

PROPHECY UNCUT

The Return (Part 1): Getting Ready

INTRODUCTION

There are three major events in human history from a Biblical perspective. The first is the creation event. This was the miraculous start of all human life as a direct result of the Divine will. Unfortunately, humanity forfeited the privilege of life when they rebelled against their Creator.

The second great event in human history is advent of the promised Messiah who was sent by God to resolve the problem of human sin and rebellion. The birth of Jesus heralded an era salvation through His incarnational birth, perfect life, substitutionary death and victorious resurrection. As a result of the Christ event every human being, no matter how far fallen, has the opportunity to find forgiveness and salvation.

The third great event, yet future, is the return of Jesus. When this takes place the finishing touches of God's salving grace will be received by humanity as we are changed from mortal to immortal, from corruptible to incorruptible. This is indeed the glorious hope that every true Christian looks forward to with eager anticipation.

It is the purpose of this study to examine what the Bible says about the timing and need for personal preparation for Jesus' return.

WHAT WILL JESUS' RETURN BE LIKE FOR THOSE WHO ARE READY?

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17;

1 Corinthians 15:50-55;

John 11:25;

Romans 8:11;

1 Thessalonians 1:10

There will be two groups who are ready when Jesus returns. The first group are those who have accepted Jesus, but who died before His return. The second group are those who have accepted Jesus and who are alive at His return (1 Thess 4:15).

Those who were laid to rest before Jesus return, but who had made the necessary spiritual preparation to meet Jesus, will be resurrected to immortality (1 Thess 4:16; John 11:25; Rom 8:11) and will escape the judgment (1 Thess 1:10). Those who are alive at the time of Jesus coming and who are ready for Him will be changed in an instant through the reception of immortality and a perfect new body (1 Cor 15:51-52). These two groups will then rise together to meet the Lord in the air and will never again be separated from His face-to-face presence (1 Thess 4:17).

Indeed, for those who have made the necessary spiritual preparations to meet Jesus – whether they be alive at the coming of Jesus or must be resurrected from the sleep of death – His return is the greatest news in history. The coming of Jesus brings to an end their conflict with sin and with Satan and ushers in an eternity in the presence of Jesus. The return of Jesus is a cause of rejoicing for those who are ready to meet Him!



PROPHECY UNCUT

The Return (Part 1): Getting Ready

WHAT WILL JESUS' RETURN BE LIKE FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT READY?

**Revelation 6:15-17;
20:5;
Matthew 24:30-31;
2 Thessalonians 1:7-10;**

There will be two groups who are not ready to meet Jesus when He returns. The first group are those who have rejected or neglected Jesus and who are dead. This group will not be resurrected to see Jesus' return. They will remain in their graves until after the millennium (Rev 20:5).

The second group are those who have rejected or neglected Jesus and who are alive at His return (Rev 16:15-17). For this group, the coming of Jesus is NOT good news (Matt 24:30-31). The very presence of Jesus which is life and resurrection to the righteous will result in death and destruction for the unrighteous (2 Thess 1:7-10).

Notice that the difference in result of the coming of Jesus for the righteous and the unrighteous is the personal state of heart between the two groups. In other words, it is the same Jesus and the same event. Yet there are two opposite outcomes for the two different groups of people based on their personal spiritual preparation or lack thereof. Jesus remains the same. It is our relational standing toward Him that will determine whether the coming of Jesus is going to be good news or bad news for us personally.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE TIMING OF JESUS RETURN?

**Matthew 24:36, 42;
Matthew 24:32-33;
2 Peter 3:3-9**

The Bible is crystal clear that it is impossible to know the exact day or hour that Jesus will return (Matt 24:36, 42). It is possible to know that the time is soon, though, based on the fulfillment of events that the Bible reveals will take place just before the coming of Jesus (Matt 24:32-33). If anyone should arise preaching a message involving a fixed date and time for the coming of Jesus, we may know with certainty that his message is not from God!

It is important to recognize that God's time schedule is not the same as that of human beings (2 Peter 3:8). For human beings who are lucky if they reach the ripe old age of 70 or 80 years, a thousand years seems like a long time because it is more than 10 times the length of a human lifetime. Yet, for God a thousand years is an infinitesimally short period of time relative to eternity (a time period with no limits). In other words, because of our extremely limited lifespan our definition of 'short' is not necessarily the same as God's definition, as He measures the concept of 'short' relative to time without end. It is because some people will insist on looking at time from their shortsighted, extremely limited human perspective, instead of the Divine perspective, that they will become disillusioned by the apparent delay and begin to express



PROPHECY UNCUT

The Return (Part 1): Getting Ready

doubt and skepticism in regard to the Lord's return (2 Pet 3:3-4). Yet the delay is to afford sufficient time for everyone to be ready (2 Pet 3:9).

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE REVEAL ABOUT PREPARATION FOR JESUS RETURN?

**Matthew 24:43-44;
1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4
2 Peter 3:10-13**

Knowing human nature, if God had revealed the exact time of Jesus return, it would likely be the case that people would only consider it necessary to prepare spiritually in the last possible moment of time. In other words, the preparation would not be motivated by a genuine desire for something better, but rather by the fear of the termination of time. The counsel of Jesus is that the true followers of Jesus should make a daily preparation and seek to be ready at all times (Matt 24:43-44). Those who do not do this, will find that the coming of Jesus will surprise them like a thief who arrives in the night to burgle one's house (1 Thess 5:2). The good news, though, is that if the daily preparation is done, there will be no surprises (1 Thess 5:4). The believer will not live in fear of being caught out by the coming of Jesus. The believer will have a growing positive anticipation in looking forward to Jesus soon return.

The knowledge that this world will end soon with the return of Jesus should be a strong and positive motivation to make the necessary preparations. According to the apostle Peter, the blessed hope of Jesus coming should dramatically change the way we live our daily lives (2 Pet 3:10-13). If we are looking for a new creation in which only righteousness dwells, then it behooves us to seek that very righteousness for our own nature. However, our preparation is not only to begin living the life of the future kingdom in the here and now, but also to help others make this necessary preparation so that we may contribute to 'hastening the coming of the day of God' (2 Pet 3:12). In other words, we are to seek God's transforming grace so that we will become ever more like Jesus in character while at the same time we are to engage actively in the mission of God in seeking to prepare the world for the return of Jesus. A person who is truly excited and expectant regarding the return of Jesus will naturally want to share this good news with others!



PROPHECY UNCUT

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SUMMARY & APPEAL

Time is fast drawing to a close. It will not be long before the blessed hope of Jesus soon return is realized. There will be no second chances after the coming of Jesus. To be ready when Jesus comes, our only hope is to make a daily preparation. If we will commit our lives into Jesus' hands and draw close to Him, we will have nothing to fear in regard to the timing or the event of Jesus return.

Have you made a personal commitment to follow Jesus and given your life into His safe keeping? If not, do not waste anymore time. Ready or not, Jesus is coming.





The Return (Part 1): Getting Ready

Works Cited

There are no sources in the current document.

