

7 Many people have suggested that Christ's appearing could never happen in this lifetime. Some have actually suggested that the Second Coming is a myth, because so much time has passed since Jesus made His promises—yet the Bible anticipated this attitude. (2 Peter 3:3, 4) What did Jesus say on this subject? (Matthew 24:44)

Be ready at any time, because Jesus will come when most of the world doesn't

expect Him.

8 Jesus asked us to be ready. Is it your desire to be ready for His glorious appearing? _____

NEXT TIME: We'll be looking at one of the most astonishing prophecies in the Bible—one that decisively proves that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the long-awaited Messiah!



the APPEARING

LESSON ONE

A PLANET IN UPHEAVAL

the APPEARING

LESSON ONE A PLANET IN UPHEAVAL

1 The signs that Jesus said to watch for can be broken down into three general domains: the religious world, the political world and the natural world. (Matthew 24:4-7)

2 The Bible lays out signs of the times with such detail that we could probably calculate a date for Christ's return.

TRUE FALSE

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only." (Matthew 24:36)

3 a) Will we be able to tell when Christ's appearing is getting close?
(Matthew 24:32, 33)

YES NO

b) To what does Jesus compare the signs of His coming in Matthew 24:32?

Leaves on a fig tree.

4 In Matthew 24:8, Jesus describes the signs of His appearing and "the end of the world" as the beginning of *sorrows*. The original word used in the Greek text is *odin*, which means birth pains. All the signs are things we have seen before, but when the contractions become more intense and frequent, it is an indication that we are getting close to the appearing.

5 Name some of the signs Jesus told us to watch for. (Matthew 24:4-7, 11, 12)

- Increased war
- Increased corrupt religion
- Increased famine
- Increased pestilence
- Increased earthquakes
- Etc.

6 In Matthew 24:37-39, Jesus makes reference to the fact that the world will resemble the "days of Noah" just prior to the appearing. What was the world like in those days? (Genesis 6:5)

Man's wickedness was great, and his thoughts were evil continually.

7 Some modern books on prophecy teach that Daniel 9 is primarily about a last-day antichrist who will desecrate a rebuilt temple in the last days. Whom does the text identify as the protagonist of the prophecy, and who brought an end to the sacrificial system? (Daniel 9:25-27; Matthew 27:51)

The subject of the prophecy is Messiah the Prince. The sacrificial system came to a dramatic end when Christ died on the cross—God Himself tore the temple veil in two!

8 There is a parallel structure in Daniel 9:26, 27. Verse 26 describes Jesus being “cut off” for others, followed by someone who would come and destroy the city and sanctuary. Verse 27 repeats the same information, with different details: Jesus would “bring an end to sacrifice and offering” in the middle of the 70th week, followed by one who would make the temple “desolate.” Was Daniel right? Did someone come after the crucifixion to destroy the temple?

Yes. The Roman general Titus destroyed the second temple in AD 70. It has never been rebuilt.

NEXT TIME: We’ll discover five things we can know for sure about the Second Coming of Christ!



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LESSON TWO

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

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LESSON TWO THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

1 The phrase “abomination of desolation” often comes up in discussions about Bible prophecy, but the historical context is rarely mentioned. According to the Bible, why was the first temple (the one Solomon built) made desolate? (2 Chronicles 36:8, 9, 11, 12, 17, 18)

It was due to the abominations, or wicked acts, of the kings of Judah.

2 When Jesus predicted the destruction of the second temple in the New Testament, He referred to the way God’s prophets were treated. (Matthew 23:37, 38) This was true before the destruction of the first temple as well. (2 Chronicles 36:15, 16; Nehemiah 9:26) What does this tell us about how God deals with His people? (Amos 3:7; 2 Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 33:11)

God is long-suffering (patient), and He keeps us well-informed because His greatest desire is not destruction, but that we will repent and come back to Him.

3 Daniel’s city and people were to enjoy a period of probation after coming back from Babylonian captivity. How long was that probationary period supposed to last? (Daniel 9:24) Given the principle we learned in Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34, which literal period of time does that represent?

Probation would last 70 weeks, which is 490 days. Applying the principle that days are often used to represent years, this period of time translates to 490 years.

4 What was the starting point for the 70-week prophecy? (Daniel 9:25)

It began with the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Artaxerxes issued that decree in 457 BC. (You can read the decree of Artaxerxes in Ezra 7.)

5 Which event signaled the close of the 490-year probationary period in AD 34? (Acts 7:57-60)

After Stephen had reviewed the long history of God’s goodness to Israel, the religious leaders refused to listen and stoned him to death. (Note: This is a repeat of the offense of killing God’s prophets, as had happened in the past.)

6 It is now possible for all followers of Christ to consider themselves descendants of Abraham. (Galatians 3:29; Acts 10:34, 35; Romans 10:12)

TRUE FALSE

—CONTINUED ON BACK—

This means that when Christ returns, there will be no further opportunities to make things right with God—which tells us that Christ’s return is final .

8 There will only be two groups of people when Christ returns, and each group will react differently to the sight of Jesus’ return. One reaction is found in Revelation 6:15-17; a description of the other is found in Isaiah 25:9. What is the difference between these two groups of people? Which reaction are you planning to experience?

One group is afraid of the sight of Christ, while the other group recognizes Him as their Savior and Friend.

NEXT TIME: We’ll search through history to discover why there is so much confusion about Bible prophecy in the 21st century.



the APPEARING

LESSON THREE

THE APPEARING

the APPEARING

LESSON THREE THE APPEARING

With more than 2,500 references or allusions to it throughout the Bible, the Second Coming is clearly one of the most important subjects in Scripture. Yet in spite of the abundance of material describing it, many Christians find themselves disagreeing about the manner of Christ's return. Fortunately, if we take the time to read through all of the data, a clear picture emerges with a number of things we can know for sure when it comes to Jesus' appearing.

1 In John 14:29, Jesus reveals an interesting principle of Bible prophecy. Even though many prophecies clearly and accurately predict the future, prophecy is not primarily about prediction. What is the primary purpose of Bible prophecy?

To build faith in the reliability of God's Word as we see prophecy fulfilled.

There are several well-established facts about the nature of Christ's appearing that we can know for sure. Let's review those facts.

2 "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11) This tells us that Jesus will return literally.

3 Jesus had a body made of flesh and bones. This same Jesus will return, which tells us that He will appear physically. (Luke 24:38-40)

4 When Christ returns, every eye will see Him. This means that His coming will be visible. (Revelation 1:7)

5 When Christ returns, there will be a shout, with the voice of an archangel, along with the sound of a trumpet. It will be so loud that it will wake the dead. (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 24:31) Furthermore, in John 5:28, 29, we learn that all who are in their graves will hear Jesus' voice. This tells us that Jesus will appear audibly.

6 When Jesus returns, how many of the angels will accompany Him? (Matthew 25:31)

All of them

How many angels are there in the universe? (Revelation 5:11)

Millions; perhaps billions

Also, when Jesus comes, He will come with the glory of His Father. (Matthew 16:27) This demonstrates that Christ's return will be glorious.

7 When Jesus appears, what will He bring with Him? (Revelation 22:12; John 5:28, 29) Our (His) rewards.

6 Old Testament prophecy was very open about pointing out the sins of God's Old Testament people. Is the same true of the New Testament? (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 7; Revelation 3:14-18)

Yes! Paul predicted a great "falling away" or apostasy that would take place within Christianity; the letters to the seven churches make it obvious that Christ cares deeply about keeping His church true to Him.

7 What prophetic symbol is used throughout Scripture to describe God's people? What does this tell us about God's feelings toward us? (Jeremiah 6:2; Matthew 25:1, 6; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 21:1, 2)

God's people are portrayed as a *bride*, which tells us something of the intimacy that God desires with us. He loves us so much and desires to identify with us so much that the second Person of the Godhead actually *became* one of us—the Son of Man!

8 Knowing the love that Jesus has for His bride, is it your desire to be one of the people who is ready for His return? _____

NEXT TIME: The battle of Armageddon!



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4 LESSON FOUR

PROPHECY INTERRUPTED

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LESSON FOUR
PROPHECY INTERRUPTED

1 In the second chapter of Daniel, what did God use to represent world history from Daniel’s day to our day? What did the head of gold represent? (Daniel 2:31-38)

A giant statue made of different materials. The head of gold represented

Nebuchadnezzar and the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

2 What did the lower sections of the statue represent? (Daniel 2:32, 39-45)

Subsequent kingdoms. Historically, we know these to be the Medes and the Persians

(silver), the Macedonians or Greeks (bronze), Rome (iron), and the divided Western

Roman Empire (feet and toes).

3 According to Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, when is the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom going to take place? (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 25:31)

The Second Coming, when Christ will sit on His throne, will take place during the “days

of these kings”—in other words, after the breaking up of the Roman Empire. This proves

that Bible prophecy was *not* blind to events taking place after the cross.

4 a) God has used several different methods to save sinners over the centuries. (Acts 4:12; Hebrews 10:4; Romans 4:2, 3)

TRUE FALSE

b) Why or why not?

Salvation has always been through faith in Christ, whether looking forward

to the cross by faith, or looking back to it by faith! Notice that even in

Old Testament times, Abraham was saved by his faith, not by his works.

5 What was the point of the sacrificial system if the blood of animals (Hebrews 10:4) could not save sinners? (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18-20; Revelation 5:6-9; Hebrews 8:1, 2)

Everything in the Old Testament sanctuary, from the priests to the sacrificial animals,

pointed forward to Jesus so that Old Testament believers could look forward to salvation

by faith.

—CONTINUED ON BACK —

8 What does this tell us about what is important when Christ returns?

What really matters is what the Bible says, not what people say.

9 The battle of Armageddon is ultimately a struggle for the hearts and minds of human beings. It is a warning that time *will* run out. Today, we are faced with the same decision that Elijah leveled at ancient Israel—if the Lord is God, follow Him; if He is not, follow another. In the end, the whole human race is figuratively gathered on the “Mountain of Megiddo” to make a decision. What decision will you make?

These are private answers, of course, but you will want to encourage people to stand on biblical truth and follow God in these last days.



the
APPEARING

LESSON FIVE

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

the APPEARING

LESSON FIVE

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

1 One of the most important keys to understanding the book of Revelation is to understand that approximately two-thirds of the imagery John uses is lifted from the Old Testament. This is especially true of one Old Testament prophet in particular who described the night Babylon fell. Which prophet told that story? Daniel

2 The word *Armageddon* is derived from the Hebrew words *Har Megiddo*, which means what?
The Mountain of Megiddo

3 What is the most prominent mountain bordering the Valley of Megiddo, and what happened there? (1 Kings 18:19-21)
It is Mount Carmel—the site of Elijah’s spiritual challenge to those involved in false religion.

4 Revelation 16:12 refers to the drying up of the Euphrates River. Historically, this literally happened in conjunction with which event? (Isaiah 44:27-45:1; Daniel 5)
The fall of Babylon, when Cyrus the Great “dried up” the Euphrates so that his army could march under the wall and take the city.

5 The literal city of Babylon is used throughout the book of Revelation as a symbol for religious confusion and rebellion against God. In Revelation 16:19, God promises that He will put an end to modern-day *spiritual* Babylon, ending the struggle with the appearing of Christ. (Revelation 19:11)

God gives His reason for the overthrow of ancient *literal* Babylon in Jeremiah 29:10, which foreshadows His reason for overthrowing last-day *spiritual* Babylon. What reason is given?

God had a great desire to bring His people back to the Promised Land—just as He still has a great desire to bring us into the kingdom of Christ.

6 Are miraculous events a sure sign that God is at work? (Revelation 16:14; Revelation 13:11-14)

No; even demons will be performing signs in the last days.

7 At the conclusion of the battle, Jesus is pictured with a sword coming out of His mouth. What does a sword represent? (Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17)

The Word of God