

### 3 – The Great Escape

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1

#### Rescued and Reunited



2

In 2010 thirty-three miners were trapped alive deep underground in a copper and gold mine in Northern Chile. Seventeen days after the collapse, as workers removed a drill bit which had just completed a bore hole, they found a hand-written note that said “We are well in the shelter, the thirty-three.” Together these miners survived a record sixty-nine days underground!



3

Finally the day came when the preparations were completed, and the miners were to be winched to the surface one by one. An estimated one billion people watched the television feed live, as jubilant families and national leaders greeted the heroic men emerging from that hole. The last miner, upon exiting the capsule, held up a sign that read “Mission Accomplished Chile.” The rescue had been a resounding success!



4

Tonight we’re going to detail a rescue story in the Bible that is even more thrilling and exciting than the rescue of the Chilean miners!



5

Unlike the fear and dread of the many doomsday predictions, the Bible’s account of how this world is going to end is filled with hope!



6

War, famine, and disease all have and will take their toll on humanity, but God’s Word tells us that humanity is not going to die out because of these disasters.

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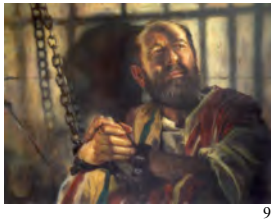
Instead, the Bible says the world will end with the triumphant return of Jesus Christ to this earth!  
He will return to this same earth that He left almost 2,000 years ago, and He will return to end time as we know it and usher in eternity.

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Yes, friends, King Jesus is coming soon, and there is no doubt that the problems of this world are beyond the help of humanity—that only Christ and His Father are capable of straightening out the overwhelming problems of Planet Earth!  
What a blessing it will be when the King returns!

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When the apostle Paul was a prisoner in the dark, damp Mammertine Prison, waiting for the executioner to behead him, he wrote that he was

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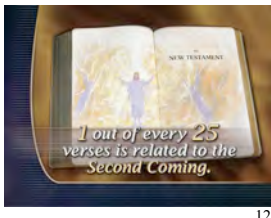
(Text: Titus 2:13)  
“Looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”  
Titus 2:13.  
Paul wrote this encouraging letter to Titus, his “true son in the faith,” to remind Titus of the “glorious coming” of our Lord.

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If you find that your life at times has dark nights of discouraging circumstances, look up and remember that “blessed hope”— the second coming of Christ to this earth – that will make all things right!

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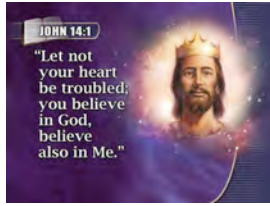


The most talked about event in the New Testament is the second coming of Christ.  
About one of every 25 verses has something to do with that event. Christ spent more time talking about that event than any other topic in the New Testament.  
One of the best-known promises of Jesus is found in John chapter fourteen:

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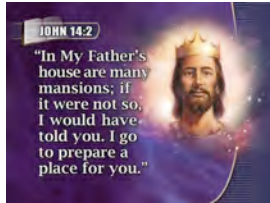
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13

(Text: John 14:1-3)

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.



14

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.



15

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again,



16

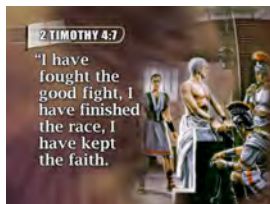
and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

John 14:1-3.



17

Over the centuries, whenever disappointment, hardship, or death have threatened Christ's followers, this star of hope—the promise of His return—has brought them courage and strength to endure. Jesus' followers have always eagerly looked forward to the fulfillment of this promise.



18

(Text: 2 Timothy 4:7,8)

Later in his life, as the executioner stood but steps away, Paul triumphantly proclaimed:

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.



19

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge,

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will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”  
2 Timothy 4:7, 8

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Paul could valiantly face the executioner’s sword on that fateful day because he had faith in Christ’s promise to return!

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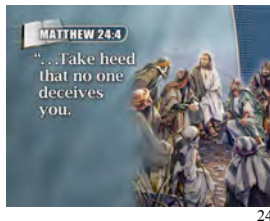
Yes, Jesus WILL return!  
And friend, Jesus’ promise to His disciples belongs to all of us.  
Jesus will come!

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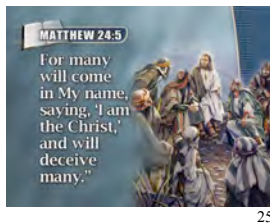
When the disciples asked what the signs of His coming and the end of the world would be, Jesus gave a detailed account of events that would take place just before His return.

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(Text: Matthew 24:4, 5)  
Let’s read about it:  
Jesus said, “...Take heed that no one deceives you.

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For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.”  
Matthew 24:4, 5.  
In verse 24, Jesus elaborates on this issue.

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(Text: Matthew 24:24)  
“For false christs, and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive,

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if possible, even the elect.”



We will not mistake the real coming of Christ!  
No one could do that. But we could be taken in by a counterfeit christ and be fooled before Christ appears!  
Think about it:



If we do not know how to tell the difference – how to spot a counterfeit – we may attach ourselves to an imposter, thinking he is Christ!  
Jesus warned it could happen! And He wasn't talking about a few clumsy deceptions.



Evidently He was speaking about incredible impersonations, so carefully planned and executed that almost the whole world will be deceived!



The devil will use false christs and false prophets to try and confuse people about the second coming.

You see, these imposters will work miracles—healing the sick and giving supernatural demonstrations to back up their claims!



(Text: 2 Corinthians 11:13, 14)

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.



And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.”

2 Corinthians 11:13, 14.

The devil will even transform himself and stage a counterfeit second coming of Jesus.

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34

What would such an imposter be like?

They may wear clothing such as people think Christ might have worn. They may speak in a kind, melodious voice, quoting Scripture and seeming very wise.

They may even attract a large following of people.

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35

They may heal people and do marvelous signs and wonders, and the temptation may be overwhelming to doubt what the Bible says. Many will be deceived!

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36

But we dare not trust our senses—what we hear, what we see, and how we feel!

There is only one safe guide for determining whether someone is genuine or an imposter—the Bible.

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37

Let's consider a few of the signs or features unique to Christ's second coming so we won't be deceived!

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38

Christ's Second Coming Is a Visible Coming

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39

(Text: Matthew 24:27)

“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 24:27.

In fact, in Revelation 1:7 we read,

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40

(Text: Revelation 1:7)

“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him...”

No one but Jesus can make an appearance like this!

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41

So that we need not be deceived by imposters, the Bible tells us exactly in what manner Jesus will return – and it will be in the same way that He left!

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42

After Jesus had finished His work on this earth, He was about ready to ascend to heaven.

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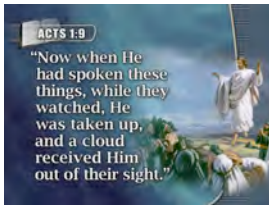


43

He took His close followers out to the Mount of Olives, and after He had instructed His disciples and said His farewell, suddenly He was taken up into the heavens.

Let's notice what the Bible says about this event.

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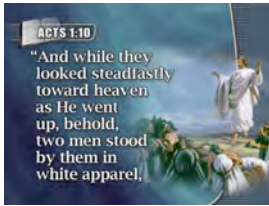


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(Text: Acts 1:9-11)

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

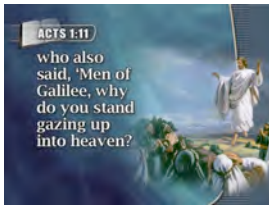
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45

And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel

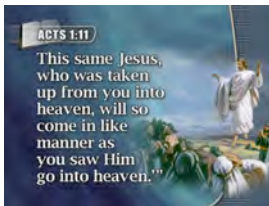
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46

who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven?’

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47

This same Jesus who was taken up into heaven will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”  
Acts 1:9-11.

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48

Two angels from God had come to assure the disciples that the promise Jesus had given them would be fulfilled. Jesus had said plainly what they would SEE:



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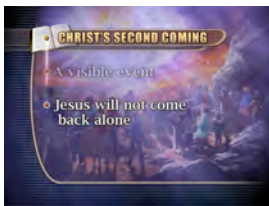
(Text: Luke 21:27)

“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” Luke 21:27.



50

No one will have to tell you when Jesus comes. You will see Him coming in the clouds. But there are other characteristics the devil cannot duplicate.



51

Jesus Will Not Be Coming Back Alone–It Will Be Glorious!



52

(Text: Matthew 25:31)

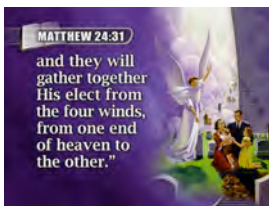
Jesus said, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.” Matthew 25:31.



53

(Text: Matthew 24:31)

Why does Jesus bring the angels with Him? He gives the answer: “And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet,



54

and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Matthew 24:31.



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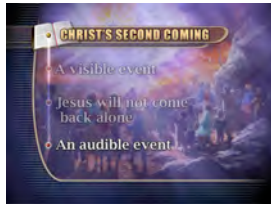
Yes, Jesus will be accompanied by all the holy angels— filling the sky with glory indescribable.

Now you know why false Christs will have an impossible time trying to duplicate Jesus' return!

No one can!

Not only will the coming of Christ be visible and glorious, it will also be audible!

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56

It Will Be an Audible Coming—and the Righteous Dead Are Raised Back to Life

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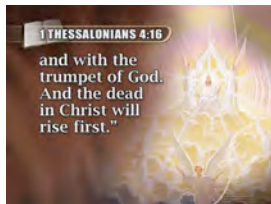


57

(Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:16)

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel,

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58

and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16.

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59

So you see, Christ's coming will not only be visible, but also audible—heard by everyone.

So penetrating will be the call of God and the sound of the trumpet that the dead in Christ will be awakened and come forth from their graves.

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60

Can you imagine the joy when the graves are opened and families are reunited?

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61

Do you see how impossible it would be for Satan to counterfeit the real coming of Christ?



62

There is still more good news!  
Notice what happens to the righteous living at Christ's second coming:



63

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



64

And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”  
1 Thessalonians 4:17.



65

The faithful followers of Jesus are caught up with the resurrected dead to meet the Lord in the air.  
What a happy reunion that will be for many families.



66

Paul gives us more details of what will happen when Jesus returns:



67

(Text: 1 Corinthians 15:51-53)  
“Behold, I shew you a mystery; . . . we shall all be changed,

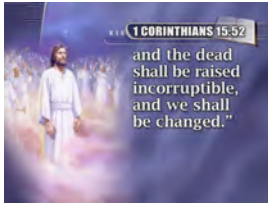
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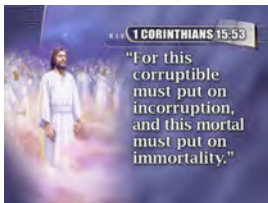
68

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound,



69

and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.



70

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."  
1 Corinthians 15:51-53.



God will give every follower of Jesus His gift of love—life everlasting.  
All other gifts are meaningless without this gift of immortality.



72

(Text: Philippians 3:20, 21)  
And there is something else God will give His people:  
"... We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:



73

who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Philippians 3:20, 21.  
A body like Christ's.  
No more aches or pains—or disease.  
What news could be more welcome?

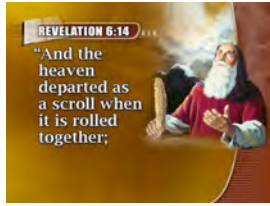


74

There is another class of people. The second coming will not be welcome news for them. Listen to how the Bible describes the last earth shaking events of history.

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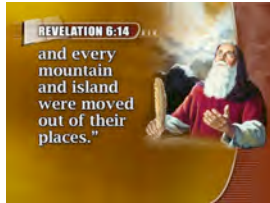


75

(Text: Revelation 6:14-17)

“And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together;

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76

and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

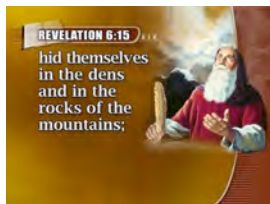
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77

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, . . .  
. . . and the mighty men . . .

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78

hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

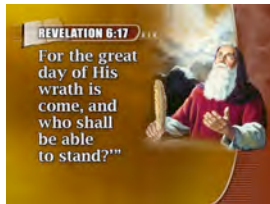
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79

and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us, and hide us from  
the face of him that sits on the throne’ . . .

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80

For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to  
stand?”

Revelation 6:14-17.

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81

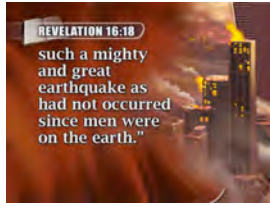
(Text: Revelation 16:18)

“And there were noises and thunders and lightnings; and there  
was a great earthquake,

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82

such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.” Revelation 16:18.

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83

This earthquake will break down the cities of the earth. No one could possibly miss an earthquake like this as it ushers in the coming of Christ!

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84

Jesus warned that His coming would be at a time when no one was expecting it. He also said that people would be busy wasting their lives in foolish pleasure.

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85

(Text: Matthew 24:30)  
In Matthew 24:30, we are told that when Jesus returns, “...all the tribes of the earth will mourn...”

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86

This is what Jesus said would happen to those who are not ready for that day!  
They are lost – and they know it!  
What a sad picture, when it could have been so different.  
Friend, that day will be real!  
There will be no waking up to find it was only a dream!

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87

Nothing is more important on earth than being ready to meet Jesus when He comes.  
How fragile are the earthly treasures we prize so greatly!  
One earthquake, and it will all be gone!

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88

(Text: Luke 21:36)

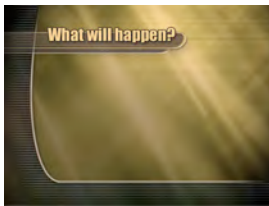
“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass,



89

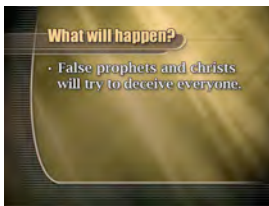
and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Luke 21:36



90

Let's just review quickly what we have learned as we have studied the Bible together:



91

- False prophets and christs will try to deceive everyone.

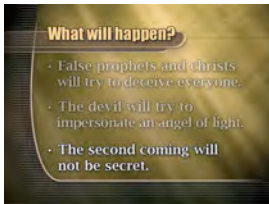
False prophets and christs will try to deceive everyone.



92

- False prophets and christs will try to deceive everyone.
- The devil will try to impersonate an angel of light.

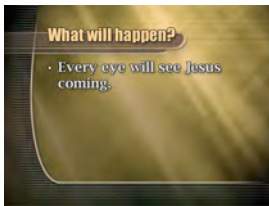
The devil will appear as an angel of light.



93

- False prophets and christs will try to deceive everyone.
- The devil will try to impersonate an angel of light.
- The second coming will not be secret.

The second coming will not be secret.



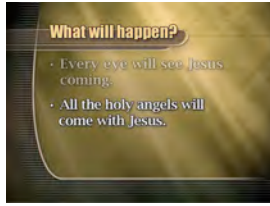
94

- Every eye will see Jesus coming.

Every eye will see Jesus coming.

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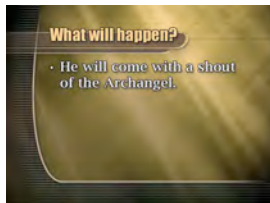
95

All the holy angels will come with Jesus.



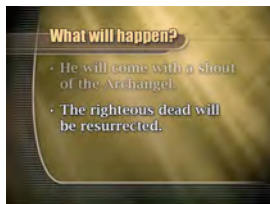
96

He will come with the blast of a trumpet.



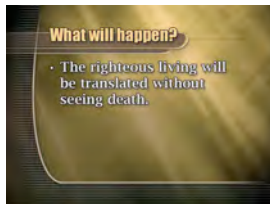
97

He will come with a shout of the Archangel.



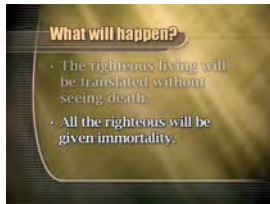
98

The righteous dead will be resurrected.



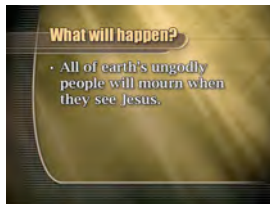
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The righteous living will be translated without seeing death.



100

All the righteous will be given immortality.

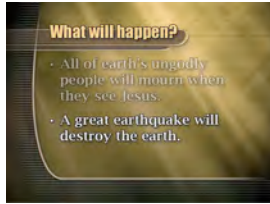


101

All of earth's ungodly people will mourn when they see Jesus.

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A great earthquake will destroy the earth.

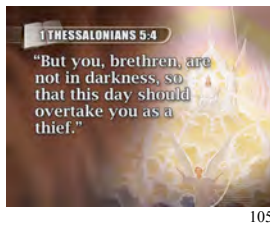


All the lost will be slain.



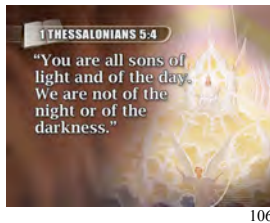
Yes, the Second Coming will come as a surprise to many, but it won't be a surprise to those who are waiting and watching for it!

The apostle Paul assures the believers that they have nothing to fear in anticipation of Christ's return:



(Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:4, 5)

“But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.



“You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.” 1 Thessalonians 5:4, 5.



For those who are walking in the light of God's Word this will be a wonderful day!



With inexpressible joy they will behold the realization of their hopes and dreams, the fulfillment of Jesus' promises they have believed and trusted!



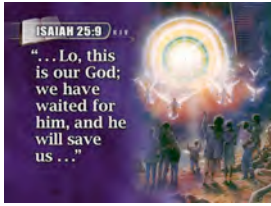
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109

They will not be frightened or surprised, but will triumphantly exclaim,



110

(Text: Isaiah 25:9)

“...Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him and He will save us.”



111

As graves are opened the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory. They are changed “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” All blemishes and deformities are left behind.

What a wonderful day that will be!



112

Angels gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heaven to the other. Little children are carried by holy angels to their mother’s arms.



113

Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the City of God.



114

Upon the heads of the over-comers, Jesus with His own right hand places a crown of glory.

Unutterable joy fills every heart, and each voice is raised in grateful praise.

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115

Before the ransomed throng, is the Holy City. Jesus opens wide the pearly gates, and the nations that have kept the commandments and patience of Jesus enter in.

There they behold the Paradise of God, the home of Adam before he sinned.

Then that voice, richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, is heard, saying: “Your conflict is ended.”

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116

(Text: Matthew 25:34)

‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” Matthew 25:34.

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117

I want to hear those words, don't you? There's nothing on this earth that I want to trade for hearing Jesus speak those words to me. And this can be our privilege; it will be our destiny, if we choose to be ready for that day!

Jesus invites us to come to Him just as we are and simply let Him prepare us for His soon return.

He invites us to simply trust His word, His promises, and His love. He invites us today to make the choice to be a part of His eternal kingdom.

Isn't that the choice you want to make?

Will you say yes to His appeal right now?

How many would like to join me just now [*raise your hand*] in telling Jesus, “Yes! Yes! I want to be there. I'm not going to let anything prevent me from being ready for that day.” Why don't we stand together as we pray tonight?

[*Suggested Prayer*]

*“Dear Father in heaven, You have seen each hand raised tonight. You have seen each heart, and now you hear each prayer. Please save us by Your grace and prepare us through Your power to be ready for your soon return. Thank you for each decision made (or made again) tonight, each heart that has said “Yes” to You. Please bless each one, bless each family and each home, and help us to keep our hearts and affections focused on the things of eternity, the things that really matter. We love You and we thank You in Jesus' name, Amen.”*

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