

ARE YOU READY FOR “The Coming of The Lord”

Lesson Title: Be Ready for the Return of Christ

Bible Passage: Luke 17:20-36

AIM: To help class members to be aware of and ready for the imminent return of Christ.

"Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." These are the positive declarations from the Holy Spirit, as recorded in Hebrews 10:37. They leave no room for doubting the fact that Jesus will surely and certainly come back again.

There is no subject that has undergone more attacks, more perversions or subversions since Satan first attacked the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures and the deity of Christ. Many conflicting views and beliefs have been filling the air in recent years, until the Christian doesn't know what to believe about Jesus' Coming. Preachers are hesitant to preach on this important subject for fear conflicting views will bring divisions in their churches or denominations. Satan could not be happier, as he is the author of all this confusion, and it is in his master plan of strategy to nullify its relevance to the church of our day.

Why does the devil hate this message of the certainty of Jesus' Coming? First of all, because it is the purifying hope of every thoroughly born again Christian. *"For everyone that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as Jesus is pure."* (1 John 3:3) If we can be cheated out of the certainty of this precious truth, then the enemy of our souls can disarm us from being ready for our Saviour's Coming. Frequently Jesus cautioned us to be ready.

Be ye ready, for in such an hour" (not day, month, or year) *"as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."* (Matthew 24:44) In this very same chapter, you only have to read four verses further before finding a lukewarm, backsliding servant of God braying the devil's doctrine: *"My Lord delayeth His coming."*

You see, he did not believe Jesus could come in this generation. He believed, as some are advocating even now, that Jesus cannot come until the middle of the Tribulation, others insist that He will not come until the end of the Great Tribulation, some say, "He came at Pentecost", while still others believe He comes when we are saved from our sins. In contrast to the Bible's teaching, another group even believes Jesus comes again when we die, and that He takes us up to Heaven. All of these confusing, false beliefs are being propagated right now in fundamental churches in America.

But much more serious than these errors are the sneering remarks from those who have gone into apostasy. They sarcastically protest: "We have heard that stuff from the time we were little children, but it hasn't happened yet." Let me assure you, it will take place just as Jesus, the angels, the apostles, and the Holy Spirit have declared in this Bible.

Paul wrote, in Romans 13:11: "*And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, The day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting, drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.*"

"And now, little children, abide in Him; that When He shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." (1 John 2: 28)

This is the key verse that unlocks all the enemies' attacks on the subject about the certainty of Jesus' Coming. Satan wants all of us to be unprepared -- not ready for Jesus. For he already knows what Jesus said in Matthew in Chapter 25:10 far better than most ministers do." *The bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the Marriage: and the door was shut.*" In Revelation 19:7, we see a scene in Heaven and hear these words uttered: *"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His Wife" (the Church) "hath made herself ready."*

BE YE READY

No true minister or Bible teacher can rightly divide the word of truth without seeing the serious implications which are involved in this term "ready", and the stern warnings which our precious Lord gave so frequently. On one occasion Jesus spoke these words: *"be ye therefore ready also for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not."* (Luke 12:40) The apostle, Peter questioned the Lord Jesus about this admonition, and this is what he asked: *"Are you speaking these words unto us, personally or to all believers?"* In reply, Jesus closed the thirteenth chapter of Mark with this answer: *"And what I say unto you I say unto all, watch."*

Our wonderful Lord would never tell us to be ready, to watch, to wait, or to look for His Coming if He never intended to come again. He would never lie to us or deceive us into thinking He could come just any minute if such were not the case. All of these words --- *Watch...look...be ready...wait..--* denote momentary expectancy. They are the same positive proclamations found in all the New Testament alone of the Coming of our Lord Jesus.

The Holy Spirit cannot diminish the importance of this vital truth by under-emphasis. This fact, in itself, ought to stir every true and faithful believer, preacher, or teacher of the Lord's Word who has this same Holy Spirit within him. Surely we ought to feel the same way about Jesus' Coming as the Holy Spirit does.

There is a great spirit of revival moving across the country. Accompanying it is a revival of the declaration of Jesus' certain return. This revival would have to happen just prior to His Coming, or else there would be no reason for the scoffers which are to come in the last days to ridicule this Second-Coming message. If it were a dead doctrine, long since abandoned and forgotten as untrue, we should just forget it.

The apostle, Peter speaks of these false deceivers in this manner: "*Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of His Coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*" Peter brands this reasoning as stupid and willful ignorance. There are too many facts and details and repetitions of this glorious truth to escape any honest heart.

Jesus said: "*I go and prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*" (John 14:2-3)

Peter encouraged the believers with these words: "*The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*" (1 Peter 1:7)

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:13)

"And He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you." (Acts 3:20)

GOD SHALL KEEP HIS PROMISE

Beloved, the Lord's "*shalls*" mean shall. There is no room for "hope so," "guess so," "maybe," or "perhaps", for in Hebrews 9:28, we read: "*So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*"

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1Thessalonians 4: 16, 17)

Hold on! I remember reading in Luke 2:25-35 of a dear old saint named Simeon. It was revealed to him by the same Spirit of God that he would not die until he had seen the Redeemer of the world, our Messiah. Even then, there were those around him who thought he was a "little off upstairs" or "had rooms for rent in his upper-story."

But, to their utter surprise, that elderly saint kept living on and on, although many thought he would be dead just any day. He openly affirmed the fact that he couldn't die until he had seen Jesus in His First Coming. If God could reveal the First Coming of Jesus to certain ones who were living close to His heart, then I affirm that He is able to do the same today regarding Jesus' Second Coming.

Jesus told us seven times in Revelation, chapters two and three, to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. The Spirit must be speaking, for Jesus tells us to listen. In the concluding chapter of this wonderful book, Jesus speaks this thrilling message in 22:7, "*Behold I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*"

Then in verse 12: "*And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*"

Finally, in verse 20: "*He which testifieth these things saith. surely I come quickly. Amen.*"

MARANATHA

The glad response which came from the writer of this last book of the Bible was: *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."* This is also our hearty response and earnest prayer when we are ready and really saved, and eager to meet Him. Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us on the Cross to purchase our lost souls. We are now looking for that Blessed Hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify ^{unto} Himself ^a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (Titus 2:14,15)

Our looking is not in vain in the least. There are manifold signs which Jesus and the apostles prophesied concerning His coming. They are being fulfilled before our very eyes. These are showing that the time is near for our Lord to come back. One very important one is found in 11 Timothy 3:1,2: *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves."*

Jesus will return on time, just as He did the first time, as declared in Galatians 4:4; *"But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."*

God's great prophetic clock is ticking away the hours, and soon an unprepared and amazed world will awaken to the fulfillment of Jesus' sudden Coming and the catching away of His waiting Bride, the Church. Jesus said:

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36)

"For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning. Lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." (Mark 13:34-37)

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away." (Mark 13:32,31)

It is with this same definite certainty that I can declare it unto you, in the authority of our Lord Jesus' words, and secondarily on that of those two Heavenly angel messengers:

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven." (Act. 1:11)

It is in our Bibles that God sets forth this 'promise: *"At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."* (Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16; John 8:17-18; II Corinthians 13:11; Hebrews 10:28.

You have been privileged to hear what Jesus, the angelic messengers, Paul, Peter, and John have declared, relative to our Lord's certain return. Jesus' word alone is enough for me! With this in mind, it would be very appropriate to give you this scripture from II Chronicles 20:20: "*Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established: believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.*"

It is not possible even to take the Lord's Supper, the Communion Service, without conscientiously testifying to our faith in the coming of the Lord Jesus. 1 Corinthians 11:26 says: "*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.*" The Lord ordained that we should take communion often, for there is a twofold purpose in doing so.

- One is to anticipate His Coming again.
- The other is to insure the required examination we are supposed to make of our own hearts and our present state of grace, lest we partake unworthily

If we are living in secret sin, we shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, thereby incurring damnation unto ourselves. "*For this cause many are weak and sickly and many*" (spiritually) "*sleep*". This is the warning note which the Holy Spirit gives in 1 Corinthians 11:26-32, and we will do well to give earnest heed, lest we, too, be condemned with the world. Jesus said; "*Behold, I come quickly hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*" (Revelation 3:11)

We have emphasized the Lord's "shalls". "*Yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*" But, from the prophecies of the past, there is also a necessary reminder which I must share. Those who are inclined to become careless and neglectful must note that God said there would be a flood in the days of Noah, and there was! Jesus said; "*As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man.*" (Luke 17:26) God told Abraham that Sodom would be destroyed by fire, and it was! Jesus said: "*As it was in the days of Sodom thus shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man.*" (Luke 17:28-30) The positivism of our Lord's Coming is set over and against the background of these certain prophecies already fulfilled. Thus, Jesus states it in terms simple and plain, in terms we can count on: He is surely and certainly coming again, beyond any shadow of doubt!

A POSITIVE NOTE

I have a final word to those of you who are not yet saved from your sins, you who do not know the joy of salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to be true to your precious, never dying souls and faithful to bring you the whole counsel of God, I feel you deserve to know the certainty of what awaits you in the future if you do not repent.

God's "shalls" do mean shall, and this is what the Bible declares:

- *For "it is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment."* (Hebrews 9:27)"
- *For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God."* (Romans 14:10-12)
- *And, for all who have refused to come to Jesus for cleansing and pardon, there is a final shall: "these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into Life Eternal."* (Matthew 21:46)

Oh, precious souls, for whom Jesus came into the world to seek and to save from your sins, Jesus is calling you now. *"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28) "And him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37)*

I have this good news for you: Despite those "shalls" which denote the certainty of Jesus' Coming and the certainty of judgment for the wicked, there is another certain and positive shall for the repentant who turns to Jesus for mercy:

- *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved .••"* (Acts 16:31)
- *"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."* (Acts 2:21)
- *Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)" ••*
- *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men."* (Matthew 12:31)
- *"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow though they be red like crimson, they shall be as WOOL."* (Isaiah 1:18)
- *"He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death into life."* (John 5:24)
- *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall Be damned. (Mark 16:16)*

Points for discussion

- 1. Why does the devil hate the message of the certainty of Jesus Coming?*
- 2. What are some of the confusing issues that the devil teaches about the return of Jesus?*
- 3. How many times does the New Testament refer to the Second Coming of Christ.*
- 4. What promise did Jesus give in John 14:2-3?*
- 5. Is there any importance attached to the word "Shall" in the New Testament?*
- 6. What does Maranatha mean?*
- 7. Will Jesus return on time?*
- 8. In what way does the Lord's Supper or Communion refer to the coming again of Jesus?*
- 9. Is there a positive hope for the unsaved as we consider the Second Coming of Jesus? If so, what is it?*

