

WARM-UP

- Do you like surprises? Why or why not?
- Are you the type who skips to the end of books or movies to know how the story ends? Why or why not?
- Why do you think much of the world is obsessed with “the end times,” using it as a theme in books, movies, and TV series?

WORD *“So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”⁶ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* **ACTS 1:6-8**

The end times and the Second Coming of Jesus stir controversy, anxiety, and fear among people. Some try to predict when these will happen or anticipate the judgment that will come. The disciples wondered if Jesus’ resurrection meant He would free Israel from its oppressors. But Jesus pointed them to a bigger reality—God’s kingdom and plan is beyond any human’s. Today, Jesus’ admonition remains: we ought not to be concerned with the details of His return or the fulfillment of God’s redemption plan, but to be faithful with what He calls us to do. Let’s look at two truths about the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to return in power and glory.

1 | Jesus will return to fully consummate His kingdom.

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" **ACTS 1:6**

(Read also **1 CORINTHIANS 15:50–58**.)

Throughout His time with the disciples, Jesus had been alluding to the time when God will restore creation and the Son of Man will come to judge the living and the dead and establish His kingdom (1 Corinthians 15:50–52). They thought that Jesus' resurrection would also fulfill the restoration He talked about. Indeed, Jesus has come to restore the world, but He will do it according to the plans and timing that *the Father has fixed by His own authority*. Because of this, we can live with hope, instead of anxiety and fear, knowing God will restore all of creation and make us new when Jesus returns. What else may we look forward to when Christ returns (1 Corinthians 15:55–58)?

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2 | Jesus will return bodily at an unknown time fixed by the Father.

⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority." . . . ¹¹"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." **ACTS 1:7, 11**

Some people claim there are signs that we are living in the last days, as they try to calculate when Jesus will return. While we may not know exactly when He will come, we know for sure He will return the same way He ascended—visibly, personally, and physically. While we wait, we shouldn't be concerned with the "when," but to live according to God's plans and purposes for us. This includes obeying God's greatest commands to love Him above all and to love one another and the Great Commission to be His witnesses to the entire world. As we wait in hope, we can invite others to wait and put their faith in Christ by preaching the gospel. Why is it more important to obey God and live in Christlikeness than know when exactly Jesus will return (1 Thessalonians 5:1–2, 9–11)?

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APPLICATION

- What mindsets do you have about Jesus' Second Coming that need to be changed in light of what we've learned? Talk to someone and ask them to journey with you through this.
- What was your initial posture about the Second Coming? How can you grow in and live with hope, knowing that Jesus will come back in power and glory?
- How will the way you live and relate with others change in light of our discussion? With whom can you share the hope we have in Christ?

