

I Shall Return!
Revelation 1:1-8
June 14, 2026

One of the most amazing stories to come out of WWII took place when Pres Roosevelt ordered Gen McArthur to leave the Philippines to avoid capture by the advancing Japanese. Even though he didn't want to, McArthur did evacuate in March of 1942 but promised the Filipino people, "I shall return." Two and 1/2 years later on Oct 20, 1944, he did just that as seen in this famous photo. By radio from this beach, he proclaimed, "People of the Philippines, I have returned! By the grace of Almighty God, our forces stand again on Philippine soil." The fight was not yet over but it was the beginning of the end of Japanese occupation of the territory. But 2000 years earlier, Jesus made the same promise to His followers as did McArthur. I shall return! Please open your Bibles to Revelation 1.

We're going to talk about something today we haven't really spoken on recently although it does come up as a common assumption in most messages. Say Second Coming. This is an event that Jesus promised would occur and all of His disciples eagerly looked forward to it as has His bride the church for the last 2000 years. I heard someone say once that Jesus doesn't have a money back guarantee, He has a coming back guarantee! We'll be looking at some of Jesus's promises to return and if you are able, let's stand as we read one of them from Rev 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must **soon** take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who testifies to everything he saw — that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. 4 John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father — to **him** be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. 7 Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen. 8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

Here in the introduction to John's revelation, Jesus promises to come again. He is, He was, and He is to come! Vs 7 tells us every eye will see Him as He comes with the clouds. It will be His glorious and grand appearing which will cause many to mourn,

which, as I understand, will be because believers will not be on the earth but will be returning with Him which we'll see later in Revelation. Jesus is coming again!

We'll look at some of the details concerning His return later but I want us to understand first of all that without question, Jesus is coming back! It's not a fable, it's not a dream, it's not a myth. It is a settled fact, for it's a promise from Jesus Himself! And Jesus keeps His promises! Many times He promised this very thing. One of the most well known was during the Last Supper when He said, John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come back** and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." He **promised** to come back and get His followers and He will!

Right now, He's still getting a place ready for us in His Father's house, and at the right time, like the Terminator, He'll be back! In every one of Jesus' parables, the absentee landlord returns! When He ascended back to heaven, the angels promised the eyewitnesses in Acts 1:11 "...This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, **will come back** in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." In Matthew 24, Jesus went into great detail about signs that would precede His return including earthquakes, wars and rumors of wars, people claiming to be Him, and more. We've spoken about those many times and will again, if the Lord tarries. But He was very clear in vs 30-31 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."

Here we see the angels gathering the elect as we mentioned a few weeks ago. But He promises us that the Son of Man **will** appear in the sky and that all nations on earth **will** mourn as He returns on clouds with power and great glory! Over in Matt 25:31, Jesus promised, "When (not if) the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory." Unless Jesus was horribly mistaken, He will return with great power and glory and the whole earth will know it! Isaiah Hosea, and Micah all talk about the last days in the Old Testament, as do Peter, James, and Paul in the New. So the Last Days are coming and Jesus knew it. Unless, we've missed it somehow, this has not yet happened. It is still on God's calendar. In fact, Paul says in 2 Thess 2 we are not to be fooled by those who say Jesus has already returned. We will know it!

When will it happen? Jesus addressed that in Matt 24 also. Vs 36 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the

days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.” He will return suddenly and unexpectedly. We do not know when but in Mark 13:36-37, Jesus said, “... do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'" and in Luke 12:37, He said, “It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes.”

Say watch! Does that mean we can't sleep at night? By no means. But it means to be ready always. To go to bed knowing that you may wake up in heaven! To live in holy expectation of seeing the Lord at any moment as the early believers did! To live with holy anticipation and eagerness! Whenever I go hunting, I have to always be ready for a deer to appear. You don't know when or where, so you have to keep watch! Be ready always! His coming is near at hand. Soon.

So we don't know when, but we know He **is** coming. And we have some signs that we are certainly seeing fulfilled all around us. So if I wasn't ready for Jesus' return, I'd be getting ready. But what else do we know about this event that Paul describes in Titus 2 as the Blessed Hope of the Christian. Not everyone agrees and the Bible doesn't spell it all out in one place, but putting various passages together, this is my understanding.

I Thess 4 describes the rapture, or the catching up of believers who are alive on earth at the time. We've preached on that passage many times. Vs15 According to the Lord's own word, (So this comes from Jesus passed on to His disciples and now recorded by Paul), we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.” Indeed, I encourage you with these words today as I do the family of every believer at the graveside when they are buried. They're coming up when Jesus returns! And then those Christians who are still living will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. This is called the rapture, say rapture, from the Latin in vs 17 for caught up. The rapture is different than Jesus' second coming. We'll get to that. In the rapture, Jesus doesn't come all the way to the earth.

Now a part that sincere Bible believing Christians disagree on happens next. Say Tribulation. Revelation describes in detail a 7-year period of intense upheaval on earth including famines, plagues, wars, meteors, fouling of the rivers and oceans, and more. Some believe the rapture will happen halfway through this Tribulation (mid-Trib), some

believe the rapture will happen at the end (Post Trib), and some, including myself believe the Rapture will happen right before the 7 year Tribulation (Pre-trib.) I have Scriptures to back up my beliefs that we can discuss another time, but so do the others so I'm not going to fight. The main thing is, the rapture and the tribulation are going to happen even if we don't know exact timing.

So we've got the rapture, we've got the Tribulation, and then we have the Second Coming of Jesus. Turn to Rev 19:11-16 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are **many** crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.

This is the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ! Grand and glorious when all nations on earth will mourn. He is leading heaven's armies and the rest of this chapter describes how He will defeat all the forces that have assembled against Him. Like McArthur, there is a battle yet to fight. But the Beast as well as all earthly leaders will be overwhelmed and destroyed by the sword that comes from Jesus' mouth-the Word of God! And the way it sounds, we're going to be right behind Him as part of heaven's armies! Some believe these are angels, but earlier in this chapter it is the Church who is given fine linen white and clean to wear! I've never seen an army wear fine white linen into battle, but we will! And on that day, we will all be on horses following our King of kings and Lord of lords into the final decisive battle! What a great day that's going to be! And according to Revelation 20-22, Jesus will then establish His Kingdom and later restore a new heaven and a new earth where we will live with Him forever! Even so come Lord Jesus!

But the most important thing is not to know all the details, the most important thing is to know Him that we might be ready for His return! I'll take a bullet for my belief that He's coming back but I won't take a bullet for how it's all going to play out. Which means we believers have to be prepared for hardship and persecution which is what Jesus and the other NT writers tell us over and over. Some believers are living through Tribulation-like persecution right now in Nigeria, North Korea, and China. And it may come here. The main thing is to be spiritually ready. To be prepared to live for Jesus and, if necessary, to die for Jesus, come what may. Almost every time Jesus' return is mentioned in the Bible, we are told to be ready by faithfully obeying Him. Don't wait till He shows up to get serious. Mart De Haan says, "Christ may come today. Or He may come tomorrow or one hundred years from now. But that's His decision, not ours. Our part is to make sure that if He does come today, He will find us doing **His** business rather

than our own.” Are we doing Jesus’ business or are we doing our business? Are we living for Him or are we living for us?

A pastor was working in his office one day when a very excited deacon came running down the hall. Pastor, pastor! I have news! The pastor looks up and asks, "What is it?" "Jesus is back! He's coming here right now! What should we do?!" The pastor smiled and answered, "Look busy." Jesus is coming again, what should we do? Not look busy, but be busy doing His work so He'll find us faithful!

Some dinosaurs were fossilized actually fighting each other. Others were buried giving birth, etc. It was obviously a very quick burial and fossilization as if from a great flood. Not over millions of years. But Jesus said some people will think He won't return just like most didn't think a flood was coming. What do you hope you are doing when He does come? Fighting? Gambling? Drinking in a bar? Looking at porn or chasing dollar bills? Billy Graham's daughter, Anne Lotz says this in her book, *Expecting to See Jesus*: "God's people in general seem to be oblivious of what time it is! We are fanatical about sports, we are consumed with eating and exercise and entertainment, we mob the shopping malls, we are preoccupied with the lifestyles of the rich and famous, we zealously pursue greater heights on the corporate ladder, ... we argue over political candidates, we dream of bigger houses and cars and portfolios... totally unaware that we are all living on the brink of ... radical inside out, upside down, never to be the same again change! We are teetering on the edge of a giant abyss where time stops and eternity begins. Yet we seem to be living our lives as though this life is all there is or ever will be."

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 **while we wait** for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.” **While we wait** for Him to come, let us live upright and godly lives. Let us keep short accounts with Him and with others that we might be ever ready.

Friend, Jesus could come today. As far as I can tell, there is nothing on the Biblical calendar that has to happen before He returns. It could happen at any moment. Some people get all scared whenever we talk about Jesus' return. Don't! If you're in Jesus! Do not let your hearts be troubled! It will be the best day in earth's history and in your history! The end of pain and suffering, war and sorrow, mourning and death. The end of all our problems! Now, if you're **not** in Jesus, you should be troubled! Greatly! You have **a lot** to be afraid of. It will not go well with you. Revelation 5-20 describes horrible conditions where 2/3rds of the earth's population dies from plagues, starvation, disease, and war. And then, your eternity will begin in hell. But that is not God's will for

you. His will is for you to be saved by accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior now. But it will be too late then. 2 Cor 6:2, Now is the time to be saved! Not tomorrow, Today!

In our work-a-day world, we often forget the grand truth, the Blessed Hope, the greatest news that Jesus is coming again. We fail to teach it, preach it and believe it as we should. But I want to remind you today that Jesus is coming again! To help us remember this, Sister Shelly Miller has painted another incredible portrait to hang with the others in the fellowship hall. Just as we read from Rev 19, Jesus is returning on His white horse and we're all right behind Him! Just like McArthur's photo earlier, here we see a triumphant Jesus coming back even as He promised, "I shall return!" Even so come Lord Jesus!

Are you ready if Jesus should come today? Have you turned from your sins, confessed them to Him and asked for forgiveness, not through your good works but through His shed blood? If not, you will be mourning when Jesus appears, not rejoicing. Please accept Jesus today so that you can be ready on that day. Will some people be saved during the Tribulation? Yes, I believe some will. Especially Jews. But don't count on it. It will be exceedingly difficult and you will likely be executed immediately in some horrendous fashion. Waiting till then to be saved is like waiting to take out homeowners' insurance until the tornado has already hit your house. Why would you do that? Today is the day! Now is the time!