



# Christ's Sudden Return!

2 Peter 3:1-14,18    Matt 24:3-14, 21-31

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## The Bible talks a lot about peace.

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Your relationship with God the Father is restored because God the Son Jesus Christ died for your sins and cleanses your conscience. You have been reconciled to God, you are welcome into His presence, and you know that He loves you. You have peace with God, and that comes only through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because you have peace with God we also have peace with other people, especially other Christians. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, we all share in the gifts of salvation, and we all call God our Father through faith in Christ. As far as it depends on us, we live at peace with other people.

## The Bible talks a lot about peace.

But there is one area in our Christian faith and life that is an *odd mixture of peace and agitation*. There is one area where the Lord Jesus *intentionally creates a tension within us*; and that is with **His sudden return on the Last Day**.

On the Last Day, Jesus will return visibly, with great power, and with all the Holy Angels with Him. It will be the last moment of history --- a *specific day, hour, minute, and second*. When that *specific day, hour, minute, and second* happens, everything on earth will stop; and every single person will see Jesus with their own eyes: and it will be Judgment Day.

When Jesus talks about His return on the Last Day, there is always an **urgency** to it. *We are to expect His return at any moment.* An example of this urgency is in the book of Revelation. In the very last chapter of the very last book of the Bible, Jesus tells us **four times** that He will return **quickly!** →

"Behold, I Am Coming Soon!"	Revelation 22:7
"The time is near."	Revelation 22:10
"Look, I am coming soon!"	Revelation 22:12
"Yes, I am coming soon ! Amen!"	Revelation 22:20

Just reading these four verses creates an **urgency** within you, doesn't it? When Jesus talks about His return on the Last Day, there is always an **urgency** to it. *We are to expect His return at any moment.* The Lord Jesus *intentionally creates a tension within us about* **His Return on the Last Day.**

That **tension and urgency** is two-fold:

For **UNBELIEVERS** it means that there is still time to repent! The day of grace is still available; the door of salvation is still open; the gospel is still being preached; there is time to repent. **But do not delay!** Do not procrastinate; do not turn your back on the Lord Jesus; **repent of your sins now while there is still time.** *Trust in Christ before it is too late!* **Judgement Day is coming!** A time is coming, and it is coming soon, when there will be no more time to repent; the day grace will be over. The door to Heaven will be shut forever!

**FOR UNBELIEVERS THE URGENCY IS TO REPENT; AND TO REPENT RIGHT NOW!**

For *believers* in Christ, on the other hand, the **urgency** is to make sure that you do not get apathetic in your faith! Now is not the time to get **DISTRACTED**; now is not the time to **DRIFT AWAY**; now is not the time to be **LAZY** in faith! You must be on *constant vigilance* and *continual watchfulness* over yourself so that you do not become **BORED** with God's Word; nor let your **HEART GROW COLD AND HARD**; nor get **TANGLED UP IN UNREPENTANT SIN**; nor **LISTEN TO FALSE TEACHERS**; nor to **THROW AWAY THE GIFTS GOD HAS GIVEN TO YOU**. Christ is coming soon! Be alert! Be ready! *For believers in Christ, the urgency is to make sure that you do not get lazy, distracted, or apathetic in your faith!*



When Jesus talks about His return on the Last Day, there is always an **urgency** to it... and that urgency creates the *tension and agitation* within us. We are to expect His return at any moment.

It is similar to an hourglass with sand in it. Every second of every day, the sand in the hourglass trickles away ---- there is not much sand left in earth history; soon it will be time; and in a split second everything will end; at a *specific day, hour, minute, and second* Jesus will return, and it will be Judgment Day.

Although there is an urgency to Jesus's return on the Last Day, we still have **complete peace** about it. It's an odd mixture of peace and urgency! The peace we have comes from knowing that there is **NO FEAR IN JESUS' RETURN** for those who trust in Christ. *The Last Day is not a frightening Day of Judgment; but rather a long awaited Homecoming Day!*

Three key things will happen when Jesus returns; AND all of them are **GOOD news and GOOD things** for those who trust in Christ!

1) **All the DEAD WILL RISE from their graves.** Every single person ever conceived will stand before God the Judge in their physical bodies. For believers, we will receive our same bodies, but glorified, and without any effects of sin. We will live forever in the Kingdom of Heaven in our sinless, glorified bodies! Jesus promised, *"Because I live, you too shall live!"* We confess this in the Creeds when we say that we believe in the *"resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting"*.

2) **It will be JUDGMENT DAY.** The Lord Jesus Christ is the Judge of the living and the dead; on the Last Day, you will stand before the Man Jesus; knowing that He is also the Son of God! But there is no fear, because you already know

the verdict that He will pronounce over you! The Lord Jesus has already declared you **righteous** in Holy Baptism; you hear God's **verdict** each week in worship with the **Absolution**: "**your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**" The Judge of the Living and the Dead has already pronounced His verdict over you: "**Not guilty!**" You are **righteous, justified**, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There will be no surprises for you on Judgment Day. The same verdict you have heard throughout your life will be pronounced over you one final time: you are forgiven; your sins are not held against you; you are "not guilty!", God will not remember your sins. **That's His promise to you!** There is no fear on **Judgement Day** for those who trust in Christ → you know both the Judge, and His verdict!!

3) **ETERNAL LIFE IN HEAVEN** is your inheritance. An eternity without sin, without guilt, without temptation, without evil, and without the devil! An eternity with a perfect and holy body in the presence of God with His love and grace always before your eyes! And eternity reunited with our loved ones who died in the Lord! This is our hope: rock-solid confidence that God is telling us the truth about our eternal home. We believe, teach, and confess the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting! Jesus promised to come back and take us to be with Him in His Heavenly Kingdom. That's both **GOOD news and GOOD things** for you!

Although there is an **urgency** to Jesus's return on the Last Day, we still have **complete peace** about it. *The Last Day is not a frightening Day of Judgment; but rather a long awaited Homecoming Day!*

So stay awake, be alert, be zealous for the Lord and His Kingdom!  
Because Jesus has promised:

"Behold, I Am Coming Soon!"	Revelation 22:7
"The time is near."	Revelation 22:10
"Look, I am coming soon!"	Revelation 22:12
"Yes, I am coming soon ! <b>Amen!</b> "	Revelation 22:20

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Lord Jesus, we believe that you are the Judge of the Living and the Dead. We thank you that we can live without fear of the Last Day and the Final Judgment. We thank you for declaring us “not guilty!” of our sins even now as we live our lives. Help us stay strong in faith as we urgently look for Your return at any moment. Come Lord Jesus, come! Amen!

## 2 Peter 3:1-14,18

This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, 2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, 3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. 4 They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." 5 For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, 6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. 7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. 8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

# Matthew 24:3-14, 21-31

As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. 9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.