

Are You Ready?

Jesus is coming back!

We're living in days where nation is fighting against nation, wars, earthquakes, famines, plagues (Covid 19) and great economic upheavals – all of which Jesus said would happen as a sign of His soon return.

In the Bible, which is God's word to us, we read that Jesus, on many occasions, promised us He would return to earth. He said He will come again to judge the living and the dead. He will once and for all eliminate all sin and disorder brought about by sin. He will provide a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21:1) where everything is in a final and perfect form for those who eagerly await His return.

Christ's first coming was in **humility** and **weakness** to save sinners like you and me from the curse of sin through His sacrificial death on the cross and, through His victorious resurrection, to give us eternal life. His second coming will be in **power** and **great glory** to punish the impenitent, those who have not acknowledged Him as Saviour and Lord, and to usher in a new heaven and a new earth free from sin in which those who have believed in Him and received His forgiveness for our sin will live and reign with Him eternally. (John 3:16-17; Matt 25:31-46; Isa 65:17; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1-4; Rev 22:3-5)

So Christ is coming back, soon. That's a fact. But the real question is:

Are you ready, excited and expectant concerning His return?

Do we wake up and live each day in anticipation of Christ's return with expectancy and joy? What could be better than seeing our Lord and Saviour face to face and being in His presence, where there is no more sin, sorrow, sickness or pain, all for eternity! How great it will be to see Him in all His glory, and to share His love and His life, pure and holy, with Him for all eternity!

And just think of who He is, the One coming back for us! Almighty God, our glorious Lord, the Creator, and the one by whose word everything that exists was created and which upholds everything in creation in place. He is the one who became incarnate in the flesh and became a man to suffer and die in your place and mine to pay the price for us to be forgiven and to have His life to live by. He came to give us a hope and a future. And some future! Glorious future!

God's word also refers to the church, those who have put their trust in the redeeming power of Christ's death and resurrection, as His bride. He is coming back to take up His bride to be with Him forever. So there is a marriage feast and an eternal honeymoon of peace, and joy awaiting us!

My eldest daughter got married recently. Prior to the wedding day she designed and made herself the most beautiful wedding dress. She worked on it for months. It's beautiful. She, along with her bridesmaids and sisters made all the preparations for the big day. She was so excited and couldn't wait for the day she and her fiancé would meet at the altar and get married.

With that in mind, let's look at one of the parables Jesus gave concerning the coming of the Bridegroom.

Matt 25:1-13 ... *"Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise*

took oil in flasks along with their lamps. ⁵ Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. ⁶ But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the wise answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰ And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. ¹¹ Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' ¹² But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³ **Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.**"

Now we need to ask ourselves, "Which of the two groups of virgins awaiting our Bridegroom, Christ, do I fit into?" In this parable oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. So the real point is, are we full of the Holy Spirit, and continually led by and walking in the Spirit? Have we got "drowsy" awaiting the Lord's return? Although no one but the Father knows the day and time of Christ's second coming, surely we are nearing His return. So we will do well to take note of Jesus' statement at the end of this passage.

Matt 25:13 ... *"Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour (of His return)."*

2 Pet 3:13-14 ... *"But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless."*

Jesus is excited at the prospect of returning for His bride.

Zeph 3:17 says that ... *"He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy."* A literal translation is ... *"He spins arounds in vigorous, enthusiastic expressions of joy over you!"*

He has cleansed you from your sin and shame and has given you the Holy Spirit to help you live by His pure and holy life, and on His return all He expects of you is that you are waiting for Him and that you are ready – dressed in purity and holiness and full of expectant joy at His return to take you up to be with Him forever.

What's our position?

So we have a few questions to ask of ourselves. Serious questions which we need to answer.

1. Have you acknowledged your need for a Saviour to forgive you and take away your sin and give you eternal life? Have you asked Christ for forgiveness and to make you holy and pure? Christ has told us clearly, John 3:3 ... *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* Only the born again will be His bride and enjoy an eternity with Him in paradise. Those that don't know Him are destined for the inescapable place of eternal fire (Matt 25:41).
2. Are you in readiness for His return living a life filled with the Holy Spirit, walking in His strength and by His leading, all the time? Jesus said John 15:5 ... *"he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing."*
3. Are you excited and daily looking forward to His return and the amazing inheritance He has stored up for you? This surely will be the greatest day of our earthly lives!

4. Are you walking in the holiness, love and purity that is fitting for the bride of Christ? 2 Pet 1:3 ... *“seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him.”* What are you doing with what He has given you? Do you know Him and obey Him and live a godly life?

Will He find a pure and holy bride who is joyfully awaiting His appearance?

We don't know the moment He will return, but we need to be certain all the time that every attitude, word and action that comes from us will be such that we are proud and not ashamed at His appearing.

So in closing, thinking about the questions we have just considered, let's read the passages from Peter's Epistle and Matthews Gospel:

1 Pet 1:3-8; 13-16 ... *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for **a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,⁷ so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honour **at the revelation of Jesus Christ;**⁸ and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory” “Therefore, **prepare your minds for action, be sober, and fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,¹⁵ but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behaviour;¹⁶ because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*

A holy Groom coming for a holy bride – what a picture!

Matt 25:13 ... *“Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour (of His return).”*

Are you ready? Is your “lamp” full of oil?

Are you excited?

Are you looking forward to Christ's return?

How will he find you when He comes?