

# Longing for the King's Return

## Heart-Cry of Anticipation

By Nathan E. Jones



Jesus Christ is returning. That is a given.

Three times in Revelation 22, Jesus promised He will return (Rev. 22:7, 12, 20). Jesus said over and over, “Surely I am coming quickly.” He even added that we could trust this promise, stating, “These words are trustworthy and true” (Rev. 22:6).

Jesus’ return is a promise made by God. It is a promise found so prolifically in the Bible that you can read about His second coming in nearly 500 prophecies of the Old Testament and one out of 25 verses in the New Testament. Jesus fulfilling all 300 first-coming prophecies 100 percent means you can rest assured that all of the second-coming promises will be fulfilled as well.

In the exaltation of that exciting promise, the apostle John closed out the Book of Revelation (and the entire Bible) with a prayer: “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20). Final messages often are the most poignant. Therefore, when Christians pray, we can follow John’s example with the mindset of, “It could be today!”

If we long for the King's glorious return and that becomes our heart-cry, then we can live every day in eagerness and preparation: "Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). Indeed, that certain knowledge of Christ's soon-to-be-fulfilled promise can dramatically change our daily prayer lives.

## **The Birth Pangs**

We live in a world where alarming news and the absurdity of what's happening increase each day—especially at a rapid pace in our nation. Absurdities that we didn't give much thought to before are suddenly becoming a nightmarish reality. It is obvious that society is speeding down the fast track to the end of the world as we know it. What astounds us today is the speed of its approach.

But that also means we are speeding ever so closer to the second coming of Christ.

How soon is soon? After all, it's been nearly 2,000 years since Christ made that promise. From a human perspective, that's a very long time. But from God's eternal perspective, not so much. For Him, those two millennia have been only like two days (2 Peter 3:8).

The apostles asked this very question of Jesus when He dropped the bombshell revelation on them about the eventual destruction of the Temple (Luke 21:6). This prophecy, found in Matthew 24 and paralleled in Mark 13 and Luke 21, resulted in the apostles asking three questions:

1. When will the Temple fall (related to New Testament times)?
2. What will be the signs of the end of the age (meaning the end of the Church Age concluded by the rapture, which is our time)?
3. What will be the sign of Jesus' coming (concerning

Christ's second coming, a time yet future)?

Using the prophetic perspective that looks across time and covers multiple events, Jesus answered all three questions with the same answer. He provided ten signs that would mark the advent of these three events. He added the illustration of birth pangs, in that these signs would increase in frequency and intensity the closer humanity got to these events, much like a woman's contractions as the birth of the baby draws near (Matt. 24:8).

## The Ten Signs

The following list contains the ten signs Jesus gave to show us that we are getting closer to His return.

**1. False Messiahs.** Jesus warned, "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them" (Luke 21:8).

We live in a time like no other as false messiahs and prophets such as Joseph Smith, Charles Taze Russell, Jim Jones, Sun Myung Moon, and hundreds of others claim to speak for God—and even commit the blasphemy that they are Jesus Himself! These fakes will lead up to the greatest of all false messiahs—the Antichrist—and his False Prophet (Rev. 13).

**2. Wars.** "When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Luke 21:9–10).

British novelist Margaret Drabble labeled the 20<sup>th</sup> century a "Beastly Century" because an estimated 160–187 million people were killed by war. And the 21<sup>st</sup> century isn't shaping up to look any different. Nation can also be translated as *ethnos*, meaning the great divisions along ethnic lines will widen.

**3. Earthquakes.** "There will be great earthquakes, famines and

pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven” (Luke 21:11).

According to the British charity Oxfam, earthquakes and other natural disasters have gone up 400 percent over the last two decades. High Richter scale-level earthquakes have been increasing in frequency and intensity, affecting nearly 254 million people per year.

**4. Famines.** Jesus also foretold how famines would increase the closer the world approached His return. Seventeen famines have occurred just in the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, decimating nations such as Myanmar, Malawi, North Korea, East Africa, Kenya, and Somalia. Some 925 million people go to bed hungry, and every day almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes. That’s one child every five seconds.

**5. Plagues.** Likewise, pestilence and plagues will increasingly continue to kill people by the masses. More than three million people have died from the latest COVID-19 pandemic, but malaria, cholera, AIDS, and countless other diseases also continue to ravage the world’s population.

**6. Fearful Events.** Fearful events, especially socio-economic disasters, loom over every horizon. Trillions in debt have been mounting as every country in the world tackles the pandemic by printing unbacked currency. The Bible prophesies an inevitable worldwide economic collapse (Rev. 6:6) and a new passport system that grants permission to people to buy and sell (Rev. 13:16–17).

**7. Signs in the Sky.** Great signs from the heavens include cataclysmic weather such as tornadoes and hurricanes, and objects in outer space hurtling past the earth at unimaginable speeds. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reports that every year unusually active and deadly tornadoes are on the rise. And in 2020, so many hurricanes tore through the Atlantic that naming them exceeded the 26-letter alphabet.

**8. The Persecution of Christians.** “But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. . . . All men will hate you because of me” (Luke 21:12–17).

Voice of the Martyrs reports that tragically more Christians died for their faith in the 20<sup>th</sup> century than in the 19 centuries leading up to it. But, as bad as the 20<sup>th</sup> century was, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is looking much worse. Tonight, more than 200,000 Christians will try to stay warm in horrific North Korean labor camps. And the mass murder of Christians in China, Nigeria, and many Islamic countries bloodily continues unabated.

**9. Jerusalem under Siege.** “When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. . . . Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:20–24).

Since the Six Day War in 1967, Jerusalem has once again moved under the control of the Jewish people. The United Nations Human Rights Council has passed more resolutions condemning Israel than it has all of the other states combined. And yet, God promised: “I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves” (Zech. 12:2–3).

**10. The Return of Christ.** Jesus Christ’s final sign will be unique to the third question concerning His second coming. “There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world. . . .” (Luke 21:25–28).

Just before Jesus breaks through the heavens, the sky will be filled with even more celestial signs, the nations will cringe in terror, the seas will toss violently, and all of His enemies will run in terror over the return of the King. Jesus then defeats Satan and his followers and ushers in His earthly Kingdom, defined as a 1,000-year reign of peace, righteousness, and justice.

### **Praying for the Kingdom**

These signs of the times indicate that Jesus is coming back, and we don't have much longer to wait. Can we know the exact day and hour of His return? No, for Jesus stated point-blank, "But about that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36). But from these ten signs and the many others Jesus provided throughout the gospels, as well as knowing that these signs are happening with increasing intensity, it is likely we are now living in the season of Christ's return.

So that begs the question, "Are you ready for the Lord's return?" The only way to be ready is to in faith and repentance surrender your life to Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord.

If you do know Jesus as Savior, then make John's prayer your prayer: "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20, kjv).

Our prayers do not bring Jesus back. That date has been stamped in heaven by the Father. But prayer for the return of the King can radically change us, release God's power, and bring about revival and spiritual awakening in those we encounter.

Ask the Lord today to grant you His heart-cry of anticipation. Pray according to His Kingdom purposes. One day soon, you will see the fulfillment of your prayers and experience that blessed hope of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

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