



 **3ABN** BIBLE STUDY GUIDES
Looking Higher

THE GREAT RESCUE



THE GREAT RESCUE

Every story has a conclusion, when each character is fully developed and the conflict is resolved. Some people go to the back of the book first, to see how the story turns out in the end. In God's story, we can read the final page where the conflict ends with a great rescue. Then, page by page through His story, we discover that God's great rescue has been guaranteed from the very start. Are you longing for a conclusion to your conflict, to be set free from tears, pain, and death? God promises that and more—the conflict ended, and your character developed. He has told us all we need to know in advance. We just need to look at the back of the Book.

1 How can we solve the rising problems humanity is facing—problems that even threaten human existence?

Psalm 146:3 “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.”

No mere person can solve humanity's troubles. Rescue must come from outside. The problems facing us will only be solved by “the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope” (1 Timothy 1:1).

2 If He is the only solution to our trouble, where is Jesus now?

Acts 1:9 “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

After Jesus' death and resurrection, He ascended from Earth back to Heaven. He instructed and empowered His followers in all generations to spread His good news of salvation to every person.

3 What promise was given to Jesus' followers while they watched Him disappearing into the clouds?

Acts 1:10–11 “And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.’”

This guarantee, announced by two angels, is one of over 300 promises in the New Testament that Jesus will return. Jesus' first coming to Earth was as a baby, to face the temptations of sin, live a perfect life, and die in our place. But His Second Coming will be to permanently rescue His followers (Hebrews 9:28). Jesus even testified about His return under oath (Mark 14:62).

4 How can we be confident that Jesus is returning?

Matthew 24:32–33 “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!”

In Matthew 24 and Luke 21, Jesus described the condition of the world that would precede His return. He directed us to watch intently for signs that confirm His promise, “I will come again” (John 14:3). These signs of His coming are compared to a pregnant woman's labor pains (1 Thessalonians 5:3), which increase in frequency and intensity as

the moment of birth nears. But Earth's final events won't come with a label that says, "Final Events, Be Prepared!" Experts will give plausible explanations to disbelieve God's plain warnings and promises in His Word. However, to those who are watching and trusting God, the ever-increasing labor pains in all parts of the world take on new meaning. The troubles of the world teach us to act in faith because we know His deliverance is coming soon.

5 What signs do we see in the natural world that Jesus is coming soon?

Matthew 24:7–8 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."

Matthew 24:29 "... and the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

The diagnosis is clear: Planet Earth is a terminal patient whose emergency conditions are growing more intense, more widespread, and more catastrophic. Jesus warned that natural disasters would be just the beginning. Droughts and floods, storms and fires, disease and death, earthquakes and extremes in weather, will cause an escalating devastation of our water, air, soil, animals, and crops. "The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut; its transgression shall be heavy upon it ..." (Isaiah 24:20). Earth's inhabitants, who trust in mankind's limited knowledge rather than in God, will exhibit an urgency to use any means to save our planet.

6 What signs do we see in the financial world that Jesus is coming soon?

James 5:3, 5, 8 "Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. You have lived on the earth in pleasure and

luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. ... Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

Ezekiel 7:19 "They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will be like refuse; their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord"

Before Jesus returns, the world's interconnected web of market relationships will begin to unravel. Greed and selfish overreaching will lead to financial instability, followed by worldwide economic collapse. "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money ... lovers of pleasure ..." (2 Timothy 3:2, 4). For a time, human schemes will prop up the world's crumbling system, but it will not last. "... the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury; 'And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore'" (Revelation 18:3, 11).

7 What signs do we see in the political world that Jesus is coming soon?

Matthew 24:6–7 "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom..."

Luke 21:25–27 "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

Conflicts between nations (nationalities or cultural groups) and kingdoms (countries or political groups) will intensify as a sign that Jesus will soon return. Mounting tensions, advancing weaponry, and threats of war in our streets will paralyze people in terror. But those whose faith is in Jesus will not fear man-made conflict. "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

1 Thessalonians 5:3–4 "For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief."

In the midst of conflict, people will be trying to get "back to normal," making long-term plans and hoping human solutions will preserve life as usual. Respected leaders will declare successful breakthroughs are



"The diagnosis is clear: Planet Earth is a terminal patient ..."



**“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.”
Matthew 24:12**

on the horizon that will ensure peace and safety, if we will only unite behind their plans. But God’s Word tells us these are signs that Jesus is coming soon.

8 What signs do we see in the social world that Jesus is coming soon?

Luke 17:26–30 “And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”

In the days before Jesus comes, people will be consumed with the pleasures of life, taking them to ungodly extremes. Most will live for one purpose: to gratify their appetites, please themselves, and pursue pleasure.

9 What signs do we see in the moral world that Jesus is coming soon?

2 Timothy 3:1–5 “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”

Matthew 24:12 “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.”

To most people, sin will not appear sinful. Even religious people will oppose God’s laws. Crime and violence of all kinds will increasingly parade themselves before our eyes (Romans 1:28–32). Broken marriages, abused children and spouses, unsolvable poverty, deception, and living in fear will become normal. By rejecting the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit, the world’s majority will show that they are blatantly rejecting the restraint of both man’s laws and God’s Law without remorse.

10 What signs do we see in the spiritual world that Jesus is coming soon?

2 Peter 3:3–4 “... scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to 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 creation.’”

Few will truly long for Jesus’ coming. God’s promises will be ignored or mocked more and more as the spiritual battle for each person’s decision reaches its conclusion.

Matthew 24:4–5 “And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.’”

Deceptive spiritual teachings will be presented by religious authorities everywhere. The plainest teachings of God’s Word will be exchanged for human ideas, even exalting sinful humans to the position of Christ. People will unite in religious revivals that move the emotions but fail to acknowledge the claims of God’s Law. We know the time is drawing nearer as new and contradictory teachings about God’s unchanging Word proliferate.

1 Timothy 4:1–2 “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy ...”

“Even religious people will oppose God’s laws.”



Through a curious infatuation with spirits, ghosts, and the occult, people will listen to demonic spirits and believe that they are receiving messages from the dead. Communicating with the dead will be a topic of attention and excitement promoted through the world's entertainment and by popular teachers. This will show that Jesus is coming soon.

11 What sign can we participate in that shows Jesus is returning soon?

Matthew 24:14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

God's urgent message will swell into a loud cry given through His followers—“... the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’” (Revelation 14:6–7). Everyone must hear God's appeal to turn away from sin that leads to death, and to unite with God's people who have faith in Jesus and follow all of God's commandments.

12 How does the Bible describe Jesus' Second Coming, so we will not be deceived by a counterfeit?

Jesus' return to rescue His children will be unmistakable, because it will be:

Visible: “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:27).

Audible: “... the heavens will pass away with a great noise ...” (2 Peter 3:10). “And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet ...” (Matthew 24:31).

Sudden: “... the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night” (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

Glorious: “For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels ...” (Matthew 16:27).

Cataclysmic: “... the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it ...” (2 Peter 3:10).

Worldwide: “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him ...” (Revelation 1:7).

There will be nothing secret about Jesus' Second Coming, even to those who are caught by surprise. News of His return will not spread by word of mouth or private invitation (Matthew 24:23–26). No matter which direction they look, every person alive will personally “see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory” (Mark 13:26).

“Behold, He is coming
with clouds, and every
eye will see Him ...”
Revelation 1:7



Those who have rejected Christ will respond immediately and decidedly, preferring the rocks and mountains to fall on them rather than to be confronted with God's consuming righteousness (Revelation 6:15–16).

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

Jesus will not touch the Earth when He returns. We will not see Him teaching on the streets of a city, in a church, or on a media platform. “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it” (Matthew 24:26). He will appear in the sky for all to see, raising the righteous dead with restored glorious bodies (an event no one will miss), and calling the righteous up to meet Him in the clouds. In this manner, Jesus will bring the saved not to a kingdom of peace on the Earth, but to Heaven (1 Peter 1:3–4), which will be better than anything our human minds could ever imagine (1 Corinthians 2:9).

13 How many groups will there be in the world right before Jesus comes?

Matthew 24:40–42 “Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.”

When the whole world sees Jesus return, there will be only two distinct groups. The saved will receive eternal life, and the lost will perish. It will be “as the days of Noah were ... in the days before the flood” (Matthew 24:37–38). Back then, the majority ignored or mocked God's pleading invitation to salvation, and they were destroyed (Genesis 6:5; 7:23). “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it” (Matthew 7:13).

14 Can we know how much time we have to choose Jesus before He comes?

Matthew 24:36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”

Matthew 24:43–44 “But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

We do not know the exact time of Jesus’ return, but we know that His coming is “even at the doors” (Matthew 24:33, KJV). Instead of getting ready when we see a future sign, we must be ready always, because if we put off preparation until we believe time is short, His coming will either catch us by surprise or we will die unexpectedly—and it will be too late. We should not wait until a better time to accept the salvation God offers us today, because “now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

15 Why does Jesus’ return seem to be delayed for so long?

Revelation 7:1–3 “After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, ‘Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’”

God is sealing His end-time people with His identifying mark: Jesus’ character of loyal and loving obedience. “Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble” (Psalm 119:165). Through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, His people will “have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16), thinking as Jesus thinks, loving as Jesus loves, and living as Jesus lived. God wants each of us to be among this group. Then Satan will be fully proved a liar, and Jesus will return to claim His people throughout all generations as His own.

16 How is Satan trying to prevent each individual from being ready when Jesus returns?

Luke 21:34 “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.”

The enemy wants us to live as if our Master is delaying His coming. He wants us to be busy only with the world’s priorities—money, houses, hobbies, vacations, technologies, and amusement. Jesus’ Second Coming will then feel sudden because we will not be looking for Him (Matthew 24:48–50). To avoid this, God says, “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3). Put God first and this world will lose its luster (Matthew 6:33).

17 How can I be ready when Jesus comes, even though I do not know the day or the hour?

John 17:3 “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

Hebrews 11:9–10 “By faith he [Abraham] dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

It is not enough to know that Jesus is returning soon. We must know Jesus personally through a constant, everlasting friendship (John 15:13–15). Without His friendship, we will curse Jesus at His Second Coming. Any person who longs for our Savior’s return is an adventist—(someone who is looking for His second advent). When we really long for His coming, we live like He is coming. We consider Heaven to be our true home. We love to tell everyone of our enduring treasure—Jesus, our Best Friend. “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15).

Isaiah 25:9 “And it will be said in that day: ‘Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.’”

“We must know Jesus personally through a constant, everlasting friendship.”



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY LIFE TODAY?



1. What signs do you see in the world that confirm Jesus' promise that He is coming soon?

2. As Jesus' return approaches, what habits can you begin or strengthen that will remind you often that this sinful world is not our home and Jesus is coming soon?

3. Jesus' Second Coming will be a victorious rescue of each of His close friends. In what way is God already helping you to experience His victory over temptation in your life?

4. Talking about the future, Jesus said, "Take heed that no one deceives you" (Matthew 24:4), because He knew there would be many false ideas about His Second Coming. Why is it vital to understand what the Bible says about this great event?

5. Who do you know that needs to hear what you have learned? "Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day" (1 Chronicles 16:23).

Additional Notes:

WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS FOR ME IN JESUS' SECOND COMING?



1. Jesus is eager to return so that we will finally be with Him. “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me ...” (John 17:24).

2. Jesus' Second Coming will be a joyous event, because death and pain will be no more. “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away’” (Revelation 21:3-4).

3. Because Jesus fulfilled the promises of His first coming, we know He will keep every promise of His Second Coming. “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman ...” (Galatians 4:4).

4. God's promises have not changed—and will not change. “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,’ says the Lord, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty’” (Revelation 1:8).

5. Each prophetic event we see is Jesus seeking entrance into our lives. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20).

6. We do not need to fear what lies ahead. “Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near” (Luke 21:28).

7. God promises that we can stay prepared for His coming. “And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11).

LESSON SUMMARY

1. Jesus promised that He is coming soon to rescue His people. Jesus always keeps His promises.

2. The Bible tells what will take place before He comes so we can watch wisely and eagerly for His Second Coming.

3. Jesus' return in the sky will be visible, audible, sudden, glorious, cataclysmic, and worldwide. No one will miss it, and it cannot be counterfeited.

4. At His coming, Jesus will raise the righteous dead and bring them, together with the righteous living, away from Earth to Heaven, where death will be no more.

5. There will be no second chance to accept Jesus' invitation after He returns.

6. The time to be ready, by accepting Jesus' constant friendship, is not *soon*. It is *now*.

7. It is important to tell everyone about the good news of salvation through Jesus now.

Additional Notes:

LAST MINUTE RESCUE!



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