

He Will Come for Us *The Signs and Manner of Jesus' Return*

A well-documented phenomenon in cognitive psychology called “change blindness” says we don’t notice large changes in an onscreen picture when a visual disruption occurs. Researcher Kevin O’Regan has numerous illustrations on his website featuring photos in which substantial parts—such as a large shadow or a reflection or building—disappear or move after a flicker or a flash.¹ The untrained eye almost always miss these changes.

There is one exception, though. We notice changes that have to do with the *subject* of the picture, our primary focus.

We human beings often miss the obvious changes occurring before us. Wouldn’t it be tragic if we missed the changes leading up to Jesus’ coming? One simple choice will prevent this potentially devastating mistake—if we make Jesus the Subject, the Primary Focus of our world. Then, in spite of disruptions, we won’t miss a thing!

At Jesus’ ascension, two angels (Described as “men in white” Luke 24:4, John 20:12) proclaimed that, “This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:9-11). The writer of Hebrews said that while Christ came the first time to bear sins, He will “appear a second time for salvation. . . to those who eagerly await Him” (Hebrews 9:28). John said that “when He appears, we shall be like Him,” (1 John 3:3, NASB). The Bible teaches that Jesus will come again! Let’s study this! And let’s break this study into two parts: His coming is near, and His coming is clear.

His Coming is Near

In His most comprehensive sermon on the signs of the end, Jesus said, “Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (vs. 36). Then He expounded on the signs of its approaching. In other words, we may not know the exact moment, but we can and should know when it is approaching.

We know He is near
But know not the day
As spring shows that summer
Is not far away.²

The Bible gives four types of clues of the immanence of Jesus’ coming: Moral clues, political clues, environmental clues, and religious clues. Let’s gather those clues.

¹ <http://nivea.psycho.univ-paris5.fr/>

² From the hymn “Hold Fast Till I Come.”

Moral clues refer to the spiritual and moral condition of society. Here's a fact: Half of Americans describe our moral values as "poor."³ It is easy to see this; many things that once shocked us are now acceptable. Not surprisingly, the Bible predicted this state of affairs! 2 Timothy 3:1-5 gives several specific ways in which morality will descend in the last days:

- Self-love
- Materialism
- Pride
- Irreverence
- Disrespect
- Ingratitude
- Grudge-bearing
- Pleasure-loving
- Hypocrisy

It is no accident that self-love heads this list. Self-love refers, not to wholesome self-respect or worth, but to narcissism. From this character blot springs all forms of ungodliness. We accumulate wealth, feel better than others, disrespect God and man, indulge in selfish pleasure, all because we through selfishness close ourselves off to the needs of others. Increasingly our world sees self-love as strength and self-giving as weakness; yet self-love is weakness because it weakens us morally.

Political clues are more and more evident as the threat of violence increases. Jesus says, "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. . . nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom" (Matthew 24:6). We can see the fulfillment of this in the last century, the deadliest century on record:

- Chinese Revolution- 2.4 million deaths
- World War I, 1914- 20 million deaths
- Soviet Revolution- 5 million deaths
- World War II, 1939- 50 million deaths
- Vietnam War, 1945- 3 million deaths
- Korean War, 1950- 2-3 million deaths
- Mao's "Cultural Revolution"- 11 million deaths⁴

Environmental clues include catastrophes such as "famines, pestilences and earthquakes" (Matthew 24: 7).

- **Famines** are common. In 2023, nearly 10% of people globally are hungry.⁵
- Coronavirus alone was responsible for nearly seven million excess deaths.⁶

³ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/393659/record-high-americans-rate-moral-values-poor.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.scaruffi.com/politics/massacre.html>

⁵ <https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/the-hunger-crisis/world-hunger-facts/>

⁶ <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

- The number of significant **earthquakes** has increased from 42 in 1977 to 68 in 2006.⁷ One of the deadliest natural disasters in history was the 2004 Great Sumatra-Andaman earthquake which produced the Asian tsunami, which killed 225,000 people in eleven countries.⁸

Religious clues are evident in such phenomenon as the cult leaders that abound in the world today. Jesus said, “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many,” and “many false prophets will arise and deceive many” (Matthew 24:4-5& 11). He warned that these cult figures would show “great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24).

The Bible gives us two categories of false leaders—false messiahs and false prophets. False messiahs claim to *be* Jesus, whereas false prophets claim to *represent* Him. Jose Jesus de Miranda referred to himself both as “The Man Jesus Christ,” and “The Antichrist.”⁹ L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of scientology, was convicted of falsely claiming to cure disease.¹⁰ “Kingdom of Jesus Christ” pastor-founder Apollo Quiboloy claims that he is the “Appointed Son of God.”¹¹ These are only a few of the plethora of such cult-like figures in recent years.

Jesus likened His coming to labor and delivery. Any woman who has born a child will tell you that these “birth pangs” increase in frequency and intensity as the big event draws near. This means that political strife will become more constant and forceful, natural disasters will come at increasing rates and greater extremity, and spiritual deceptions will be more prevalent and powerful.

His Coming is Clear

When Jesus said, “Take heed that no one deceives you” in Matthew 24:4, He referred specifically to the manner in which He would come again. Let’s boil down the manner Jesus coming into four things: **Visible, Glorious, Audible and Sudden. Think: Very Good, And Soon.**

The coming of Jesus will be **visible!** “Every eye will see Him” (Revelation 1:7). Kidnappers say to children, “Come with me and I’ll take you to your father.” An unwarned child cannot resist such an offer. But if the father explicitly says, “Son, a kidnapper will come and lie to you in order to get you into his car. Don’t do it!” the child might recognize the deception when it comes. It is likewise with us. We may not be sophisticated enough to avoid the master kidnapper, Satan, but Jesus has keyed us in on his deceptions.

He said, “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). The largest fireworks in the world launched

⁷ U.S. Geological Survey

⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Indian-Ocean-tsunami-of-2004>

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jos%C3%A9_Luis_de_Jes%C3%BAs

¹⁰ "Church of Scientology on trial in France". The Sydney Morning Herald. 2009-05-26. Retrieved 2009-07-28.

¹¹ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2022/october-web-only/southeast-asian-heresies-philippines-singapore-cambodia.html>

from Steamboat Springs, Colorado in February of 2020. Thousands of eyes beheld the swirling lights, shot high into the air, surrounded by clouds of smoke. When Jesus comes again, billions of eyes will fix upon the spectacle. He'll come, not on clouds of smoke, but "on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30).

And that's the second point! The coming of Jesus will be *glorious!*

The glory of God is a brilliant, powerful thing. When Moses asked to see it, God said, "No man shall see Me and live!" (Exodus 33:18-20). Paul said that God "dwells in unapproachable light" (1 Timothy 6:16). The glory of the Lord, called "the Shekinah," filled the tabernacle of Israel (Exodus 40:34). Once when a group of men looked directly upon it, they were instantly killed—all 50,070 of them! (1 Samuel 6:19). Truly, "our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29).

The luminosity of the God's presence reflects His holiness in contrast to the darkness of sin. For centuries God has refrained from judging, but with the Second Coming we see the beginning of what is often called His "day of wrath." When Jesus walked the earth as a man, He subdued His glory. Now He comes as a conquering King, and His righteousness shines forth in all its splendor. He will come with "His own glory, and in His Father's glory, and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26) in a true joining of heavenly forces. This is too much for sin-darkened eyes to behold. Lost souls will cry out, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" (Revelation 6:16).

The coming of Jesus will be *audible*.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 has been called the noisiest verse in the entire Bible: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first." Notice that there are three sound-producing elements—shout, angel voice, and trumpet. Nothing in these words suggests a secret coming. A person *shouts* when they wish to be heard far and wide. The trumpet is the loudest of musical instruments, used historically to signal religious and military events. The verse conveys heaven's signaling of a great event to the entire world.

And—good news--"we shall all be changed," because "corruption must put on incorruption" (1 Corinthians 15:50-51& 54). Our bodies will be instantly transformed, "in the twinkling of an eye" when "the trumpet will sound" (vs. 52).

The coming of Jesus will be *sudden*. Using the worldwide flood as a metaphor, Matthew 24:36-44 describes several surprise elements (parallel verse in Lk 17:26-37):

- "No one knows" vs. 36
- "They did not know" vs. 39
- "You do not know" vs. 42
- "If the master of the house had known" vs. 43
- "The thief" vs. 43
- "His house. . . broken into" vs. 43
- "You do not expect" vs. 44

Many knew long before 2005 Hurricane Katrina that the city was like a ticking time bomb due to the faulty design of the levees around the city. Because of neglect, nearly 2000 lost their lives. Similarly, the antediluvians lived on a flood-bound planet, but ignored the problem.

1 Thessalonians 5:4-5 says, “But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day.” Instead of ignoring the problem, let’s live ready for Jesus to come. All we need do is believe His promise and allow Him to shape our lives.¹² Philippians 1:6 says, “He that has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

The Takeaway

The coming of Jesus is near. The manner of His coming is clear. But don’t doubt His ability to prepare you! He wants you to be ready more than you want you to be ready. He said:

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. John 14:1-3

Quiz

1. The phenomena of not seeing changes in an image when a disruption occurs is called _____.
2. We may not know the exact moment of Jesus’ coming, but we can and should know when it is _____.
3. The time of Jesus’ coming is _____; the manner of His coming is _____.
4. We can know Jesus’ coming is near when we see _____ clues, _____ clues, _____ clues, and _____ clues.
5. We may boil down the manner Jesus coming into four things: _____, _____, _____, and _____.
6. What sentence helps us remember this? _____.
7. This day need not overtake us as a _____.
8. Jesus said, “_____ not your heart be troubled.”

¹² For more information about this, see our study “Growing Up a Second Time.”

Answer Key

1. Change blindness
2. Near
3. Near, clear
4. Moral, political, environmental, religious
5. Visible, glorious, audible, and sudden
6. Very good and soon!
7. Thief
8. Let

