



Week 5

The Promise of Jesus' Return

-Personal Study-

“And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

LUKE 21:27-28

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

2 PETER 3:8-14

Think about the different ways in which you prepare for things in your life—whether it's making dinner, getting ready for work or having a guest over. How much time and intentionality do you invest and why? What motivates you toward careful preparation? What adjustments do you make to your schedule, plans, budget, etc.?





The Promise of Jesus' Return

For many of us, Christmas Day is one of the most important days of the entire year, which is obvious given the intense amount of preparation that often goes into it. We adjust schedules, plans and budgets months in advance. Family members travel in from far away. Decorations are perfectly placed, menus are planned, and gifts are purchased, wrapped and hidden. There is intentionality, joy and anticipation; all because this day is significant. And also because we believe it is a reality.

Christmas isn't a pretend day; it's real. We wouldn't go through all the trouble to prepare if we didn't believe Christmas was, in fact, an actual day. We trust it to come on the same date every year. Out of love and expectation, we make every necessary preparation, so that when it becomes our reality, we are ready.

We spend months preparing to celebrate and remember Christ's first coming. How much more should we seek to be ready for His second coming? That day, too, is a reality; an absolute certainty. Unlike Christmas Day, which happens every December 25, only the Father knows the day and hour His Son will return. But He is coming. In the fullness of time, He will split the sky and descend to destroy all wickedness, receive the worship that is rightfully His and usher in a new age—the beginning of unbroken, unending fellowship with Him. We should believe in, think about, look to and prepare for that day.

Once More We Wait

The day of Jesus' return is certain and coming, but—so far—it is not today. We find ourselves much like the Israelites long ago—waiting. Which begs the question: How then shall we wait? Peter asks and answers this very question in his second letter. In love, he reminds his readers that, though the days seem long and weary in the waiting, God is not slow in keeping His promise.

He assures them of the absolute reality of the appointed day when Jesus will return. And he then tells them exactly what kinds of lives they are to live in light of this coming day—lives of holiness, godliness and hopeful expectation.

Peter's exhortations are just as much for us today as they were for the believers he wrote to long ago. We too are living in the days of God's patient mercy. We need to be reminded that really believing in and looking toward the reality of Jesus' return changes the way we live. It reorients our hope and perspective. It creates a sense of urgency and sobriety, as well as giddy anticipation—just like a child who cannot wait for Christmas morning.

Let us, the people of God, be found ready in the waiting. As this Advent season comes to a close, take some time to reflect on how the reality of Jesus' return affects the way you live. May your heart be full and your eyes bright as you hope all things in Christ and look to His coming. Take heart, beloved. It won't be long.





Reflection

Re-read 2 Peter 3:8-14. What stands out to you in this passage and why? What questions does it leave you with?

How does your life reflect your belief that Jesus will return? Is it something you think about and long for? If not, why do you think that is?

What do you think of when you hear or read the words “be diligent”? What does it look like for you to be diligent in pursuing holiness and godliness? In what areas do you need to fight and flee from sin? In what areas do you need to cultivate love for God and love for others?

Look up Romans 8:22-25. Compare it to Revelation 21:1-7. What future birth do we await? How does looking expectantly to the promised return of Jesus affect the way you see your present circumstances?

Response

One way God’s children prepare for Jesus’ return is by caring for the poor, vulnerable and outcast (Matt. 25:31-46). As you look ahead to the New Year, think of practical ways you and your family or community can care for the weak in your area.

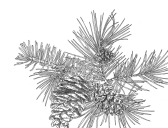
In prayer, thank God for the reality that Jesus will return and make all things new. Confess any areas of your life— finances, time, relationships, stewardship of your body—where you haven’t been diligent in pursuing holiness. Ask the Lord to show you specific ways you can actively await His promised return in the coming year.

Songs of the Season

Glorious Day

In Christ Alone Look and See

You Hold Me Now





-Family Discipleship Time-

Set aside ten minutes one night this week to talk about God's promise that Jesus will return. The only materials needed are five candles, matches and a Bible.

Lighting of the Advent Candle

As a family, light all five candles. Talk about how Jesus, the Light, came into the world to pierce the darkness of sin once, and He will return to do away with it forever.

Scripture Reading

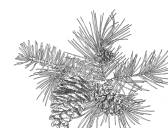
Have one person read the following passages out loud.

"And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

LUKE 21:27-28

"I am going to show you a secret, John," Jesus said, "about when I come back." "Write down what you see so God's children can read it, and wait with happy excitement. I'm on my way... I'll be there soon."

THE JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE





Reflection

Have an adult read the commentary below.

Jesus came, just like God said He would. But God's promises don't end there. Just like God's people waited with eager anticipation for Jesus to come and rescue them from their sins, we are waiting too.

God made us another promise. He promised that Jesus would return to earth. He has already saved us from our sins if we love and trust Him. But when He comes the second time, He will save us from all the brokenness that sin has caused in the world.

Just like before, God has given us hints and clues about how and when Jesus will return. And just like before, we wait. Sometimes we wait patiently. Sometimes we wait with tears and frustration because we can't wait to live in a world without any sin. Sometimes we forget and wonder if Jesus really will come back. But God is faithful—even when we are faithless. And Jesus will come back.

Ask: How do you think we should be waiting for Jesus' return? What should we do as we wait?

This time, Jesus will not come in the middle of the night as a baby. He will not be weak and helpless. The Bible tells us that when Jesus comes back, He will ride out of the sky on a horse, carrying a sword. He will do battle with Satan. And He will win. Our Rescuer is coming back!

While we wait, we wait with hope. We live lives of joy, peace and compassion. We strive to be more like Jesus, every day putting sin to death. And we tell others that Jesus came to save sinners in hopes that they will love and trust in Him, too.

Jesus is coming back. We don't know when, but we know He's coming. Soon. So be ready. Soon we will worship our King, as He deserves, forever. Come, Lord Jesus, come!

Ask: As we read these verses and remember God's faithfulness to send a Rescuer and His promise that Jesus will come again, what attributes of God do you see?





Prayer

Have one family member say a prayer, asking Jesus to come again soon.

Song

As a family, listen to or watch *God With Us* (featuring Isaac Wimberley) by Folk Angel. You can find the video by clicking [here](#) or on Matt Caporale Spotify Advent Playlist.

Family Activity

Together, read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and talk about what Jesus' return will be like, look like and sound like. What do you learn from this passage?

Ask your children what questions they have about Jesus' return and if it's something that scares them to think about. Assure them that Jesus' return will usher in a world with no more sin, sickness, sadness, fights, punishment or having to eat foods they don't like. Even better, those who love and trust Jesus will be with Him forever with no separation. We should look to and long for Jesus' return. And while we wait, we should take seriously His command to love Him first and most, know His Word, care for the poor and share the gospel.

Additional Activities

Draw or paint what you think Jesus' return might look like.

Spend time outside watching the clouds. After Jesus died and came back to life, He returned to heaven by going up into the clouds. The Bible tells us He will return, coming out of the clouds. Spend time imagining what Jesus' return will look like and pray for Him to come soon.

