

THE JOURNEY

Basic Discipleship

REVEALED

STEP SIX

JESUS RETURNS



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

We are so glad you're here! As you step into this journey of discipleship, know that you are entering a path designed to deepen your relationship with God and build a firm biblical foundation. This material is meant to guide you, no matter where you are on your faith journey. The tools and lessons you'll find here are adaptable to many settings—whether you're meeting one-on-one, gathering with a small group, or sharing in a larger community. It can be simplified to nurture the hearts of youth and children or enriched to challenge and inspire mature believers to grow even further.

Discipleship is a journey, not a race.

Our prayer is that this journey will help you engage with Scripture, build meaningful relationships, and discover how God is working in and through your life. Let's take this next step together with faith and intentionality as we grow closer to Him. Trust the process of growth and transformation that occurs over time as you walk with God.



JESUS RETURNS

I. RETURN OF THE KING

THE DEBATABLE DETAILS

Ever since Jesus returned to Heaven, Christians have debated the details of His second coming. While sincere believers differ significantly on sequences, timelines, and interpretations, there is a core set of truths that unites the great majority of Bible-believing Christians. These foundational truths about Christ's return are essential to understand and are the focus of this step in The Journey.

It's important for believers not to fixate on secondary issues that cause division. Instead, we are called to focus on the central truths we share, keeping our eyes on Christ and walking in love toward one another. A wise phrase to keep in mind when discussing Jesus' return is, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, love."



TITUS 3:9 | *“But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless.”*

EPHESIANS 4:3 | *“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”*

*Additional
Scripture
References*

JOHN 17:20-23

ROMANS 14:1-4

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-13

2 TIMOTHY 2:23-24

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Why do you think God allows some mystery in the details of Jesus' return?
2. How can unity in essential truths be maintained without ignoring real theological differences?

A VISIBLE, PHYSICAL RETURN

One truth that comes before all others in discussing the end times is this: Jesus is literally and physically returning. His return will not be symbolic, metaphorical, or merely spiritual.

Instead, the Bible is clear and consistent that it will be real, visible, and certain. Jesus Himself spoke of it often, and the early church affirmed it with confidence. When Jesus ascended into heaven, the angels said He would return in the same way they had seen Him go—visibly and bodily, descending from heaven in power and glory.

Christ's return will not be hidden or private but unmistakable and climactic: The King is coming to reclaim His world and reign in righteousness! That reality shapes our hope and fuels our faith as we wait in eager expectation.

ACTS 1:11 | *“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”*

MARK 13:26 | *“At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.”*

*Additional
Scripture
References*

MATTHEW 16:27 LUKE 17:30
MATTHEW 25:31-32 LUKE 21:27
MARK 8:38 REVELATION 1:7

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What do the Scriptures teach about the nature of Jesus' return, and how do we know it will be physical and visible?
2. How does the certainty of Jesus' return shape the way you think about the future?

UNMISTAKABLE MAJESTY

Unlike Jesus' first coming in humility, His return will be unmistakable and majestic. In other words, it will not be something you can miss. If someone has to point out that He has already returned, you can be certain that they are wrong.

When Christ comes again, every eye will behold Him in all His glory. He will arrive as the conquering Lord, robed in splendor and accompanied by the voice of heaven's hosts and the shout of the archangel. Every knee will bow at His appearing, and every tongue will confess His lordship.

MATTHEW 24:30 | *"Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."*

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16 | *"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first."*

*Additional
Scripture
References*

MARK 13:26
PHILIPPIANS 2:10-11
2 THESSALONIANS 1:7-10
REVELATION 1:7
REVELATION 19:11

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How does Jesus' return differ from how He came the first time?
2. Is Jesus' return frightening to you? Why or why not?

THE UNKNOWN HOUR

Two truths stand firm: Jesus will return, and we do not know when. Jesus stated plainly that we won't know the timing of His return. While on earth, even He voluntarily laid aside that knowledge. The angels don't know either. The exact time is a secret known only to God Himself.

This means we cannot and should not claim to know when Jesus will return. Predicting a specific day, month, or year is not just unwise, it goes directly against what Jesus said. Trying to unlock this time is not an act of faithfulness but of presumption. Instead, we should focus on doing what Jesus has clearly asked us to do while we wait.

Church history is full of teachers and movements who claimed to know the time of Christ's return—and every one of them was wrong. These false prophecies have led to confusion, disappointment, and division. Anyone or group insisting they know the time of Jesus' return should be avoided.

MATTHEW 24:36 | *"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."*

MATTHEW 24:42 | *"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."*

*Additional
Scripture
References*

LUKE 12:40

MARK 13:32-33

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-7

1 THESSALONIANS 5:2-3

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Why do you think God doesn't want us to know the time of Jesus' return?
2. Why do you think it's been such a fascination for people to predict Jesus' return, despite Scripture being clear to the contrary?

WHY SO LONG?

The Bible indicates that the (long to us) period before Jesus' return serves at least two divine purposes. First, God is not bound by time in the same way we are. To Him a thousand years and a single day are alike, so what feels long to us is but a moment to Him.

Second, this time in-between displays His patient mercy. He desires all people to repent and to be saved rather than perish. This reveals His passionate love for us and His desire that as many as possible be saved. It allows the gospel to spread to every nation and gather all who choose to believe.

2 PETER 3:8 | *"But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day."*

2 PETER 3:9 | *"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

*Additional
Scripture
References*

MATTHEW 24:14
ROMANS 2:5-8
ROMANS 9:22-24
REVELATION 7:9

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What is the Bible's explanation for the long time prior to Jesus' return?
2. If you had a choice, would you want Jesus' return to either be tonight, or a thousand years from now? Why?



ALWAYS READY

Though we don't know the exact time of Jesus' return, Scripture consistently calls it "near" and urges us to live in readiness. We are to stay watchful, expectant, and faithful, knowing He could return at any moment.

This doesn't mean trying to predict a date, but being prepared to meet Him.

After 2,000 years, it's understandable that some have grown spiritually sleepy, distracted by the cares and comforts of the world. But Jesus calls us to stay alert. Whether Jesus returns today or far in the future, none of us is guaranteed tomorrow. Readiness is not optional. It is the daily response of those who trust the Savior who promised to return.

MATTHEW 24:44 | *"So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."*

1 PETER 1:13 | *"Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming."*

Additional Scripture References

MATTHEW 25:1-13

MARK 13:33-37

LUKE 12:35-40

REVELATION 3:3

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Why is it so important that we're ready for Jesus' return?
2. Have you been distracted from "readiness" by spiritual sleepiness or by worldly pleasures?

ENEMIES DEFEATED

Though the exact timeline is debated, one truth is certain: when Jesus returns, He will defeat His enemies.

In sharp contrast to His first coming in humility, Jesus will return as a conquering warrior and victorious King. He will ride a white horse, leading the armies of heaven in power and glory.

The final confrontation, called Armageddon, is built up with great anticipation—yet it ends swiftly and decisively. The enemies of Christ are defeated not by prolonged battle, but by the overwhelming power of God Himself. Fire from heaven brings instant victory, and Christ's reign is established.

REVELATION 20:9 | *“They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.”*

ISAIAH 11:4 | *“...He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.”*

*Additional
Scripture
References*

PSALM 2:9

2 THESSALONIANS 1:7-8

REVELATION 6:15-17

REVELATION 19:11-16

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How do the Bible’s descriptions of Jesus returning as a victorious King differ from how the world often views Him today?
2. What emotions or thoughts arise when you consider Jesus returning in power to judge and defeat His enemies?

IN THE MEANTIME

The seemingly long period before Jesus’ return is not a reason to drift or disengage—it’s a call to action. Scripture calls us to be active, not passive, as we await His return. That readiness goes beyond mere belief to include holiness, obedience, and spiritual maturity.

Jesus’ Parable of the Talents makes clear that faithful service matters deeply to Him. Paul likewise had to warn a church against quitting their work and simply waiting around for Jesus to return.

We should strive to be found spotless at His appearing and labor faithfully until He comes. We reject worldly passions and love God and others with all we have. Led by the Spirit, we live with boldness and trust in God’s promises. All this shows why the wait before Jesus’ return is not wasted time; it is God’s appointed season for His people to be purified, fruitful, and faithful.

2 PETER 3:14 | “So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.”

TITUS 2:12-13 | “It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ...”

*Additional
Scripture
References*

MATTHEW 25:14-30

ROMANS 13:11-12

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13

1 THESSALONIANS 5:6-8

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What church was it that Paul had to warn and what was going on there?
2. In what areas of your life do you feel tempted to coast or disengage while you wait?

II. THE FINAL JUDGMENT

ALL WILL BE JUDGED

After His return, Jesus will exercise the authority the Father has given Him to judge every human being, both the living and the dead. This is called the final judgment, and no one will escape this summons. Jesus Himself declared that every nation will stand before Him for this solemn accounting.

Believers may disagree about timing or sequence, but the Bible leaves no doubt: this final judgment is not about social status, wealth, or popularity. Instead, the books will be opened, exposing every thought, word, and deed. At that time, God’s perfect justice will be publicly vindicated, and no one will be able to accuse Him of unfairness.

HEBREWS 9:27 | “...people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:10 | “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”



*Additional
Scripture
References*

MATTHEW 16:27

ACTS 17:31

ROMANS 14:10

1 JOHN 4:17

REVELATION 20:11-15

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. The world focuses on power, wealth, and fame. What will truly matter at the final judgment and why?
2. How does knowing that every thought, word, and deed will be examined influence your daily decisions?

REWARD OR CONDEMNATION

At the final judgment, those saved in Christ will not face condemnation for their sins, because every sin has been covered by His blood. At this judgment seat of Christ, they will literally be justified by faith and saved entirely by God's grace. They will also receive rewards for faithfulness, obedience, and service. While there is debate about whether believers retain these rewards or lay them at Jesus' feet in worship, Scripture emphasizes this as a joyous time rather than one of penalty.

By contrast, there are those who have rejected God's offer of rescue, which was paid for by the life of His own Son. They will stand before Him with their sins exposed, and their names will not be found in the book of life. They will then receive a righteous and irrevocable judgment.

MATTHEW 25:31-32 | *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats..."*

ROMANS 2:6 | *"God 'will repay each person according to what they have done.'"*

*Additional
Scripture
References*

ROMANS 8:1

1 CORINTHIANS 3:14-15

2 TIMOTHY 4:8

REVELATION 21:27

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What does the reality of a public, final judgment reveal about God's character and His commitment to perfect justice?
2. Does the promise of rewards at the final judgment motivate you to serve others and faithfully steward your gifts, abilities, and blessings? Why or why not?



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