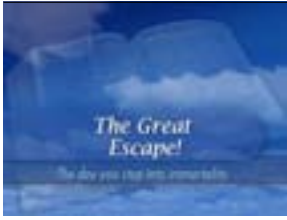


3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



1

The Day You Step Into Immortality



2

Mary was tired. It had been a very busy week. Her life seemed to be one constant whirlwind of activity. Driving home from the store, she turned off the highway onto the narrow country road which led to her house.



3

Suddenly a meteor shower lit up the night sky. Shooting stars brilliantly illuminated the heavens.



4

Unaccustomed to such a starry display, she anxiously pressed down on the accelerator.

She immediately thought, "This is the end of the world! Christ is coming! All I want to do is get home and be with my son."

Commenting on this experience later, Mary said, "When I saw the heavens so bright, I thought Jesus was coming that very moment."



5

Have you ever wondered if the world will end some day? If you have, perhaps you have wondered how it will end? Will some colossal meteorite shower signal the end?



6

(Video: 8 sec) Some people think the world will end in a nuclear war—that human beings will destroy themselves and all life on earth.

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



7

Others think the world's population will explode to the place where the earth just can't support so many people, and mass starvation will follow.



8

Still others worry that someday maybe an asteroid or a comet will hit the earth and destroy it.



9

(Video: 8 sec) But do you know that long ago, the Bible prophesied exactly how the world will end?

And friends, the good news is that the human race is not going to die out because of war or starvation or even by colliding with another object in space.



10

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.



11

It's interesting to discover what people think will happen when asked what they think the return of Jesus will be like.



12

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!

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



13

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



14

(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.



15

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!



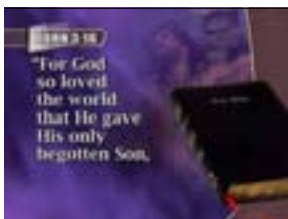
16

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.

There are two texts in the New Testament that every Bible-believing person should know.



17

(Text: John 3:16)

The one perhaps best known is John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,

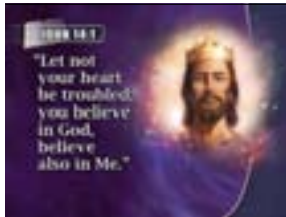


18

that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

The second one is a beautiful promise Jesus made shortly before His crucifixion and ascension:

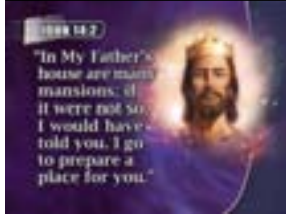
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(Text: John 14:1-3)

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

19



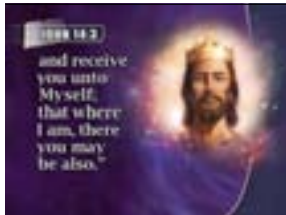
In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

20



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

21



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

John 14:1-3.

22



Over the centuries, whenever disappointment, hardship, or death have threatened Christ's followers,

23



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.

24



(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.

25



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

26

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



27

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



28

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



29

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



30

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.



31

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



32

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.



33

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



34

if possible, even the elect.”

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



35

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.



36

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

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



37

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.



38

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



39

(Text: 2 Corinthians 11:13, 14)

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



40

**And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.”
2 Corinthians 11:13, 14.**

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE

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



41

(Video: 13 sec) Every now and then someone appears on the scene claiming to be Christ. They may wear clothing such as people think Christ might have worn.

**They speak in a kind, melodious voice.
They quote Scripture a lot.
They seem to be very wise.**

**Some of them attract a very large following of people who believe that Christ has come to earth again.
But none of these people are Christ.**

**We can tell you that in total certainty.
And why?
Such a person may look as you would expect Jesus to look.
He may talk as you would expect Jesus to talk.**



42

**He may heal people and do marvelous signs and wonders, and the temptation may be overwhelming to doubt what the Bible says.
But we dare not trust our senses—what we hear, what we see, and how we feel!**



43

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



44

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

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



45

Christ's Second Coming Is a Visible Coming



46

(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.



47

(Text: Revelation 1:7)

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



48

Counterfeits may appear here or there, but no imposter can come in the clouds of heaven so every eye can see Him



49

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



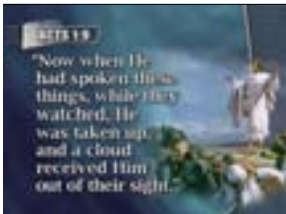
50

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.



51

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



52

(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."

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



53

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



54

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



55

**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.**



56

**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:**



57

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



58

**No one will have to tell you when Jesus comes. You will see Him coming in the clouds. But there are other signs the devil cannot duplicate.
Christ is not going to suddenly appear in some remote place or step out of a space ship.**



59

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



60

**(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.**

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



61

(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,



62

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

Matthew 24:31.



63

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

Now you know why these people who claim to be Christ can't possibly be!

They would have an impossible time trying to duplicate Jesus' return!

No one can!

But there are more events connected with the coming of Jesus.



64

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



65

(Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:16)

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



66

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

1 Thessalonians 4:16.



67

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

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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.



68

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



69

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



70

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



71

(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.



72

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



73

(Video: 4 sec) 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.



74

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

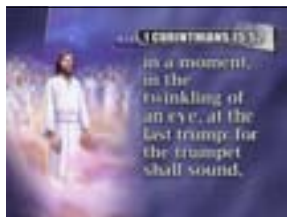
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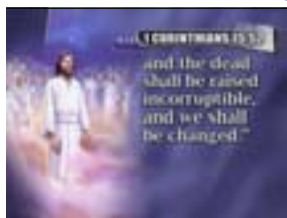
(Text: 1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; . . . we shall all be changed,



76

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



77

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



78

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



79

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

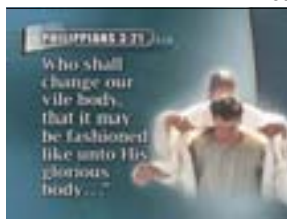


80

(Text: Philippians 3:20, 21)

And there is something else God will give His people:

” . . . We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:



81

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.

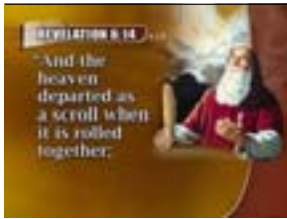
What news could be more welcome?



82

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.

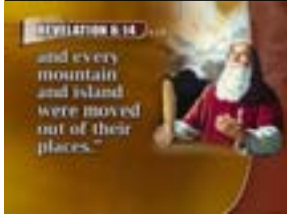
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83

(Text: Revelation 6:14-17)

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



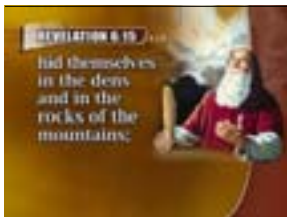
84

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



85

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



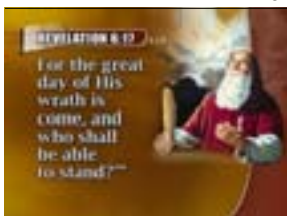
86

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



87

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



88

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

Revelation 6:14-17.



89

(Text: Revelation 16:18)

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



90

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

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



91

**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!**



92

**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.**



93

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



94

**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!**



95

**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!**



96

**(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,**



97

**and to stand before the Son of Man."
Luke 21:36**

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



98

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



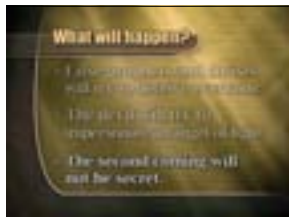
99

False prophets and christs will try to deceive everyone.



100

The devil will appear as an angel of light.



101

The second coming will not be secret.



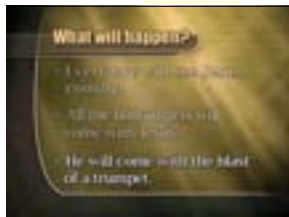
102

Every eye will see Jesus coming.



103

All the holy angels will come with Jesus.



104

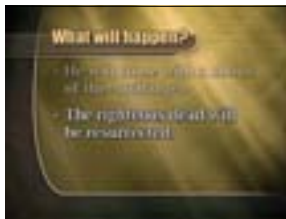
He will come with the blast of a trumpet.



105

He will come with a shout of the Archangel.

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



106

The righteous dead will be resurrected.



107

The righteous living will be translated without seeing death.



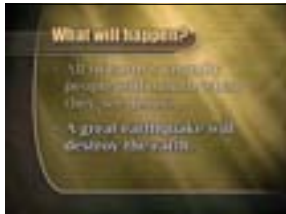
108

All the righteous will be given immortality.



109

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



110

A great earthquake will destroy the earth.



111

All the lost will be slain.



112

The half cannot be told, nor human pen portray, nor mortal mind conceive the splendor and glory of Christ's majestic second coming!

But we would like to share with you just a little panoramic view of how authors and artists have tried to illustrate the coming of Jesus—what it will be like—and the way their minds picture it as described in the Bible.

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



113

“At a time when no one will expect it, Jesus will return! The voice of God, like peals of thunder, rolls throughout the earth announcing the day and hour of His son’s coming.



114

“The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, and every mountain and island is moved out of its place.



115

“Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man’s hand.



116

As the cloud draws nearer earth it becomes brighter and brighter and more glorious until it became a huge cloud with a rainbow above it. In silence the people of God gaze at the scene, speechless. It is breathtaking!



117

The sky is filled with radiant forms, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels surrounding Jesus on His throne!



118

“The splendor of it all covered the heavens and as they came still nearer earth, ‘every eye’ beholds the coming King!

No crown of thorns mars that sacred head, but a crown of glory rests on His holy brow. And on His vesture and His thigh the name is written, ‘King of Kings and Lord of lords.’



119

“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman,

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE

cried for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the presence of the Lamb.



120

“Those who persecuted and killed God’s people and those who ridiculed and rejected Christ as the son of God, who shouted, ‘Crucify Him! Crucify Him!’ have been raised to stand before Jesus.

Their hearts melt, their knees knock together, and with an awful, despairing wail call out,



121

‘HE IS THE SON OF GOD. HE IS THE TRUE MESSIAH.’



122

“Now, they behold Him in all His glory, and they are yet to see Him sitting on the right hand of power.



123

Those who derided His claim to be the Son of God are speechless.

There is haughty Herod who jeered at His royal title and commanded the mocking soldiers to crown Jesus as king.



124

There are the very men who with impious hands placed upon His form the purple robe, upon His sacred brow the thorny crown, and in His unresisting hand the mimic scepter, and bowed before Him in blasphemous mockery.



125

“The men who smote and spit upon the Prince of Life now turn from His piercing gaze and seek to flee from the overpowering glory of His presence.

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



126

Those who drove the nails through His hands and feet, the soldier who pierced His side, behold these marks with terror and remorse.

“With awful distinctness do priest and rulers recall the events of Calvary. With shuddering horror they remember how, wagging their heads in Satanic exultation they exclaimed: ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save.



127

If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him.’



128

“Those who would have destroyed Christ and His faithful people now witness the glory which rests upon them. In the midst of their terror they hear the voices of the saints in joy exclaiming,



129

(Text: Isaiah 25:9)

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



130

(Video: 11 sec)”Amid the reeling of the earth, the flashing of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints.

He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: ‘Awake, awake, awake, you that sleep in the dust, and arise!’



131

Throughout the whole earth the dead shall hear His voice, and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE



132

“From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying: ‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’

And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory. All blemishes and deformities are left in the grave.

Oh, wonderful redemption! Long talked of, long hoped for, contemplated with eager anticipation, but never fully understood.



133

“The living righteous are changed ‘in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.’ At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air.



134

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.



135

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



136

“And as they ascend to heaven the retinue of angels cry, ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.’ And the redeemed shout, ‘Alleluia’ as they move toward the Holy City.



137

“Before entering the Holy City, the Savior bestows upon His followers the emblems of victory and invests them with the insignia of their royal state.

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE

Throughout the unnumbered host of the redeemed every glance is fixed upon Him, every eye beholds His glory whose 'visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.'



138

"Upon the heads of the over-comers, Jesus with His own right hand places the crown of glory. For each there is a crown bearing his own 'new name' and the inscription 'Holiness to the Lord.'

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



139

"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.'



140

(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.

(Video: 5 sec)



141

This is our hope. This is our destiny. This is our future. We can live with Christ in heaven forever.

If we miss eternity, we have missed everything.

If we miss heaven, we have missed everything.

If we are unprepared for Christ's soon return, we will miss the greatest event in the history of the ages.

3 - THE GREAT ESCAPE

Jesus says come . . .Come to forgiveness.

Come to mercy.

Come to power over your sins.

Come to eternity.

Come enter my kingdom.

Will you say yes to His appeal right now?

**If you desire to live in His kingdom forever, stand right now
as we pray.**