

Is Jesus Returning Soon?

Romans 13:11: “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”

ONE OF THE THINGS the Bible tells us is that each day draws us closer to the return of Christ. The Rapture really is closer today than it was yesterday, and we are closer to it this year than we were last year. The big question on everyone’s mind, though, is this: is the Rapture actually going to happen sometime soon, or is it still a long way off?

People have worked very hard to come up with some way to answer that question. Unfortunately, all of their efforts are doomed to failure. The Rapture is imminent, which means that no prophetic event has to take place before the Rapture happens. It is impossible to say “Well, event X happens one week before the Rapture, and event X is about a year away, so that means...” There is no event X. There are no other events that surround the Rapture. It stands alone, all by itself.

The only thing that we know for sure is that the Rapture occurs before the Tribulation begins – but we don’t know how much time separates the Rapture and the Tribulation. The Bible never says that Jesus will return exactly one day before the Tribulation starts (although that’s what people seem to believe). God removed Enoch from the world several generations before He sent the Flood – the great judgment that destroyed the planet. But it’s impossible to look at that and say anything definitive. God may remove the Church from the world generations before the Tribulation begins, or He may wait until the last minute. It is up to Him, and He has not told us His plans.

On top of that, the Tribulation itself is not near at all. There is a long list of things that must happen before the Tribulation begins, and only a couple of them have happened so far. We are decades away from seeing the Tribulation begin, and it may be much further away than that. Despite what you may have been told, end-time events have not been moving very fast.

It would definitely be helpful to know if the Rapture was going to happen next week or if it was going to be delayed for another five decades. However, that is something we *just can’t know*. God has not given us the answer to that question; all He has said is that we need to be watching. We need to live with care because it can literally happen at any time.

Jesus said repeatedly that He was coming quickly, but He never said that the Rapture would happen “soon”. Take a look and see for yourself:

Revelation 3:11: “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

Revelation 22:7: “Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”

Revelation 22:12: “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

Revelation 22:20: “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

“Soon” and “quickly” are *two different things*. When Jesus does come He will come with great speed – but He may *not* come soon. Many generations have come and gone waiting on Him, and our

generation may join them. There is no way to tell.

Preachers love to tell their congregations “Jesus is coming soon!” I wish they would tell the truth instead – that it is impossible to know if He is coming soon, and that we need to be ready regardless. The reason we need to be ready is because when He does come He will come so quickly that it will be impossible to have a change of heart and get ready at the last minute. If you are not ready when He comes then you will be left behind. You must be ready *when* He comes.

One thing I have noticed is that when people realize that Jesus may come soon, they start to panic. The ugly truth is that Christians don’t want Jesus to come soon. They want Him to stay away as long as possible so they can live their lives and finish their to-do lists. Many believers (yes, believers!) see the Rapture as an awful event that they would like to put off as long as possible. They consider their lives vastly more important than the return of Christ. As I have said before, this is a terrible attitude that does not honor God. If you are dreading the return of the Man who shed His own blood to save your soul, then there is something very wrong with your walk with God.

Jesus may return soon, or He may not. But regardless, *we must be ready* – and we must stay ready all our lives, even if we never see Him come. We must be prepared and we must never stop longing for His return. Anyone who looks at Jesus and says “Please stay away so I can have as much fun as possible before you drag me off” needs to repent of the hardness of their heart. That attitude tells God that you are in love with the world, not with Christ – and God has some rather harsh things to say about such people:

I John 2:15: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

Remember this: *be ready*, because Jesus is coming quickly. If you are not ready when He returns then you will be left behind, and you will find yourself in a great deal of trouble. He is coming too quickly for you to wait to prepare yourself until He is here.