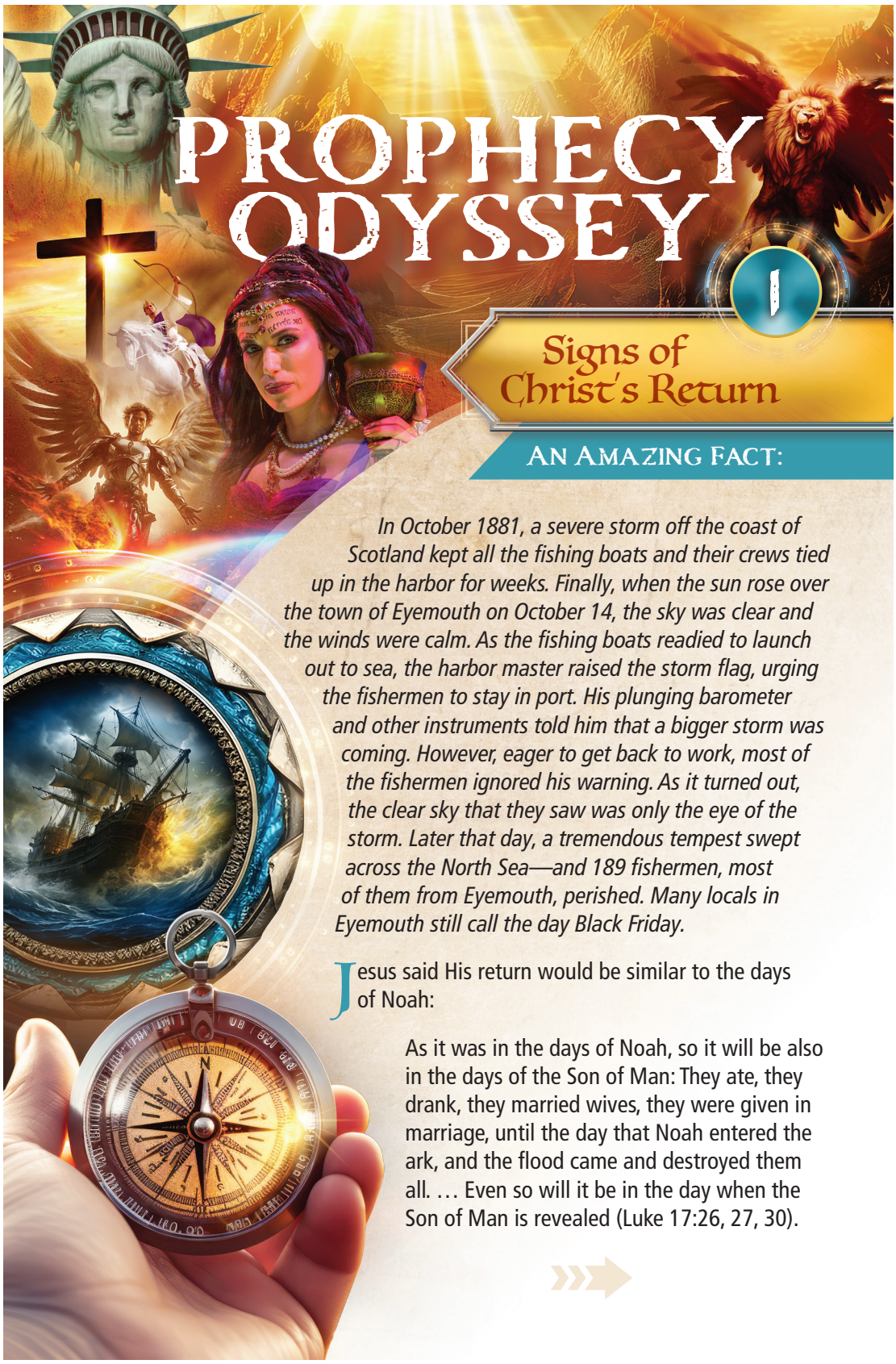




PROPHECY ODYSSEY

Signs of Christ's Return

AN AMAZING FACT:

In October 1881, a severe storm off the coast of Scotland kept all the fishing boats and their crews tied up in the harbor for weeks. Finally, when the sun rose over the town of Eyemouth on October 14, the sky was clear and the winds were calm. As the fishing boats readied to launch out to sea, the harbor master raised the storm flag, urging the fishermen to stay in port. His plunging barometer and other instruments told him that a bigger storm was coming. However, eager to get back to work, most of the fishermen ignored his warning. As it turned out, the clear sky that they saw was only the eye of the storm. Later that day, a tremendous tempest swept across the North Sea—and 189 fishermen, most of them from Eyemouth, perished. Many locals in Eyemouth still call the day Black Friday.

Jesus said His return would be similar to the days of Noah:

As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ... Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed (Luke 17:26, 27, 30).



For years, Noah warned his generation of a coming storm. When the ark was complete, he urged the people to come into the vessel of salvation. Seeing only clear skies, however, the people disregarded his persistent warnings and carelessly returned to their daily pursuits.

Is the same thing happening today?

The Bible provides an abundance of information regarding the return of Christ. Yet many Christians have come to doubt the promise of His return. Others are deeply confused regarding what the Bible teaches about the how, why, and when of His coming. Let's find out what it really says ...



When you see a blank, use your Bible to look up the missing word and fill it in.



How positive was Jesus that He would return?

JOHN 14:3 *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will _____ and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

MATTHEW 16:27 *For the Son of Man _____ in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*



What can we know about the time of Jesus' return?

MATTHEW 24:36 *But of that day and hour _____ knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*

MATTHEW 24:33 *So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is _____—at the doors!*

NOTE: Only God knows the exact time of the Second Coming. All date setting is out of harmony with the Bible. But Jesus made it clear that when we see the signs of His coming fulfilled (Matthew 24:4–51; Luke 21:8–33; 2 Timothy 3:1–5), we can know that His return is very near—even at the doors.



What signs did Jesus give to indicate His coming was near?

MATTHEW 24:7 *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be _____, pestilences, and _____ in various places.*

MATTHEW 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom will be _____ in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

NOTE: There have always been wars, plagues, and natural disasters. However, Jesus' prophecy indicates these events will increase in frequency and intensity as we near the time of His return. Jesus did not say the whole world would be converted—rather, the world would have an opportunity to hear the gospel. Today, with almost instant global communication and rapid international travel, fulfillment of this prophecy is well within reach.



What solemn warning does Jesus give about His second coming?

MATTHEW 24:5 *For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will _____ many.*

MATTHEW 24:24, 26 *For false christs and false _____ will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ... Therefore if they say to you, "Look, He is in the desert!" do not go out; or "Look, He is in the inner rooms!" do not _____ it.*

NOTE: As his masterpiece of deception, Satan will seek to impersonate Christ's second coming by appearing upon the earth as a glorious being, and he will trick billions. Jesus has warned us that He will not touch the earth at all at His second coming; rather, He will remain in the air. The dazzling deceptions of Satan will be so convincing that most people will be misled.



What will prevent the righteous from being deceived?

ISAIAH 8:20

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to _____, it is because there is no light in them.

NOTE: God's people will not be deceived, because they will know from a study of God's Word just how Jesus will come (Acts 17:11). Any appearance that is not in agreement with Scripture is a counterfeit and must be rejected. Jesus forewarned us: "See, I have told you beforehand" (Matthew 24:25).



Will Jesus come quietly when He returns?

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a _____, with the voice of an archangel, and with the _____ of God.

JEREMIAH 25:30

The LORD will _____ from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; He will roar mightily against His fold. He will give a _____.

PSALM 50:3

Our God shall come, and shall not keep _____; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him.

NOTE: "Tempestuous" means "turbulent and stormy." The second coming of Jesus will clearly be noisy beyond description. There will be nothing secret about it!



Who will see Jesus when He returns?

MATTHEW 24:30

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then _____ the _____ of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

REVELATION 1:7

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and _____ will see Him.

NOTE: This is too clear to misunderstand. Every person alive, wicked or righteous, will see Jesus return in the sky. A secret gathering, or "rapture," of God's people is not described in the Bible. Some have wondered, "How can every eye see Jesus simultaneously on a round world?" The verse does not say that it is simultaneous; rather, when He comes and sweeps around the planet, the eyes of everyone alive will see Him on that day.



Who will be with Jesus when He returns in the clouds?

MATTHEW 25:31

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the _____ with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

NOTE: The brightness of the Lord's return will, by comparison, make the brightness of a hydrogen bomb pale in significance. At Jesus' tomb, the brightness of one angel caused the Roman guards to fall to the ground as dead men (Matthew 28:2-4). The brightness of all heaven's angels will make Jesus' second coming too bright for anyone to miss. Added to this will be the fantastic glory of Jesus and the Father (Luke 9:26). Jesus' second coming will be like lightning flashing from one horizon to the other (Matthew 24:27).



What will happen to the righteous at Jesus' coming?

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16 *The dead in Christ will _____ first.*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:52, 53 *The dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be _____. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

1 THESSALONIANS 4:17 *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught _____ together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

NOTE: God's saints will meet the Lord in the air. (Remember, Jesus' second coming will be a sky appearance, not an earth appearance.) Also, no one except God has immortality now (1 Timothy 6:15, 16). But it will be given as a free gift to the righteous at Jesus' second coming. Their bodies will be changed into heavenly, incorruptible bodies, like that of Jesus' body (Philippians 3:20, 21).



What other physical evidence will accompany Jesus' return?

REVELATION 16:18 *And there was a great _____, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.*



What will the brightness of Jesus' coming do to the living wicked?

2 THESSALONIANS 1:7, 8 *When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in _____ taking vengeance on those who do not know God.*

2 THESSALONIANS 2:8

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and _____ with the brightness of His coming.



What will the angels do at Jesus' second coming?

MATTHEW 24:31

His angels ... will _____ together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

NOTE: Your guardian angel (Matthew 18:10) will probably be the first to greet you at Jesus' return. What a blessed thought! No wonder the Bible calls the Second Coming the "blessed hope"! (Titus 2:13).



Since we are living just before Jesus' second coming, how should we relate to this solemn, glorious event?

MATTHEW 24:44

Therefore you also _____, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.



How will people be rewarded at Jesus' second coming?

REVELATION 22:12

And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his _____.

NOTE: People will be saved by grace but rewarded based on their conduct, not on their profession. Their conduct reveals if their profession is genuine (Matthew 7:20–23).



What will the wicked say when Jesus returns?

REVELATION 6:16, 17 *[They] said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and _____ is able to _____?"*

NOTE: During this horrendous final earthquake, the wicked—petrified with fear—will prefer for the rocks and mountains to fall on them rather than to face King Jesus unprepared.



What will the righteous say when Jesus appears?

ISAIAH 25:9 *Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and _____ will _____ us. ... We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.*



What is the primary purpose of Jesus' second coming?

JOHN 14:3 *I will come again and _____ to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

NOTE: Jesus' most thrilling purpose in returning to the earth is to take His children to the glorious home He has prepared for them. The New Jerusalem is a city with no more tears, woes, heartaches, or illness—only joy and peace forever.

» YOUR RESPONSE

Jesus is coming in the clouds very soon. Will you plan now to be ready to meet Him?

ANSWER: _____



FURTHER STUDY

The Secret Rapture Theory

The secret rapture theory is based on eight premises that have been so widely embraced that most people accept them as fact without investigating them. However, our only safety is to search the Scriptures daily to determine whether those things are so (Acts 17:11).

The eight points of the secret rapture theory are as follows:

1. The rapture is silent.
2. The rapture is invisible.
3. The rapture leaves the wicked alive.
4. God removes the righteous to protect them from the tribulation.
5. Christ's second coming will be in two stages: (1) the secret rapture and (2) the actual glorious coming.
6. These two stages of the Second Coming will be seven years apart.
7. The rapture will take place before the revelation of the Antichrist, who will then bring about the tribulation.
8. The wicked will have a second chance to be converted and to serve Christ.

To examine these points fully is beyond the scope of this limited supplement, but we will briefly cover each point. Prepare for some surprises!

1. The rapture is not silent but, rather, extremely noisy. The Scriptures say Jesus will descend "with a *shout*, with the *voice of the archangel*, and with the *trumpet of God*" (1 Thessalonians 4:16, emphasis added). King David says, "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; ... it shall be very tempestuous [violent, whirling] all around Him" (Psalm 50:3). And Jeremiah says, "The LORD will roar from on high. ... He will roar mightily. ... He will give a shout. ... A noise will come to the ends of the earth" (Jeremiah 25:30, 31). Nothing about it is quiet! Christ will come with a noise heard around the world. Know



this: If you are living when Jesus returns, you will hear Him come. It will be the loudest event in history!

2. The rapture is not invisible; it will be seen by all. All of the angels will come with Jesus (Matthew 25:31). When one lone angel appeared at Jesus' resurrection, the brightness was so overpowering that the entire Roman guard fell to the ground (Matthew 28:2–4). Consider the staggering brightness of all the angels of heaven! Added to the glory of the angels will be Jesus' own glory (Matthew 25:31) and the glory of His Father (Matthew 16:27). The brightness will be overwhelming. Jesus 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). Secret? Not by any stretch of the imagination! In fact, the Bible forever settled this by saying, "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him" (Revelation 1:7). Rest assured, if you are living at Jesus' second coming, you will see Him come!

3. The rapture does not leave the wicked alive. They are slain at the Lord's coming (Isaiah 11:4; Malachi 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

4. God does not remove the righteous before the tribulation but, rather, protects them through it (Psalm 91:5–12).

5. Christ's second coming will not be in two stages—one secret and the other seen by all. There is only one Second Coming, and it will be seen by every living person on the earth. There is no Scripture to support a two-phase Second Coming.

6. The secret rapture teaching claims that there is a seven-year period between the two comings of Christ. The Bible teaches that His coming as a thief and the destruction of the world happen at the same time.

7. The Antichrist does not appear three and a half years after the second coming of Jesus. He has been active for centuries (1 John 4:3) and is doing his nefarious work on the earth even now. (More on this in a future lesson!)

8. The wicked will not have a second opportunity to be saved after the Second Coming. All sinners will be destroyed at Jesus' return; there is no second opportunity for them.

SUMMARY SHEET



Please read this lesson before completing this Summary Sheet. All answers can be found in the study guide. Fill in the boxes for the correct answers. **Numbers in parentheses (1) indicate the number of correct answers.**

1. When will Jesus return? (1)

- ☐ On the spring equinox, when everyone stands outside and looks up
- ☐ No one knows the day or hour
- ☐ One year soon on Christmas day

2. How do we know that Jesus is coming soon? (2)

- ☐ The increase in frequency and intensity of wars and natural disasters
- ☐ The gospel rapidly spreading around the world
- ☐ The major news outlets reporting it
- ☐ People talking about it on social media

3. What should we do if a glorious being walks on the earth claiming to be Christ? (2)

- ☐ Go meet him and listen to his sermons.
- ☐ Do not go.
- ☐ Do not believe it.
- ☐ Ask him to prove it by performing a miracle.

4. What will protect Christ's followers from being deceived? (1)

- ☐ Understanding the latest scientific theories
- ☐ Being physically fit
- ☐ Knowing the Word of God

5. Which of the following describes Jesus' return? (4)

- ☐ Jesus will descend with a shout.
- ☐ A fire shall devour before Him.
- ☐ It will be on a calm afternoon.
- ☐ Every eye will see Him.
- ☐ He will return on a magnificent spaceship.
- ☐ There will be a great earthquake.

6. All the holy angels will be with Jesus at His return. (1)

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

7. At Jesus' return, the righteous will (3)

- ☐ Be raised from the dead
- ☐ All go swimming in the ocean
- ☐ Be given new bodies
- ☐ Be caught up in the air to meet the Lord
- ☐ Have a pizza party

8. Will the living wicked survive the Second Coming? (1)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. What will be the angels' job at Christ's return? (1)

- ☐ To gather all the saints
- ☐ To play tricks on the wicked
- ☐ To preach to the wicked

Continued on back ►►

10. We are saved by grace but rewarded according to our works, which reveal if our faith is genuine. (1)

- ☐ True
☐ False

11. The wicked will be terrified and cry out to the rocks to fall on them at Jesus' return. (1)

- ☐ True
☐ False

12. What will the righteous say when they see Jesus? (1)

- ☐ Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.
☐ I wish that I had watched one more basketball game before Jesus came back.
☐ We hope Jesus will let us take our possessions with us.

13. The main purpose of Jesus' return is (1)

- ☐ To look really awesome and powerful in the sky
☐ To take the righteous home to be with Him
☐ To convince the world to convert to Christianity

14. Jesus said that we should "be ready" for His return. Have you given Him your heart so that you will be ready to meet Him?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Be sure to answer all the questions above and on the reverse side!

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