

## Encouraged, Jesus is Coming

As Christians we are encouraged because we know Jesus will return as promised and take us to heaven, but that encouragement should not be disguised as contentment with the knowledge that we have made it and apathy as to whether or not others do. The second coming of Jesus will be real and not a figurative thing. It will actually be Jesus returning in a way that every man, woman and child will see Him. Revelation 1:7, "Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen." When Jesus comes it will be surprising. Matthew 24:36, "No one knows about that day or hour, 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."

The second coming of Jesus will be a surprise, but our eternal destination does not have to be a surprise to us. 1 Thessalonians 5:4, "But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief." The prepared believer will not be taken by surprise. You and I should know what our final destination is. As Jesus shouted and Lazarus came out of his grave, so there will be a shout and all of the dead in Christ will come forth. Mark 13:27, "And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens."

The popular "Left Behind" series makes some great stories, but I want you to consider that Jesus says it will be "Just as it was in the days of Noah," and "It was the same in the days of Lot," speaking of Sodom and Gomorrah. In both cases some lived and some did not, but there was a sudden judgment on everyone. Those who remained behind instantly met their eternal judgment, and there were no second chances.

When Jesus comes it will either be a time for God to release you from your suffering that was a result of your faithfulness, or it will only be the beginning of your suffering. When Jesus returns, evil will be destroyed. There will be no more choices. Our choice as an individual will already have been made, and it will last for eternity. I want this next verse to be true about me. Colossians 3:4, "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

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