

God Redeems: Redemption  
God Sends: Mission  
God Reigns: Kingdom  
God Gathers: Church  
God Returns: New Creation

## Big Question: When will Jesus return?

***1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 says.. About the times and the seasons: Brothers and sisters, you do not need anything to be written to you. <sup>2</sup> For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> When they say, "Peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, like labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. <sup>4</sup> But you, brothers and sisters, are not in the dark, for this day to surprise you like a thief.***

Ten years ago, my wife and I were living in greater western Sydney, and our house was broken into a week before Christmas. In the darkness of night, a thief broke into our house, and stole our belongings. If you have ever had your house broken in to, you know the uncomfortable feeling. A lack of security and safety. Losing Mel's wedding rings. And that pit in our stomach of regret and wishing we had been prepared. We had locks on our doors, and home insurance but it all made us complacent and comfortable. We needed to remember that thieves are unpredictable and be prepared. I share this because this is how the Bible describes the return of Jesus.

The New Testament repeatedly announces that Jesus Christ will one day return. It will be his royal visit. There will be trumpets and chariots. It will be physical, visible and triumphant. He will bring judgement and share his glory with the children of God. The bible never tells us when it will happen, it says it's unpredictable. And for those who live in the darkness, it will be like a thief in the night. Therefore, the challenge for us is to be prepared for his return.

First, being prepared teaches us to live in joyful anticipation. For the Thessalonians, the danger of knowing that Christ will return lead them to be overconfident and complacent with his return. And this is a real danger for us today. If you were to look at your diary this week, does it reflect someone does or doesn't expect Jesus to return at any moment? When we understand that Jesus' return is unpredictable it transforms our lives to live in joyful anticipation of Christ's return. This means we wholeheartedly prioritizing God's Kingdom in our lives. We display the gratitude of those who are saved into the Kingdom. We demonstrate the values of the Kingdom of God in our lives. We patiently endure as we wait for Christ to return. Living with joyful anticipation of Christ's return doesn't mean we do more stuff. It means we set our lives and our schedules based on the things that matter in God's Kingdom.

Second, being prepared teaches us to live a life of radical sacrifice and service. Knowing that we are already accepted by the grace of Jesus is a blessing. But thinking that he won't return soon, leads us to seek a life of comfort and ease. We would rather a safe and stress-free life. But the Bible gives us a better way to live. It teaches us that the return of Christ is unpredictable and therefore we should live a life of radical sacrifice and service. This means we stretch ourselves, as we seek to serve and grow others in God's church. It drives us to fearless obedience, as we put sin to death. It leads us to take bold risks for the gospel as we joyfully surrender to God's. And we are willing to put our friendships on the line as we share the gospel with others. Understanding that Jesus' return is unpredictable teaches us to live a life of radical sacrifice and service.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, as we finish our winter devotions this week. Do not be like those who live in the darkness and are unprepared for the return of Christ. Understand that it's unpredictable and let this profound truth transform your life. Let us live in joyful anticipation of his return, in radical sacrifice and service of others. Enjoy reflecting on God's Word for our final week.

### LIVING AND ACTIVE PRAYER

Gracious Father,

You have saved us with a wonderful and powerful salvation.

Your Word is living and active. Today, we have heard you speak,

So help us to not harden our hearts but to live it out.

Forgive our failures, renew our wills, awaken our joy, and transform our lives.

Make our faith living and active.

In the name of your Son and by your Spirit, Amen

**Reflection Questions:**

What needs to change in your diary to show that you are joyfully anticipating Christ's return?

What is a sin that you need to put to death as you live a life of sacrifice?

What would it look like for you to stretch yourself in the service of others?

**RESOURCES FOR THE WEEK**

Make the greatest ice-cream sundae with all the trimmings. Chat about why heaven will be better than ice-cream.

Everything A Child Should Know About God: Part 10

The-ology: Chapters 59-65

PTC Course: Promise to Fulfilment

**Tuesday**

Read Isaiah 65:17

How does the Old Testament promise of a new creation reshape your view of God's plan? How does this challenge your perspective on current struggles and injustices in the world?

**Wednesday**

2 Corinthians 5:17

How should eternity, shape your life today? What practical changes have you experienced in your life since becoming a new creation in Christ?

**Thursday**

Revelation 21:1-4

How does the vision of a new heaven and new earth in Revelation challenge or inspire your view of eternity?

**Friday**

Revelation 22:20-21

How does Jesus' own words give you comfort and strength to keep following him?