiers of “breastplate.” “Hope” is the lone referent for “helmet” and is itself refined by the phrase “of salvation.”* This serves to highlight hope and bring the reader’s attention back to the future deliverance that is the theme of this section.

Paul's point here is that those who are on the road to ultimate salvation should behave differently from those on the road to destruction.

So what would we have to fear- if Paul tells us not to fear? That issue we discussed last week- judgment. Let's go to [Matthew 25:31-46](#)...

In his passage, **Jesus Himself speaks to a judgment**- one where righteous and unrighteous deeds are the means of being held accountable.

What separates the two groups? One recognized Jesus and one did not.

Matthew 2. Judgment on the Temple but Also on the Nations (23:1–25:46)

The sheep are people whose works demonstrate that they have responded properly to Christ's messengers and therefore to his message, however humble the situation or actions of those involved

Matthew 2. Judgment on the Temple but Also on the Nations (23:1–25:46)

The goats ask the same kind of question as the sheep did, and Jesus offers a parallel reply. These people are condemned for sins of omission as well as commission. Improper response to Christian witnesses leads to damnation

I know what seems an odd statement at first read, but look at the passage- what did the first group do- they did to the "least of these" and that was Jesus.

The second group didn't.

And this is further expanded on in [Revelation 20:11-15](#)...

This white throne judgment is for those who have not been gathered to Jesus. For those who didn't know Him. And it is a broader picture that adds depth to the passage in Matthew.

Revelation 10. The Judgment of the Great White Throne (20:11–15)

The only people appearing before this Great White Throne Judgment are those who were not a part of the first resurrection and hence were outside of Christ. No believers are here

The deeds people do flow out of who they know- and those who do not know Jesus do not fulfill what God has called them to do or be on a basic level. And they answer for it.- the record of their lives vs the Book of Life

Revelation 10. The Judgment of the Great White Throne (20:11–15)

At the great white throne judgment, only unbelievers are present, and they are judged according to their works. The fact that they are condemned on that basis bears eloquent testimony to what the Scriptures have plainly said: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23); "There is no one who does good, / not even one" (Rom 3:12b); and, "The heart is deceitful above all things / and beyond cure. / Who can understand it?" (Jer 17:9). Even persons who have been counted to be good and noble by their counterparts on earth are in their hearts rebellious against God. Universally, unredeemed humanity is at enmity with God. That becomes apparent in the judgment from the books

Revelation 10. The Judgment of the Great White Throne (20:11–15)

the point of the text is that the recording of one's name in the Lamb's Book of Life is the antidote to the condemnation of God brought on men by the deeds of their hearts and lives. So, therefore, men are twice condemned. First, they are condemned by their works; and second, the condemnation of their works holds because they have chosen to reject the proffered gift of God, which is eternal life. The result is that they are thrown also into the lake of fire.

Which leads to one last act in the return of Jesus- the arrival of heaven on earth.

Go to [Revelation 21:1-5...](#)

Revelation (1) Heavenly Relationships (21:1–7)

Pulling the metaphors together, the celestial city is the eternal home for the bride of Christ. The perfect passive participle of the verb *hetoimazō*, meaning “prepare” or “make ready,” calls to mind the promise of the Lord to his disciples, “I am going there to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2). The perfect passive participle indicates that this place, having been prepared, now descends, looking like a bride prepared for her husband. Another perfect passive participle coming from the word *kosmeō*, meaning “adorn” and from which have evolved the English words “cosmos” and “cosmetics,” references the way in which this heavenly city was adorned. The reference to the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband captures the awe of the moment of the presentation of a bride to a groom. In addition to the beauty of the bride, there is the anticipatory union that is about to take place in the midst of the general excitement of all who are a part of the moment

It’s verse 4-5 that gets me every time. The end of mourning and weeping and death and “all things new.”

What would I not give for that reality? And the truth is, there is nothing I would not give- and that’s what Jesus did to secure this future for us, and it’s what He invites us to when He offers to save us.

What will it take this morning for you to accept that offer?

Someone telling you God actually loves you?

Someone telling you Jesus died for you?

Someone telling you the Holy Spirit wants to lead you?

Someone telling you that you are not an accident and have a purpose?

Someone telling you that what is broken in your life is that way because you rebelled against God?

Someone telling you there is a heaven and a hell and you will wind up in one of those places?

Someone telling you Jesus is coming back?

These past 7 weeks we have said all those things. Will you listen to what you have heard? Will you respond to the voice of God that is speaking to you?

Page 7. Exported from [Logos Bible Software](#), 7:41 AM September 4, 2022.