

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Study Guide

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 14: THE LORD WILL COME AGAIN

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Disciple Essentials module titled Christian Life and Worldview. This series of lessons examines the choices and practices that are essential for Christian living. To live as the Word of God teaches us means we understand that the choices we make each day affect our faith. It also means learning to pray, practising the commands of God and learning to serve others. These are important lessons for understanding the practice of Christianity and how to live out our faith within our Church community.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 14: THE LORD WILL COME AGAIN

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

Jesus promised He would return to earth one day. This lesson considers the significance of this promise, and how we can prepare for His return by being steadfast in our faith and obedient to His Word.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

Jesus promised He would return, and that there would be a series of amazing events at the end of history. Christians differ in how they interpret the events of the end times, but we agree that Jesus will return. Our lives on earth could be over at any moment, and no one knows when. Let this knowledge fuel passion for evangelism and the urgency to get one's life right with God. Understanding the promise of Christ's return helps us set our minds on God and not on the world. We should be encouraged to do our best for Him and make the most of our days, knowing that we will be judged and rewarded by God according to our deeds.

GETTING STARTED

1. How would you feel if Jesus Christ returned to earth tomorrow, and ended life as we know it?

2. How much of each day do you spend doing things that have an eternal significance? What are some things we can do that have eternal value?



STUDY

❖ **THE PROMISE: CHRIST WILL RETURN!** After Jesus was resurrected from the dead, He appeared to His disciples and many believers. After a time, He ascended to heaven as the disciples watched.

- Read Acts 1:6-11 and write down what happened:

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- The return of the Lord is mentioned in almost every book in the New Testament. When Christ returns, His Word will be revealed as true and believers will ascend to heaven with Him. Jesus will gather those who belong to Him to be with Him forever, and finally there will be judgement, a new heaven and a new earth.
- Read the following verses about the return of Christ:

Mark 13:26-27, 32	
Hebrews 9:28	
1 Thessalonians 4:16-17	
Revelation 19:11-16	

- According to the previous verses, answer the following questions:

Who promises the return of Jesus?	
Why will Jesus return, and when?	
What do you think the return of Christ will look like?	



❖ **THE PREPARATION:** The fact is that we have no idea when Christ will return. The Bible tells us that Christ's return will be sudden - like a thief in the night. Those that live in darkness are not prepared for the thief and are devastated by him, but those who live in the light are always prepared and ready and have the hope of salvation.

- What does 1 Thessalonians 5:2 tell us about the return of Jesus?

- What does Luke 12:35-48 tell us about being ready for Jesus return? In this story, who was ready?

- What does 1 John 2:28 say we should do until Jesus returns?

Jesus warns us to be ready for His return. Everyone who, like the five wise virgins, is devoted to God and looking forward to Christ's return, will be with Him and will receive an everlasting reward. The return of Jesus may not happen in our lifetime – we will never know the day or hour. Therefore, we must stay close to Him and wait patiently. This involves being diligent in good works, following His Word, and proclaiming the Gospel until He comes.

❖ **TWO JUDGEMENTS:** The Bible tells us that at the end of time there will be judgement. When people think about judgement they often feel a sense of doom, picturing a judge who is happily punishing people for crimes committed. This is not the feeling a Christian should have when they think of judgement. The Bible tells us that when justice is done, it is a joy for the righteous, but terror for evildoers (Proverbs 21:15).

- **The Judgement at the Great White Throne** is a trial for all those who did not accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will receive their eternal punishment: eternal death and separation from God.

What does Revelation 20:11-14 say about this judgement?



- **The Judgement Seat of Christ** is for believers, those who have been washed and cleansed by the blood of Christ. They have already received forgiveness for their sins — Christ paid their penalty for them. They will stand before this seat, also known as the Mercy Seat, and what is judged is the quality of work they did while on earth.

What does 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 say about this judgement?

Each believer will stand before Christ and will be judged according to the works we did on earth. As a believer, we do not have to fear eternal punishment or separation from God, but because we love God it should be our desire to please Him. This judgement is not something we should fear; rather we should strive to do our best for God.

- Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-12. How will a Christian's work be judged? What work is valuable?

Christ is the foundation that we must build upon using the gifts and abilities He has given us. We must make the most of opportunities and use our time wisely. In the previous verses, 'gold' refers to work that has eternal value. These are works that build the Church, bring people into the Kingdom of God, and glorify our Father in Heaven. These are things that will not pass away. 'Straw' refers to the works that may appear to be done for God, but in actual fact are for one's own glory. The motivation for doing these works is to gain acceptance and appreciation from those around us.

- ❖ **TREASURE IN HEAVEN** : Knowing that all we accumulate on earth will someday pass away, either at the end of our lives or when Christ returns, we should view our lives here as temporary. They are fleeting. While it is prudent to save money and plan for the future, it is more important to store up treasure in heaven.

- Read Matthew 6:1-4, 19-24. What does this passage tell you about our heavenly treasure?

We can store up treasure in heaven by investing our talents in the lives of others and in the growth of the Church — eternal things which glorify God. We must choose to honour God every single day, not only with our thoughts and words, but also with our deeds. At the judgement, there will be rewards for those who persevered.



IN SUMMARY

- ❖ The Bible promises us that Jesus will return someday.
- ❖ Jesus promises that He will return – and that no one can know the day or the hour.
- ❖ We are told to prepare as if Jesus could return at any time. This involves being diligent in good works, following His Word, and proclaiming the Gospel until He comes.
- ❖ The Bible tells us that two judgements will occur – one for those who do not have Jesus as their Saviour, and a separate one for those who do.
- ❖ Christians will have their work judged by God, so we should do our best to do His work while we have life.
- ❖ We will be rewarded for our good works for God, and thereby store up ‘treasure in heaven’.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What does it look like to be ready for the Lord’s return? What would it look like to not be ready? Are you ready?

2. How should it change your life knowing that all your deeds will one day be seen and judged for their quality and eternal value? What can you do to live a more productive Christian life and not waste the time given to you?