

## **JESUS IS COMING SOON**

Jesus said, *"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"* (John 14:1-3). I recently heard a man tell that he and his family were watching their college alma mater play another team in a championship game. It was a real tense time as the family watched their team get trounced on in the first quarter, then the first half. In the third quarter momentum was found by their team and by the fourth quarter there was a complete turnaround and their team won. A few weeks later this dad was watching a re-run on one of the sports channels and he said he was completely relaxed, even when the opposition was leading by two goals and extra points. He tried to stay awake, but finally turned off the television and whispered to his wife, "We can go to sleep because we know how this turns out." There is so much happening today that is enough to frighten the average person. We who are Christians and have studied the Bible know how this is going to turn out. So we can obey what Jesus said to do when He said, *"Let not your heart be troubled...."* Let me give you a very basic outline as to why I believe Jesus is coming soon and what we can do in light of this knowledge.

### **1. I believe Jesus is coming soon because He said He would return.**

Jesus said, *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"* (John 14:3). We are to look with anticipation to the return of the Lord. Jesus said, *"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh"* (Luke 21:28). The return of the Lord is closer than we think.

### **2. I believe Jesus is coming because of the attitude and atmosphere of the world in which we now live.**

The many skeptics who mock the return of the Lord do not realize that their attitude toward the coming of the Lord was prophesied and actually becomes a sign of the times that Christ's return is near. Peter prophesied, *"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation"* (II Peter 3:3,4).

God's Word says, *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come"* (II Timothy 3:1). As we read II Timothy 3:2-7, we see the times spoken of match perfectly this present world in which we live.

### **3. I believe Jesus is coming soon because of the proven accuracy of Bible prophecy.**

Let's begin with the promise of the Lord's return as given in the Bible: *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (I Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

How can I believe this promise of our Lord's return will come to pass? Let me give you something that is beyond human explanation. God said through the prophet Daniel, *"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself..."* (Daniel 9:25,26a). Here Daniel prophesies that from the time the decree by King Cyrus would be given to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem until Christ would enter Jerusalem to die would be sixty-nine sets of seven years. This would be four hundred and eighty-three years or 173,880 days. Using the Jewish number of days in the year (360 days), we see a marvelous prophecy. From the decree made by the king on March 5, 444 BC until March 30, 33 AD, which was the day that Christ rode into Jerusalem, is exactly 173,880 days.

If we can trust the Bible's accuracy for Christ's first coming; we can trust the Word of God for His second coming.

#### **4. I believe Jesus is coming soon because of the alignment of the nations just before the Lord returns.**

When we read the prophecy of Ezekiel 38: 1-6 and see the names of the countries mentioned, Magog (Russia), Persia (modern Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan), Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, and all his bands (many authorities say this speaks of Germany and surrounding neighbors), and Togarmah (Turkey). According to Bible prophecy these nations will form an alliance and come against Israel. Before the re-establishment of Israel as a nation in 1948, many of these areas of the world had little to do with each other. Now when we open the Scriptures it is like reading present day news. These countries coming against Israel will happen soon before the Lord returns. We must be near!

The Bible says, *"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness"* (II Peter 3:11). In light of the Lord's return, how then shall we live? C.S. Lewis said, "It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one." Joseph Stowell wrote, "When we begin to believe the reality of the other side, we start behaving differently on this side."

##### **A. Be Patient; Don't Panic**

*"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh"* (James 5:8). The word "stablish" is the Greek word "sterizo" meaning "to set fast, i.e. [literally] to turn resolutely in a certain direction."

##### **B. Be Devoted; Not Detoured**

The Bible says, *"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure"* (I John 3:3). It is so easy to become so pre-occupied with this present world that we begin to acclimate rather than stand out as lights in the darkness to show a contrast of lifestyles. It is only when we live like Christ that we will effectively influence others to embrace Him.

##### **C. Be Soul-Conscious; Not Self-Conscious**

Paul said, *"...I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some"* (I Corinthians 9:22). This is not the time to "hole-up" and wait for

Jesus to return; more than ever we need to obey the admonition of Jesus: "...Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13).

#### **D. Be Fearless; Not Fearful**

In the comic strip "Peanuts" Snoopy was writing a book and he began, "It was a dark and stormy night..." Lucy said, "Silly dog, don't you know that every good story starts with "Once upon a time?" So then Snoopy begins, "Once upon a time, it was a dark and stormy night." No matter what, Snoopy could not get past the dark and stormy night. In the same manner, many are fearful and afraid to face the future. For the Christian and observer of Bible prophecy we see past the dark and stormy night into the "happily ever after." If we take these Bible verses seriously, how can we not only be optimistic, but fearless? *"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand" (II Thessalonians 2:1,2). "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do" (I Thessalonians 5:9-11). "Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thessalonians 4:18).*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in black ink and features a large, decorative initial "J" and a long, sweeping horizontal line at the end.