

The Certainty of Jesus' Return
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Opening Illustration

88 Reasons Why the rapture will be in 1988.

Introduction

In 1500 the roads of Europe were littered with the belongings of those who believed Christ would return. Too often, people chase other's opinions or flawed interpretations of when Christ returns rather than hearing His own words about His return.

Three final notes on Jesus' return

1. His friends ask one final question.

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about..."⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1:4, 6

After He rose from the dead, Jesus spent forty days with His followers teaching them about the Kingdom of God. Now it was time for His ascension to heaven and after giving them His last instructions they asked him one final question.

“Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

To restore means to return something to its former state. Jesus’ purpose in coming to earth and dying on the cross was not to restore the kingdom of Israel to its former glory but to restore people to the place Adam and Eve had before they sinned. It was to restore us to a place of reconciliation with the Father.

To restore has to do with people more than kingdoms in its best sense. David pointed out in Psalm 23:3 that the Lord restores His soul. God spoke of restoration to Jeremiah.

Therefore this is what the LORD says: “If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me; if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be my spokesman. Let this people turn to you, but you must not turn to them. Jeremiah 15:19

That is what Jesus was always about as He traveled the roads of Galilee. He restored lepers to their families, the demon possessed to their communities, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, life to the dead, hope to the hopeless and salvation to the sinners.

Illustration

Restoring the stingray found on bulk pickup day.

2. Jesus offers them one final answer.

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But ⁽¹⁾ you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and ⁽²⁾ you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. Acts 1:7-9

Jesus' answer was that the time of His return is known only to the Father. Throughout history people have tried to pinpoint the exact time but this is fruitless speculation. We just don't know.

What Jesus gave us is His Spirit to help us prepare for His return.

That power first came at Pentecost.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place... ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2:1, 4

As they began to speak, others in Jerusalem began to hear about Jesus in their own languages.

When they heard this sound... each one heard their own language being spoken.⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?"⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Acts 2: 6-8, 11-12a

The power of the Holy Spirit was given to His people to share the good news with people everywhere.

The priority He gave us was to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth telling people the good news of the gospel. It is like party invitations that we pass out to people. Many won't come, many will reject it, but some will come. We are to go to our families, neighbourhoods, town, province, nation and world bringing the King's party invitation so that as many will come to His party.

*I tell you that in the same way there will be **more rejoicing** in heaven over one sinner who repents... Luke 15:7*

To be His witness is to be like Him and to be prepared to suffer as He suffered while telling others about Jesus. The word for witness is **Martus** and martyr comes from it. To lay down your life for Christ is what many have done willingly throughout history.

It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household! ²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Matthew 10:25, 28

Illustration.

My party invitation to my 12th birthday.

3. The angels gave one final declaration

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? 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.”

Acts 1:10-11

Jesus just gave them their mission, and they were distracted by His leaving. Two angels immediately appeared. Jesus' priority was waiting to be obeyed. The time for looking up or back was over. Now it was time to look forward to the world that lay before them.

The words of the angels are important to us as well. They are an assurance that Jesus is coming back. “As you saw Him go so He'll return.” Be assured that He'll keep His promise.

Jesus promised more than once that he would come back.

*“My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And 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. John 14:2-3*

The certainty of Jesus return is established in Scripture. The earliest followers believed it and looked forward to it as a certain event. They died believing in His return.

You and I can be certain that He will keep His promise and come back to take us to be with Him where He is. Be assured of this, Jesus is coming back. And while we wait for His return let us continually be obedient to the priority that He left for us to do.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

We are not to live in fear or dread, we are not to ignore His clear promise that He is coming back, but we are to be faithful in the tasks He has given us to do and be light in a darkening world.

Closing Illustration

"I wish that candles be brought."