

DISCIPLESHIP PRINCIPLE #12

Mt. 24-25, 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11, Rev. 4-22

LIVING IN HOPE OF THE THINGS TO COME

The King of kings is coming to rule and reign, and there will be a judgement which will send some to eternal damnation in hell and some to share eternal life with the King. How do we know these things will happen? On what do we base our **HOPE** in Christ's return?

The return of Jesus Christ is announced in over 1835 passages in the Old and New Testaments. Our **HOPE** of ruling and reigning with our Savior and Lord is based on these biblical prophecies.

The following summary addresses only the predictions relative to the future of our earth until the Millennium. The prophecies of things to come are so extensive that we cannot address here many other things we are told about, such as hell, heaven, the rewards for believers, the resurrections, the final judgement, the dead, etc.

Also, this summary of things to come is "dispensational" as shown in **the diagram below**. There are other interpretations of these many prophecies, which is not a surprise because of the difficulty to determine

- 1) the literal or symbolic value of some passages, and
- 2) the sequence or chronology of these predicted future events.

Please be cautioned, in light of the complexities and different interpretations of prophetic passages, to remember that **the main things** regarding the prophecies of Christ's return are simple and really only two:

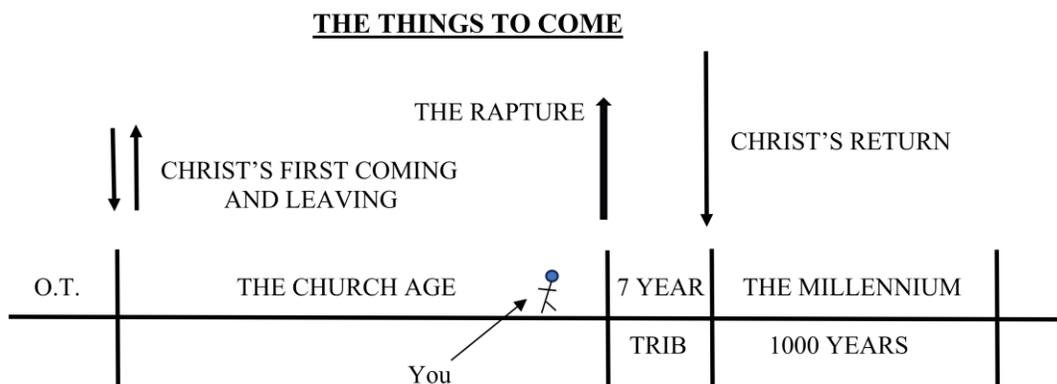
1. Jesus Is Coming Back!

2. There Will Be A Judgement!

*²⁷ "For the Son of Man is **going to come** in the glory of His Father with His angels; and **will then recompense** every man according to his deeds."*

— Matt. 16:27

Let us, therefore, focus on heeding these primary declarations, getting ready for the coming of our King by living a holy life and having, because of our **HOPE**, a steadfast witness of what He has done and will do.



THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST

Each of the following areas of prophetic announcement in the Scripture have many, many passages related to them. Only 1 or 2 passages are quoted for each and then a number of the additional passages are listed for further study.

1. When Will Jesus Christ Return?

1) No one knows the day.

³⁶ *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.”* — Matt. 24:36

See also: Acts 1:7, Mt. 24:42-44, 50, 1 Thess. 5:1-2, 2 Pet. 3:10, Mk. 13:33-37

2) Christ delays His coming for a reason.

⁹ *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.* — 2 Pet. 3:9

The reason? He has been waiting for you - and all those whose names have been written in the Lamb's book of life to be born, hear the gospel and believe unto eternal life.

See also: 2 Pet. 3:15, Mt. 24:14, 2 Thess. 2:3, Rom. 11:25

3) Be on your guard.

²³ *“But **take heed**; behold, I have told you everything in advance.”* — Mark 13:23

⁴² *“Therefore, **be on the alert**, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming...”*

⁴⁴ *For this reason, you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. ⁴⁵ Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.”* — Matt. 24:42-46

²⁸ *And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.* — 1 John 2:28

2. The Major Signs Of Christ's Return.

1) The universal spread of the gospel to all peoples

¹⁴ *“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.”* — Matt. 24:14

¹⁰ *“And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.”* — Mark 13:10

The Bible, after the first 15 centuries of the church age, had only been translated into 14 languages. Today the Bible is available in 733 languages. This means that 5.9 billion people can read the Word of God in their mother tongue. Just the New Testament is translated into an estimated 1,622 languages, other parts of the Bible in another 1,255 languages.

Today, with the advent of the internet, the entire globe is being reached with the gospel.

2) The return of Israel to the land.

⁸ *I will whistle for them to gather them together, for I have redeemed them; And they will be as numerous as they were before.* ⁹ *When I scatter them among the peoples, they will remember Me in far countries, and they with their children will live and come back.* — Zech. 10:8-9

¹⁵ *“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place... ¹⁶ then let **those who are in Judea** flee to the mountains;... ²¹ for **then** there will be **a great tribulation**, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.”* — Matt. 24:15-21

After nearly 20 centuries of non-existence as a nation, in 1948 Israel became a nation again and since then millions of Jews have returned.

3) Knowledge shall increase and many shall go “back and forth”.

⁴ *“But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.”* — Dan. 12:4

Undeniably, knowledge has increased, especially in the last century. And, every day in the United States alone, 90,000 airplane flights carry many “back and forth”.

4) Apostacy, wars, earthquakes and famines.

³ “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” ⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many. ⁶ And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.” — Matt. 24:3-7

3. The Removal (Rapture) Of The Church.

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. ¹⁷ **Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.** ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

— 1 Thess. 4:13-18

This event will occur before the great tribulation. Why? Because...

⁹ God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. — 1 Thess. 5:9

See also the following texts, which permit us to believe that the church is taken up before the great tribulation: Rev. 3:10; Lk. 21:28, 36; 2 Thess. 2:6-8; Zech. 14:4-5; and Rev. 20:4-6.

4. The 7 Year Tribulation Period

¹⁵ “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place... ²¹ then there will be a **great tribulation**, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. ²² And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.”
— Matt. 24:15-22

This great tribulation and outpouring of God’s wrath is described at length in Rev. 4-19.

See also what the prophets say regarding it: Isa.13; Ezekiel 30:-1-2; Joel 1:15; 2:1-11; Amos 5:18,20; Zephaniah 1:14-18; Malachi 4:1

5. God’s Promises To Israel vs. The Church

²⁵ For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, (as non-Jewish believers in the Messiah) that a **partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in.**
— Rom. 11:25

The church, made up of souls from all the non-Jewish nations, (and Jews) has not replaced the Jewish people or cancelled the covenant promises God has made to them. The apostle Paul addresses this issue at length in Romans, particularly chapters 9-11.

6. The Millennium (1000-Year Reign Of Christ On Earth)

1) The Glorious Appearance Of Christ At The End Of The Tribulation

When our Lord left His disciples and returned to the Father after His resurrection, the angels said this to the disciples:

¹⁰ And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; ¹¹ and they also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come **in just the same way** as you have watched Him go into heaven.”
— Acts 1:10-11

The verses that follow describe that this indicates He shall return personally, visibly, from heaven on clouds, suddenly, encompassed with glory, with all His angels and saints, to the Mount of Olives. See: John 14:3; 16:22; Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:17; Dan. 2:34-35; 1 Thess. 5:2-3; Mt. 24:26-27; 2 Thess. 1:7-8; Jude 14-15; Mt. 13:38-41; Col. 3:4; Zech. 14:3-5.

2) The Characteristics Of Our Lord’s 1000 Year Kingdom On Earth

¹ And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him **for a thousand years**, ³ and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, **until the thousand years were completed**; after these things he must be released for a short time.

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ **for a thousand years**.

— Rev. 20:1-4

This 1000-year reign of our Lord is a time of perfect justice, peace, prosperity, long life, good health, and happiness lived in a world delivered from the curse, as described in the following: Isa. 2:4; 11:3-5; Micah 4:4; Isa. 9:5-6; Isa. 8:22-9:2; Isa. 35:5-6; Isa. 65:20-23; Amos 9:13-14; Zech 3:10; 8:12; Rom. 8:19-22; Isa. 41:18-19; Isa. 11:6-9

7. The Exhortations Based On Christ's Return

1) To His Disciples

A great number of passages directly connect our hope in the return of our Lord with our lives as His disciples as we wait to see Him and be with Him.

¹¹ It is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. ¹² The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. **Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day.** — Rom. 13:11-12

⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief;

....⁶ so then **let us not sleep** as others do, but **let us be alert and sober.**

— 1 Thess. 5:4-6

See also the exhortations and commands to be watchful, prudent, courageous, discerning, zealous, patient, joyful, sober, committed, and prayerful in our **HOPE** of Christ's return. Here are just a few: 2 Pet. 3:11-14; Phil. 1:6, 9-11; 1 Thess. 3:13; 1 Cor. 1:8; 2 Pet. 3:14; Mt. 25:19-21; 1 Pet. 1:7-9; 4:13; James 5:7-8; Heb. 10:36-37; 1 Pet. 4:7.

2) To The Lukewarm And Unrepentant Who Say They Are Christians

¹⁵ “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot.

¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked... ¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; **be zealous therefore, and repent...** ²¹ He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne... ²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”
— Rev 3:15-22

3) The 5 “Finals” In God’s Final Words Of His Revelation To Us.

In the final book in the Bible, in the final chapter, God has some final words to say to us to guide us and warn us until He returns, after His great plan of reconciliation is complete. There is a final invitation, a final warning, a final promise, a final prayer, and a final benediction. These are all in the context of His return to be with you. They were written for you.

UNIT 12 STUDY SESSION #1

In preparation for the group session, read the primary prophetic passages quoted in each of the areas above and complete the following self-evaluation.

Evaluating My Hope In The Return Of My Lord

If our Lord returned today would He be pleased with what you are doing in life as His disciple?

Are you fighting the good fight for Him, in self-denial, regardless of the cost?

Personally _____

In Your Marriage _____

With Your Children _____

As A Member Of The Church He Has Placed You In _____

As A Christian Standing For Him In The World _____

Discussion Questions for Unit 12 Study Session #1

1. Is the diagram on page 33 helpful? Do you have questions about the primary events to come, i.e. the end of the church age, the rapture, the tribulation, the time of the Lord's return, or the millennium?
2. How many of the prophecies relating to the Lord's return have yet to be fulfilled before He comes?
3. Can you sum up the 1800+ announcements regarding things to come in two sentences?
4. Remember that our study of biblical prophecies in this study has been limited to those concerning things to come until the Millennium because of the breadth of prophecy in the Bible. Let us be careful to avoid too much attention to other areas at this time.

Prayer Together

UNIT 12 STUDY SESSION #2

In preparation for the second study session please choose one of the following projects for the week and come prepared to share what you have learned in the process:

Preparation For Session #2: Application Project

1. The word HOPE is used 145 times in the Bible, 77 in the N.T. Memorize 5 of these passages where it is found in reference to the return of our Lord.
2. Choose one of the 7 subject areas in “The Return Of Jesus Christ” material above. Read all of the quoted AND noted passages referenced and meditate on them this week. Come prepared to share what the Lord has shown you.
3. Remember that our study of biblical prophecies in this study has been limited to those concerning things to come until the Millennium because of the breadth of prophecy in the Bible. Let us be careful to avoid too much attention to other areas at this time.

Discussion Questions for Unit 12 Study Session #2

1. If you were able to pursue one of the projects can you share what you have learned?

Prayer Together