JESUS IS COMING SOON

TEACHER'S GUIDE

THIS LESSON IS ADAPTED FROM THE BOOKLET "A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE," WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT JESUS' SECOND COMING.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

That question looms in the minds and hearts of people around the world. Some debate, predict, or philosophize about it. Others ponder it silently in the innermost recesses of their hearts. Still others resolutely push aside all thoughts of what the future might bring, or fail to give thought to it at all. However, the question must not be ignored, because careful comparison of Biblical prophecies and conditions in our world today indicate that the culmination of God's dealings with the people of this earth will soon occur.

The Second Coming of Christ is a future event so important that it is mentioned in almost every New Testament book, and the imminence of His return is a theme woven through the prophecies concerning this subject. Christ's Second Coming encompasses two separate events: the Rapture of the Church, when Christ comes to catch away those who have made spiritual preparation; and the Revelation of Christ, when He comes with His saints from Heaven to execute judgment upon the ungodly and set up His Kingdom on this earth. The Rapture of the

Church is the next great event in God's plan for the ages.

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He taught that He would return one day and repeatedly instructed His disciples to be prepared for His return. His assurance that He would come back again was one of the promises He comforted His disciples with prior to His death. The Early Church lived in anticipation of His soon return, and believers of every era are challenged in God's Word to live in that same continual state of readiness.

After the followers of Christ are taken from this earth in the Rapture, a terrible tide of destruction will come upon the world. That period is referred to in Scripture as the Great Tribulation—a literal seven-year period of terror and torment the likes of which have never been known. The Holy Spirit is in the world today, dwelling in the hearts of believers and holding back that time when God's wrath will be poured out upon those who have rejected Him.

These cataclysmic events are just ahead, so it is vital that we ensure we are ready for the Rapture of the Church.

SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON

AUGUST 31, 2025

FOCUS VERSE

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Matthew 24:44)

FOCUS TEXT

Matthew 24:3-14 Mark 13:32-37 2 Timothy 3:1-5

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LESSON QUESTIONS & SUGGESTED RESPONSES

1. The Bible is a written record not only of history, but also of what is to come. Its pages contain prophesies of the signs that will precede Christ's return to this earth, along with those that have already been fulfilled. Yet many fail to believe. Jesus said to the Jewish religious leaders of His day, "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (Matthew 16:3). Tragically, that is often still the case today.

One of the most detailed passages in the Bible concerning end time events is found in Matthew chapter 24. When Jesus' disciples asked Him what signs would precede His coming and the end of the world, He responded with a comprehensive list. In it, He telescoped near future events concerning the Jewish people of His day, and far future events that would not occur until the time of the end. Some of these signs have already occurred, some are occurring today, and some are still to come. IN MATTHEW 24:3-14, WHICH OF THE SIGNS CHRIST PREDICTED DO YOU SEE OCCURRING IN THE WORLD TODAY?

RESPONSE: You may wish to compile a list with your class of the signs that they observe in the world today, based on these verses. The list should include widespread deception regarding Christ, wars and rumors of wars, famines and pestilences, earthquakes, persecution of Christian believers, numerous false prophets, and a lack of love. (Supporting facts for these categories can also be found in the booklet, "A Glimpse Into the Future.")

2. In God's Word, the nation of Israel often is a prophetic signpost. In Isaiah 11:12 we read, "And he [God] shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." That prophecy was fulfilled in 1948 when Israel became a nation for the first time since 597 B.C. Since then, numerous

Biblical prophecies regarding Israel have come to pass, including the return of rainfall to the land, the restoration of a pure language, the establishing of the shekel as official currency, and a number of astonishing military victories. IN SCRIPTURE, ISRAEL SOMETIMES IS REPRESENTED BY A FIG TREE. WHAT INSTRUCTION DID JESUS GIVE HIS DISCIPLES IN MATTHEW 24:32-33, AND HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO US TODAY?

RESPONSE: As part of Jesus' discourse on end-time signs in Matthew 24, He instructed the disciples, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it [the coming of Christ] is near, even at the doors" (Matthew 24:32-33).

These verses apply to us because we can see that the prophetic fulfillments that have already taken place in Israel have set the stage for end time events. Today, radical elements in the Islamic world want to destroy Israel, while much of the rest of the world wants to bring peace to the region by dividing Israel and Jerusalem. Although politics in the Middle East can be confusing, one thing is increasingly clear: the eyes of the world are riveted upon Israel, the epicenter of the momentous events that will shape the world's future. What many fail to realize is that no lasting peace agreement involving this region will be established until the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, sets up His Kingdom and rules from Jerusalem.

3. In addition to Jesus' warning given in Matthew 24, prophets in the Old Testament and Christ's disciples in the New Testament spoke of signs that would indicate Christ's return to this earth was imminent. For example, in the Old Testament, Daniel predicted that in the last days, multitudes would travel to and fro, and knowledge would increase (Daniel 12:4). Zechariah's prophecy could apply to weapons of

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mass destruction (see Zechariah 14:12). In the New Testament, Peter predicted that many false prophets would emerge, bringing in heresies (2 Peter 2:1-2). John the Revelator indicated that the Gospel would be preached as a witness to all nations (Revelation 14:6). WHY DO YOU THINK GOD PROVIDED SO MANY AND VARIED SIGNS RELATED TO THE CONDITION OF THE WORLD AT THE END OF TIME?

RESPONSE: Your group should recognize that the multiplicity of signs forewarning the end times are indicative of how important it is to believe that Christ's return will occur soon. It is vital that people make the proper spiritual preparation.

Point out to your group that there is ample instruction in the Bible about what it takes to be ready. Because God has provided so many indicators of the end of time, there will be no excuse for those who fail to prepare.

4. Biblical prophecies paint a graphic picture of the human condition just prior to Christ's return. In 2 Timothy 3, Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, described to Timothy how the last days would be characterized by sinfulness. He introduced this portion of his epistle with the statement, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." The Greek word translated *perilous* means "hard to bear, troublesome, dangerous." Then Paul proceeded to describe what brought about the peril: the sinfulness of man. WHAT DOES 2 TIMOTHY 3:1-5 TELL US ABOUT THE CONDITION OF MANKIND IN THE LAST DAYS?

RESPONSE: Consider having a volunteer read each of these verses aloud so your group can discuss how closely Paul's descriptive list of behaviors in the last days aligns with behaviors we see in society today. You may wish to note each on a white board or flip chart for ease of reference.

To start the discussion, point out that the prediction that "men shall be lovers of their own selves" is the first negative characteristic mentioned. The Greek word used in this phrase, philautos, means "self-loving." Its placement as first on the

list is appropriate, because the love of self is the foundation for all the depravity that follows in Paul's description.

5. The Rapture of the Church will occur when Jesus calls His followers (both Gentile and Jewish believers in Christ) from this earth, and they are transported to meet with Him in the air. The word rapture does not appear in Scripture. It is derived from the Latin Vulgate translation of 1 Thessalonians 4:17. There the phrase "caught up" is translated into the Latin word rapturo, which literally means "being carried away in body or spirit." While the word itself does not appear, the Bible gives many details about what will occur at the time of the Rapture. WHAT **CAN WE LEARN ABOUT THIS EVENT** FROM THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES?

- MATTHEW 24:27
- MATTHEW 24:36
- MATTHEW 24:40-41
- 1 CORINTHIANS 15:52
- 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16
- 1 THESSALONIANS 4:17
- JOHN 14:2-3

RESPONSE: Review of these Scriptures will provide these details about the Rapture of the Church.

- Matthew 24:27 It will be an instantaneous happening.
- Matthew 24:36 No man knows the day nor the hour of its occurrence.
- Matthew 24:40-41 It will be a time of separation between believers and unbelievers.
- 1 Corinthians 15:52 Our physical bodies will undergo change.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16 It will be accompanied by three sounds: a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the sound of the trump.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17 Christ will meet believers in the air.
- John 14:2-3 Believers will go to a prepared place.

To wrap up your discussion of this question, you may wish to read Revelation 19:7-9. These verses relate that the believers who go with Christ at the Rapture of the Church will take part in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, where rewards will be given for faithful service, and Christ himself will serve the saints (see Luke 12:37).

6. Luke 21:36 and Matthew 24:42 have a common theme. WHAT ACTION WORD OCCURS IN BOTH VERSES, AND HOW DO WE DO THIS IN OUR DAILY LIVES IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S RETURN?

RESPONSE: After your class identifies the word "watch" in these two verses, class discussion could center around the following ways to "watch" in our daily lives.

- We watch for God's warnings. One way to do this is through prayer and being sensitive to His Spirit. He will not allow us to be taken by surprise by the enemy. He will alert us to danger, but we must not overlook His warnings.
- We watch world developments. Events happening right now are fulfillments of Bible prophecies, and as Christ's followers, we are to take note of these signs.
- We watch for God's leadings. He says, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalm 32:8). We must be careful to let our lives be guided by God rather than making decisions without consulting Him. Great consequences sometimes turn upon one seemingly trivial choice!
 We watch for God's teachings. We must take time to study and learn

Your group should conclude that if we watch for God's warnings, His leadings, and His teachings, and obey them, our communication with God will be unhindered. We will be sensitive to His Spirit and alert to anything we need to do to

be spiritually prepared for Christ's return.

of Him, and be careful to follow His

instructions.

7. When the believers are taken from this world, a time of terrible tribulation will begin on earth. God's wrath will be poured out on those remaining on earth. SOME WHO ARE POSTPONING MAKING THEIR PEACE WITH GOD MAY THINK, I'LL JUST GO THROUGH THE TRIBULATION, BUT I WON'T TAKE THE MARK OF THE BEAST. BASED ON 2 THESSALONIANS 2:5-8, WHY IS THAT SUPPOSITION IN EPPOR?

RESPONSE: You may need to preface class discussion of this question by pointing out to your group that the word he in the phrase "he who now letteth will let" refers to the Spirit, and

the word letteth could be translated "hinders" or "restrains." For now, Satan is being restrained, although lawlessness is already at work in the world. However, when Christ takes His followers from this earth in the Rapture and the Spirit is no longer abiding here, the restraining power that holds back Satan's evil influence will be "taken out of the way" so there will be no influence drawing an individual who has previously rejected God's call to salvation.

8. WHAT MIGHT YOU EXPECT TO SEE IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WHO ARE TRULY READY AND WATCHING FOR THE LORD'S RETURN?

Your group should be able to offer a variety of specific indicators in the lives of those who are prepared for the Lord's return. These may include attributes such as faithfulness, obedience, zeal, etc. You may wish to conclude the discussion by summarizing all these specifics as part of "living in the light of eternity."

Veteran minister and missionary George Hughes preached in 1949, "The Rapture must be the thing that motivates our life, that takes charge of every ambition, as it were. God does not want us to make plans of our own without considering first the coming of the Lord. He does not want us to live as though we had three score and ten years to live on this earth. Every action, every plan, every hope of ours should be contingent on one thing: If the Lord tarries. Many times we are so busy with our own activities and things that are near to our heart that we forget the Lord is coming. Remember, He is going to appear for those who look for Him."

There has never been a period in history when end-time prophecies aligned more closely with the conditions of the world than they do today. Christ's return is clearly imminent, and we must be certain that we are ready. We have something wonderful to look forward to—the Rapture of the saints of God! May we be ever more vigilant to make our calling and election sure as we see that day approaching.

LET'S BE READY FOR THAT DAY!

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