

DISCOVER

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

8



When Jesus
Comes for You



JUST WEEKS AFTER WORLD WAR I BEGAN

in 1914, Captain Robert Campbell, a British officer of the 1st Battalion East Surrey Regiment, was captured by enemy forces and sent to a prison camp in Magdeburg, Germany. After two years as a prisoner of war, Campbell received word that his mother in England was dying of cancer and had only a short time to live. The British soldier penned a letter to Germany's ruler, Kaiser Wilhelm II, appealing to him for permission to see his dying mother one last time.

Incredibly, word came back that his request would be granted. He would be allowed two weeks to visit his mother—on one condition. He had to promise, on his word of honor as an army officer, that he would return to the German prison camp when his visit was completed. During all of World War I, no other British prisoner of war is known to have been granted such a request—especially given the fact that the British refused a similar appeal from a German soldier imprisoned in Britain.

Did Captain Campbell keep his promise?

Yes, he did. He spent two weeks with his mother in Kent and then, just as he had said he would, he returned to the Magdeburg prison camp where he remained a prisoner of war in Germany until the war ended in 1918.

1 | The Promise

Promises. They aren't always easy to keep. Abraham Lincoln cautioned, "We must not promise what we ought not, lest we be called on to perform what we cannot."

How do you feel when someone makes you a promise, and then breaks it? Or maybe you know what it's like to be the one who has broken a promise. Promises aren't always easy to keep, but there is one promise we can count on, because we can count on the One who has promised. Just before departing from His disciples into heaven, Jesus made this pledge:

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-3).

There are times when we may be tempted to wonder about the Second Coming of Christ. Will He really descend someday from the blue sky above us for a wonderful reunion? We've been separated for so long. Such a gloriously happy ending to the earth's long, tragic history may appear just too good to be true.

However, there's one thing that can keep us going; there's one thing that can keep hope alive in our hearts—and that's



**The coming of Jesus
will be as visible and
dramatic as lightning—
it will not be a hidden event**

His promise. The One who longs more than anything else to experience complete union with His people has promised to return. He wants us to be with Him, and He promised to return and take all who trust in Him to the special place He has prepared for us. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He assured His followers, “I will come again!”

The Second Coming of Jesus is a Bible fact. Scripture speaks of His return approximately 2,500 times. Interestingly, you will find more references to Jesus’ Second Coming than to His birth in Bethlehem. The fact that Jesus is coming to the world a second time is as certain as the reality that He lived on this earth 2,000 years ago. That’s why the Apostle Paul could confidently proclaim that, because Christ “gave Himself for us” on the cross, we can experience a “blessed hope,” the “glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13, 14).

Long ago, God promised that a Messiah would come—a Deliverer who would take our iniquities upon Himself and provide

pardon for human sin. To many people in the ancient world who were living a difficult day-to-day existence, that promise seemed too good to be true. But Jesus did come and die on the cross. The promise came true, and it was more glorious than anyone could have imagined.

His promise to return to earth will come true as well. We can rely on the One who loves us and trust that He will return and gather up those for whom He has paid an infinite price. Can you imagine what a wonderful reunion it will be when we are finally able to see Christ face-to-face? His glorious appearing will swallow up all our sorrows and frustrations and wipe away all the pain we've kept hidden in our hearts. Jesus' return will fulfill our deepest longings and most exciting expectations. And we'll embark on an eternity of face-to-face conversations with the most wonderful Person in the universe. Jesus is coming soon! Are you eager to meet Him?

2 | How Will Jesus Come?

A. Will Jesus come in secret?

"See, I [Jesus] have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:25-27).

Lightning flashes very visibly for great distances. The coming of Jesus will not be a secret or subjective event, so Jesus warns us not to let anyone mislead us with claims that He will return in some hidden manner to a select few.

B. Will Jesus come again as a real Person?

“And while they [Jesus’ followers] looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven’” (Acts 1:10, 11).

Jesus will return in person. On the day of His departure from our world, the angels assured the disciples that the “same Jesus” taken up into heaven—not someone else—would come back.

The Christ who appears as King of Kings will be the same Jesus who healed the sick and opened the eyes of the blind; the same Jesus who spoke gently to the woman found in adultery; the same Jesus who wiped away mourners’ tears and welcomed children onto His lap; the same Jesus who died on Calvary’s cross, rested in the grave, and rose from the dead the third day.

C. Will Jesus come so we can see Him?

The angels promised that “this same Jesus” will return “in like manner” as He went away.

In what way did Jesus leave?

“Now when He [Jesus] had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9).

The disciples clearly saw their Master rising from the earth in His glorified human body. Many witnesses saw Him depart. He will return “in like manner,” in full view, openly.

According to the Apostle John, how many people will witness the return of Jesus?



“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him” (Revelation 1:7).

Both the righteous and the wicked will watch Jesus’ Second Coming. All who are alive when Jesus comes again will witness His return.

How many people did Jesus Himself say would view His return?

“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30).

Every living inhabitant of our globe will witness the Second Coming. Christ’s return preempts and overwhelms every other

event on the planet—sunsets, eclipses, and electrical storms will pale by comparison.

D. In what other way will Jesus broadcast His return?

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Jesus arrives in the clouds “with power and great glory,” like a flash of lightning (Matthew 24:27, 30), and with the mighty blast of the trumpet of God.

E. Who will accompany Jesus when He comes?

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory” (Matthew 25:31).

The presence of just one angel at Christ’s resurrection caused the Roman guards to fall to the ground in shock (Matthew 28:1-4). Imagine what it will be like when Jesus returns in all His splendor, surrounded by “all the holy angels.”

F. Can we predict the exact time of Jesus’ return?

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. . . . Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matthew 24:36, 44).

Although everyone will see and hear Jesus’ glorious arrival, many will be unprepared for it. Are you personally ready for Jesus to come?

3 | What Will Jesus Do When He Comes Again?

A. Jesus will bring salvation to everyone who waits for Him.

“To those who eagerly wait for Him He [Jesus] will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Hebrews 9:28).

“And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:31).

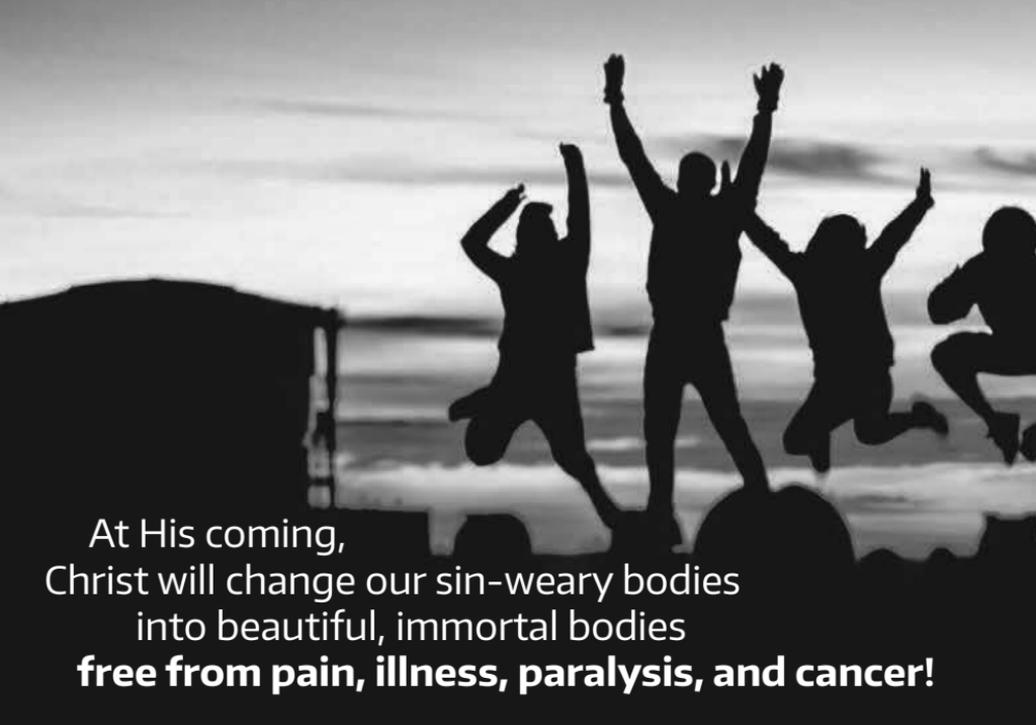
If you have accepted Jesus as your Savior and given your life to Him, He will gather you with the redeemed to live with Him forever.

B. Jesus will awaken the righteous dead who sleep in their graves.

“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28, 29).

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

When Jesus returns, He will descend from heaven with a shout that wakes up the dead. That mighty voice will be heard



At His coming,
Christ will change our sin-weary bodies
into beautiful, immortal bodies
free from pain, illness, paralysis, and cancer!

around the world and break open graves in every cemetery. Millions of people who have accepted Jesus through the ages will be raised to life. What a wonderful day that will be!

C. Jesus will transform all the righteous at His coming.

The Apostle Paul assures us that Jesus returns not only for the righteous dead, but also for the righteous living. He adds:

“Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and



we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

To prepare us for eternity, Christ changes these sin-sick, weary bodies of ours into beautiful, immortal bodies. No more arthritis, paralysis, or cancer! Shut down the hospitals and close up the funeral homes—Christ has come!

D. Jesus will take all the righteous people to heaven at His coming.

Jesus Himself made the promise while here on earth, “I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3).

The New Testament clearly shows that Jesus will take the saved to heaven at His Second Coming. Peter speaks of the

inheritance of the redeemed “reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4). Paul tells us of “the hope which is laid up for you in heaven” (Colossians 1:5). We can look forward to exploring the marvels of God’s city, the New Jerusalem, and getting to know our Heavenly Father face-to-face. In a later lesson, we will discover how the redeemed, after living in heaven with Jesus for 1,000 years, will come back with Christ to spend eternity in a completely re-created, perfect world (Revelation 20-22).

E. Jesus will destroy all the wicked at His return.

According to Jesus, what will happen to the wicked people still alive at His Second Coming?

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed” (Luke 17:26-30).

The wicked—those who have persistently rejected all of Jesus’ offers of mercy—actually pass sentence upon themselves. As they stare at His inexpressibly glorious face coming toward them from the clouds, a sudden awareness of their sin and indifference proves too painful to bear; they cry to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!” (Revelation 6:16).

The wicked prefer death to standing before Jesus’ all-seeing gaze. They know that the voice now thundering from the sky once

tenderly implored them to accept divine grace. Those who lost themselves in the mad rush after money, pleasure, or position now realize they've neglected the only really worthwhile thing in life.

It is a crushing revelation. After all, not one of them needed to be lost. God Himself finds “no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezekiel 33:11). He is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus implores us, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). But, incredibly, some turn aside His gracious invitation.

4 | Are You Ready for Jesus to Come?

Jesus has done all He can to help us avoid an eternity without Him. In fact, it cost Him a great deal to guarantee us a glorious future with Him in heaven. It cost Him His life!

“It is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. . . . the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us. . . . put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts” (Romans 13:11-14).

“But now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. . . . Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Hebrews 9:26-28).

The Savior who died on the cross to take away your sins will appear “a second time,” and He will bring salvation to those “who eagerly wait for him” (Hebrews 9:28). Without the Second

Coming, the cross would be a failure. Christ wants us to live with Him forever, but in order for that to happen when He comes, we must allow Him to rule in our hearts as Savior and Lord right now.

The world has been hit with horrific natural disasters in recent years. Back-to-back earthquakes in Ecuador in 2016 caused multiple injuries, deaths, and devastating destruction. The 2011 Tohoku earthquake/tsunami was the most powerful earthquake ever recorded to hit Japan. The tsunami waves alone reached heights of more than 130 feet. Thousands were killed, missing, and injured.

Hurricane Katrina will go down in history as one of the worst natural disasters to hit the United States in modern times. It caused catastrophic damage and was responsible for at least 1,836 casualties in New Orleans and along the coastlines of Mississippi and Florida.

In the aftermath of the storm, thousands were stranded by high water, perched atop their homes or other buildings, waiting for rescue. The hours—and days—passed, filled with weariness, thirst, hunger, fear, and uncertainty.



However, help was on the way. Massive rescue efforts were being put into motion. Military helicopters began arriving. Hour after hour, pilots and crews searched for flood victims, hovering just overhead and lowering rescue baskets as they raised desperate survivors to safety one by one.

Can you imagine the joy when those frightened, weary people saw the helicopters arriving? Saw the crewmembers lowering the baskets that would take them to safety? What a joy that must have been!

Very soon, Jesus, our Savior, will descend from the clouds to rescue us. The long horror story of sin will finally come to a close.

Continued on page 16

WordSearch

If you want to go deeper into this study topic, complete this section.

1. Jesus predicted distress and calamities in the world just before His return. How should we react to these things as we see them taking place around us? (Luke 21:25-28)

2. How does the Apostle Paul describe the way we should be living our daily lives as we look for the “blessed hope” of Jesus’ glorious return? (Titus 2:11-13)

3. What is one thing that must happen before Jesus can return to this planet? Why? (Matthew 24:14)

4. What does Jesus say about the nearness of His Second Coming? (Revelation 22:12)

5. We cannot know the day and hour when Jesus will return, but does this mean that it’s impossible to have any idea of when it will happen? Which parable of Jesus speaks to this point? (Luke 21:29-31)



What excitement—what joy—there will be on that day! Jesus sees *you!* He knows who *you* are! He is coming to rescue *you!*

Are you ready to welcome the King in all His glory? Have you discovered a living hope that can fill your heart? If you have not yet done so, won't you invite

Jesus personally into your life just now? Just as Jesus' return will solve the world's problems, so His coming into your heart today will help you deal with your present problems. He wants to deliver you from the guilt and burden of sin and give you eternal life. You can depend on Jesus. He will prepare you for His coming and give you the wonderful assurance of a life of eternal happiness.

My Decision

- I want to follow Jesus daily and be ready to meet Him when He comes.
- Please pray for me as I continue to study God's Word, the Bible.

My Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the promise that You will return to this earth again. I want to be ready when You come, and I can't wait to live with You forever. Please guide my life as I follow You. I ask this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

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Voice of Prophecy | www.vop.com
PO Box 999, Loveland, CO 80539, USA

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