

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 14: THE LORD WILL COME AGAIN

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled Understanding Salvation. 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. Include time to discuss these principles and how to effectively apply them to your life.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 14: THE LORD WILL COME AGAIN

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to consider the significance of the Lord Jesus' promised return to earth, and to encourage participants to prepare for His return by being steadfast in their faith and obedient to His Word.

LEADER'S NOTE

This lesson deals with the reality of the return of Jesus Christ to the earth, as promised in the Bible. There are different eschatological positions on when the exact events of the last days will happen (for instance, if Jesus will return before or after a time of tribulation), but for the purposes of this lesson it is best to focus on the reality that Jesus has promised to return. Our lives on earth could be over at any moment, and no one knows when. Let this information fuel passion for evangelism and the urgency to get one's life right with God. Understanding the promise of Christ's return is essential for right living as a believer. It helps us set our minds on God and not on the world. Knowing that our work will be judged and we will be rewarded by God for what we do should encourage us to do our best for Him and make the most of our days.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ How would you feel if Jesus Christ returned to earth tomorrow, and ended life as we know it?
- ❖ How should knowing that Christ will return motivate our lives today?
- ❖ What feelings might people have about the return of Jesus? (Apprehension, fear, excitement, curiosity). Do you have difficulty believing that Christ could return at any time?
- ❖ How do you think the Church should prepare for the return of Jesus?
- ❖ How much of each day do you spend doing things that have an eternal significance? What are some things that we can do that have eternal value?

STUDY

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH

- ❖ **The Promise: Christ Will Return!** After His resurrection, Jesus ascended into the skies as the disciples watched. Acts 1:10-11 says that two angels came down and told the disciples that Jesus



would come again just as He had gone. Since that time, the Church has anxiously awaited the return of Christ to the earth.

- 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 new earth.
- Read together the following verses about the return of Christ:
 - [Acts 1:10-11](#)
 - [Mark 13:26-27, 32](#)
 - [Hebrews 9:28](#)
 - [John 14:2-3](#)
 - [Acts 3:20](#)
 - [1 Corinthians 1:7](#)
 - [2 Thessalonians 1:7](#)
 - [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#)
 - [Revelation 19:11-16](#)

ASK PARTICIPANTS:

- Who promises the return of Christ?
- Why will Christ return?
- When will Christ return?
- What do you think the return of Christ will look like?

TEACH

- ❖ **The Preparation:** The fact is that we have no idea when Christ will return. [1 Thessalonians 5:2](#) tells believers 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.
 - In [Matthew 25:1-13](#) Jesus warns us to be ready for His return. Everyone who, like the five wise virgins in this story, is devoted to God and looking forward to Christ's return, will be with Him and will receive an everlasting reward.
 - We must diligently wait for the Lord's return, knowing that it may or may not occur in our lifetime. [1 John 2:28](#) tells us, "And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming." This includes 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 dealing out punishment 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 to the righteous but terror to evildoers ([Proverbs 21:15](#)).



- When Christ returns to earth, the Bible tells us we can expect two different judgements: the judgement at the Great White Throne and the Judgement Seat of Christ.
 - **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. Revelation 20:11-14 clearly tells us about this judgement. Those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will receive their eternal punishment: separation from God.
 - **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 (Romans 14:10-12, 2 Corinthians 5:10).
- ❖ **We receive what is due:** Each believer will stand before Christ and will be judged according to our time 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.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 says, “So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”
 - 1 Corinthians 3:10-12 expands on the work that will be judged. 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 with the new heaven and earth.
 - ‘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.
 - 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.



DISCUSSION

- ❖ What can you do to be sure that you are prepared and ready for the return of Christ?
- ❖ How can you share the Gospel and be instrumental in preparing others for the Lord's return?
- ❖ Do you know people who have tried to predict when the Lord will return? How can you respond to them, with what you know from Scripture?
- ❖ What things in your life that seem very important become inconsequential when we consider that Christ could return at any time? How does this reprioritize our values?
- ❖ 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?
- ❖ Who is judged on the Judgement Seat of Christ? What is judged there? Who is judged on the Great White Throne? What is the result of that judgement?
- ❖ How should it change your life knowing that all your deeds will one day be seen and judged for their quality and their eternal value? What can you do to live a more productive Christian life and not waste the time given to you?

PRAYER

Close your time in prayer. Thank God that He will come again, and that it could be at any time. Pray that participants and your community would be ready, that many would hear the Gospel, repent and be saved. Thank God that His promises are true, and that His Spirit gives us power to change and become more like His son, Jesus.