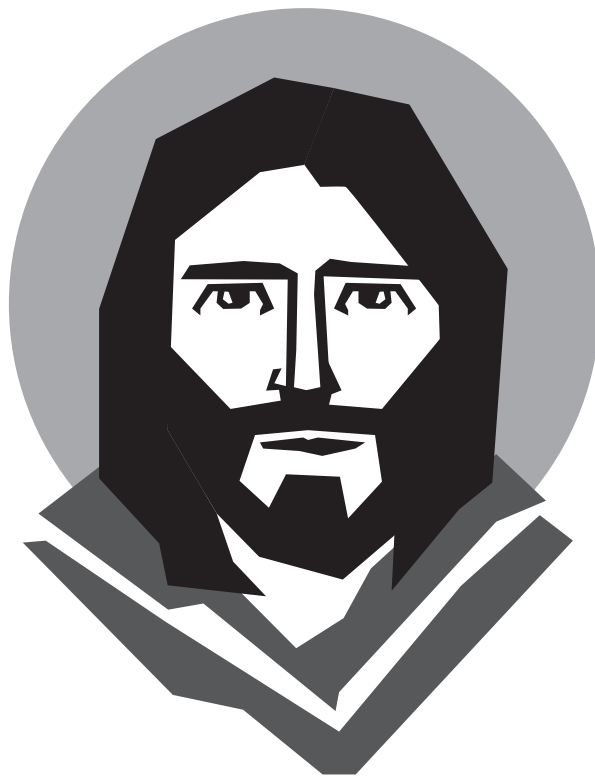


THE REAL **JESUS**



A study through the Gospel of Luke

BOOK 5: HIS RESURRECTION

THE REAL JESUS: HIS RESURRECTION

Week Six | November 4, 2018 | You Will See The Real Jesus Soon

PREPARATION

GETTING READY

Before your group meets next time, spend some time alone in God's Word reading through this week's texts, Luke 21:1–28, 34–36 and Revelation 22:6–21. Pray that God, through His Spirit, would bring to life the truth of this text and how it applies to your life.

THIS WEEK

KEY BIBLICAL TRUTH

Jesus' return should not inspire wild speculations, but faithfulness, godliness, and perseverance.

THEOLOGY APPLIED

Jesus' return should not inspire wild speculations, but faithfulness, godliness, and perseverance.

MEDITATE

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20).

GETTING STARTED

+ Use this section to prepare your heart and mind for the truths of this week. This section will help to introduce the focus of this week's lesson.

According to a survey done by the Pew Research Center, 40% of Americans believe Jesus will either definitely or probably return in the next forty years.

Theologians and scholars have debated Jesus' second coming for centuries. They have argued over how it will happen, when it will happen, how to predict it, and even if it can be predicted. Countless people, including pastors, popes, mathematicians, and even founders of other religions, have tried and failed to predict when Jesus would return. Books have been written and movies have been made describing the expected state of the world and the circumstances of His return. We risk thinking the second coming is more about a major world event than it is about Jesus—The Real Jesus.

Martin Lloyd-Jones observes, “The great doctrine of the second advent has in a sense fallen into disrepute because of...this tendency on the part of some to be more interested in the how and the when of the second coming rather than in the fact of the second coming.”

Rather than encouraging us to spend our time researching theories and predictions about the future, the second coming of Jesus should lead us to examine our daily lives. Jesus talks about His imminent return not to give us a code to break, but to exhort us to obedience. Instead of being paralyzed with fear over what Christians might face, He inspires us to faithfulness.



Sometimes it is easier to engage in wild speculation than pursue sanctification. We can be certain we have the right view on the end times, but find our daily walk sluggish, inconsistent, and compromised. We can freak out over earthly kingdoms instead of keeping our eyes on the heavenly kingdom. But Jesus says we should prepare to meet Him by persevering, not predicting. As we do, we can be assured of two things—first, one day we will meet The Real Jesus face to face, and second, in the end, The Real Jesus wins.

🔗: *Have you found yourself fascinated by biblical prophecies of Christ's return, or confused or intimidated by them?*

🔗: *How should Jesus' return influence the way you live your ordinary life today?*

🔗 UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

In today's lesson we will study Jesus' promise to return and what He calls us to do to prepare for it.

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1. DON'T FREAK OUT
 2. PURSUE THE KINGDOM OF GOD
 3. CHERISH GOD'S WORD
 4. REPENT QUICKLY

GOING DEEPER

+ This next section will help show what God's Word says about this week's particular focus. Read through the Scripture passages and connect the text to this week's biblical truth.

DON'T FREAK OUT

☐ LUKE 21:7-28

🗨️: *According to these verses, what sorts of things should we expect to happen?*

🗨️: *How does Jesus comfort and reassure us?*

Jesus is straightforward and honest about what we should expect in the “last days.” It’s important to keep in mind that the apostle Paul believed he was living in the last days. Since Christ’s ascension, we are not called to coast through time waiting for the last days to come, but to live watchfully, prayerfully, and expectantly, as though Christ could come at any moment. In these days, we should not be surprised by the world acting like the world and the devil seeking to devour however He can. Jesus specifically lists several things we can expect to experience.

- False teachers
- Wars and calamity
- Natural disasters
- Food shortage
- Terrorism, persecution, captivity

- Betrayal and hatred, even from loved ones
- Destruction and displacement

How many of these things do you see examples of when you turn on the news every day? Jesus told His disciples about His death and resurrection so they would not be “surprised” or confused when it happened. He tells us how things will be before His return so we can be alert and aware, not dismayed and despondent. We can and should grieve these things, because they are devastating. They are evidence of sin in the world and reminders that we are not yet home. But we should not be tempted to think God is far off or not in control. We should remember the story isn’t over yet. We haven’t moved outside of the plot of God’s narrative of redemption.

Jesus specifically warns us to be alert for false teachers. In verse 8, He urges us to be neither fooled by them nor afraid of them. False teachers don’t always come in weird clothing or holding Kool-Aid mix. They can be any voice that speaks contrary to God’s Word or that encourages us to love things God hates. They can sway us from believing Christ is truly sufficient for our salvation and our true satisfaction. They can be on our podcasts and playlists, our movies and TV series, advertising, and social media. They can also come from teachers who suggest that we need Jesus plus a few extra rules. False teachers can also try to introduce us to a variety of false Jesuses and sway our allegiances to them. We should not allow ourselves to be fooled by them, Jesus says. Rather than leading us to the truth, they seek to distract us from the gospel and from pursuing the kingdom of God. At the same time, we should not be caught off guard when we come across them. We know they will be around and will even do much harm. But we also know the end of the story—Jesus wins.

In these verses, we hear warning after warning. But Jesus doesn’t want our hearts to be dismayed. He tells us in verse 13 not to fear the turmoil because “this will be your opportunity to bear witness.” In order to bear witness, we have to keep our minds focused on a bigger story. We have to know what’s going on and how it fits into God’s plan. We have to have perfect trust that God is fully in control over all things at all times, even the “end times.” This kind of Christian life is not centered on comfort, health, wealth, or prosperity. It is not surprised by mistreatment, difficulty, hatred, persecution, and suffering. It sees these things as opportunities to experience and declare Christ’s sufficiency.

In verse 14, Jesus tells us the best way to prepare for these moments of suffering, and it isn’t by memorizing all the right answers or creating a trouble-shooting grid to handle each situation. Instead, the best way to prepare is to abide in Him and in His word. It is dependency on the Spirit, not on our own abilities, that will hold us fast.

- ♀: *What ways may you unknowingly be ingesting “false teaching?” How can you be alert to it so you won’t be fooled by it?*
- ♀: *Read 2 Timothy 3:1–9. Paul gives a similar warning about what to expect from people in “the last days.” How have you experienced any of these things from people in your life? Does this list indict you as well?*
- ♀: *Do you fear extremely trying times? What truths can you cling to to remind you of God’s faithfulness, even in the moments and circumstances you fear most?*

PURSUE THE KINGDOM OF GOD

☐ LUKE 21:1–4, 27–28

- ♀: *What did the widow do compared to the rich?*
- ♀: *Why did Jesus commend her?*

According to the theology behind the Diet Coke commercial slogan, “Life is short, have a Diet Coke,” you better take and enjoy all you can here and now, because here and now is all you get. That being the case, there is no place for generosity. There is also no reason for open-handed submission of everything you have to God. Diet Coke theology says if the short time you have on earth is all you’ve got, you better experience as much of heaven as you can right now. However, The Real Jesus says if the kingdom is to come, you don’t have to hold tightly to the things of this earth. You can leverage all you have now because you seek something far greater. That is the difference between the poor widow and the rich. The widow did not find her security and comfort in the little money she had, but in God’s faithfulness to her. The rich gave God their surplus, not their everything. They gave Him the margins of their lives rather than putting the entirety of their lives in His hands. They held onto the kingdoms they were constructing in

this life rather than seeking the kingdom to come.

In verse 3, Jesus says the widow put in more than all of the rich combined, even if her offering added up to far less. A heart fully surrendered to Christ leverages everything in pursuit of the kingdom, bringing far more glory to God than the fattest check ever written. The story of the widow teaches us that the way we use our money says more about our theology of the “end times” than any words we speak.

In verses 27–28, Jesus says we should not fear the “signs” of the last days. When these things happen, we must fix our minds on the end of the story. These are not signs that all is over, but that all is about to be made new. We must not be like the disciples who forgot what Jesus said would happen. We must interpret these events in light of what He promises will be. That means when disaster strikes, we don’t grieve as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13), but respond by looking up, focusing our attention on Jesus. We look at what is happening on earth with a heavenly vision.

🔍: *What do your money habits reveal about what you actually believe about the return of The Real Jesus?*

🔍: *What goes on in your heart and mind when you hear the news? Do you “straighten up and raise your head?” Or do you experience fear and anger?*

CHERISH GOD’S WORD

📖 REVELATION 22:6–21

🔍: *How is the Bible treated in these verses?*

🔍: *How is Jesus described in these verses?*

John is the writer of the book of Revelation. He experienced a stream of visions from God and was charged to write them down for the seven churches. Why? To give them inside knowledge of what heaven is like or how things will go down in the last days? No, the main purpose was to exhort the churches to be faithful and persevere in obedience in light of Christ's return. The book of Revelation calls Christians to be faithful servants of King Jesus and to keep His words.

What does it mean to "keep" the Word of God? (verse 7b). Tony Merida suggests this means to hear, love, and obey it, but also to cherish it, or to keep it alive in your life. As you grow to cherish the Bible, you will live an obedient life. The person who does this is called "blessed." Psalm 1 also connects blessing with "keeping" God's Word:

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."

In 2 Timothy 3:14–17, after giving a list of expectations for the "last days," Paul gives the same advice for how to live in them—hold fast to God's Word. He urges them to remember that God's Word makes them wise for salvation and it is trustworthy and authoritative because it was breathed out by God Himself. "Keeping" God's Word will prepare and equip us for every good work in even the darkest of times.

🗨️: *Does reading the Bible feel like a duty or a responsibility to you? How can you cherish it more? How can it become more alive in your life?*

🗨️: *Why do you think Revelation 22, Psalm 1, 2 Timothy 3, and countless others emphasize the connection between obedience and cherishing God's Word?*

REPENT QUICKLY

📖 **REVELATION 22:12–17, LUKE 21:34–36**

Q: *Who is The Real Jesus, according to these verses?*

Q: *What does it mean to be a Christian, according to these verses?*

In Revelation 22:12–17, we see an exalted picture of Jesus, The Real Jesus. We learn He is not only the final Prophet, Priest, and King, but also the Judge. Many people say they want a loving God, not a judging God. But every cry against injustice they have witnessed or experienced is proof that they deeply long for a God of justice. A God who was only love and no justice, or only justice and no love, would be truly terrifying. But in verses 12–13, we learn that the Savior who died on the cross for us because of His great love will also come and execute perfect justice on earth. Injustice will not go on forever. The Judge will say, “Enough!” He will put an end to it once and for all.

Everyone will be judged, but Christians do not risk being forsaken by God at the judgment seat because Christ was already forsaken on their behalf. They have already had their robes washed clean (Revelation 22:14). However, they will be called to give an account for their deeds (Revelation 20:12). As Tony Merida says, “The saving provision of God in Christ is so powerful that faithful life results. The judgement will expose the reality of our faith, or the falsity of our faith. Faith always expresses itself in obedience.”

We even see this truth in Revelation 22:15. The opposite of those who have had their robes washed clean are the dogs and sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. That doesn’t mean if you don’t do these things you will be saved. As we learned in verse 14, you must have your robes washed clean to be saved, and this is done through the blood of the Lamb. But those who are saved by Christ are new creations. They will bear the fruit of their salvation (James 2:14–26) as they continually grow more and more into His image.

Rather than getting caught up in the everydayness of life, with all its responsibilities, routines, problems, and distractions, in Luke 21:34–36 we are called to snap out of the lull. When we are so focused on our calendars and activities—the cares of this life—we cast our gaze on the here and now, unable to see the world through heavenly eyes. Instead of Christ’s return catching us off-guard because we were so focused elsewhere, Jesus calls us to keep it in front of us at all times and in everything we do. We should be guarding against temptation, being quick to repent, putting off sin and putting on obedience, and praying to remain faithful even in trial and suffering. We are not called to a hazy or lazy life, but a vigilant one. Yet, we also remember we are held fast not by our own effort or merit, but by the power of His grace.

- Q: *Why does knowing your salvation is secure, but that you still must give an account for your deeds, make you quick to repent?*
- Q: *How do you see God's kindness in these passages? How do you feel it is leading you to repentance?*

NEXT STEPS

+ *Connect the truths from God's Word to your daily life. Process how what you've learned this week will impact the way you live beyond today and into the future.*

- Q: *Based on what we have learned, how can you better prepare to meet The Real Jesus when He returns? How can you prepare as a community?*
- Q: *Can you identify ways God has matured people in your group, making them more generous and kingdom-minded? If so, share with them what you see as an encouragement.*
- Q: *Do you see the Word of God "alive" in the lives of people in your group in specific ways? If so, tell them what you see.*

PRAY

+ *Use this prayer point to connect your time in prayer to this week's focus.*

- Jesus, thank You that, in the end, You will return and You will win! May this truth lead me to faithfulness and obedience. Help me not to get distracted by the cares of this world, by calamities and fears, by false teachers, or by theories and predictions. Help me cherish Your Word and depend more and more on Your Spirit as I eagerly await Your return.

COMMENTARY

REVELATION 22:10 John must not “seal” his book of visions like Daniel did his because the events in Daniel’s visions concerned the remote future. The fulfillment of John’s visions, comparatively, would be much sooner. This is yet another reminder that Jesus’ return is “soon.”

REVELATION 22:12 Jesus is coming as the fair and impartial judge. Recompense indicates reward for believers and punishment for unbelievers.

**All exegetical content and commentary resourcing for this lesson was provided by the ESV Study Bible Commentary Notes, the Christ Centered Exposition (Luke), and Preaching the Word (Luke).*