Jesus is Coming Soon
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Several years ago, a fervent movement swept through the University of Michigan campus. Fueled by a professor's teachings and a whirlwind of current events interpreted as ancient prophecies, students became convinced that Christ's return was imminent. Their response? A road trip to Detroit, where many snapped up the most luxurious Cadillacs on the lot…with no intention of ever making a single payment. Why bother with monthly installments when the world was about to end, and believers would be whisked away?

The story sounds almost comical today, yet it captures a recurring pattern in Christian circles: the intoxicating blend of end-times speculation and real-world consequences. From packed megachurch conferences to viral TikTok sermons and bestselling books that map headlines to obscure Bible verses, fascination with the Second Coming shows no signs of fading. But amid the hype, what does Scripture actually teach? And more importantly, how should this core Christian belief shape everyday life rather than fuel escapism or financial folly?

The early church pulsed with expectant hope. Jesus had promised His return. The apostles echoed it. Page after page of the New Testament crackles with the electricity of anticipation. This wasn't fringe theology; it was foundational. "Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation," declares Hebrews 9:28. The apostle Paul urged the Thessalonians to live blamelessly "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." James put it plainly: "Be patient… for the coming of the Lord is at hand." Even Peter acknowledged the inevitable scoffers who would mock the delay: "Where is the promise of His coming?" These weren't vague hopes. They formed the heartbeat of a movement that turned the Roman Empire upside down. Believers didn't just sit around predicting dates…they lived differently because of the promise. History, they understood, was not an endless loop of futility. God was moving purposefully toward a climactic victory: the full redemption of creation and the completion of His people's salvation.

Today, that same belief endures among millions. Most Christians affirm it simply and straightforwardly: Jesus said He would return. The early church believed it. The majority of believers throughout history have held it. And so do we. Yet the loudest voices often miss the doctrine's most practical punch.

When the apostle Paul wanted to motivate folks toward radical love, hospitality, generosity, and ethical living, he didn't rely on guilt or fear alone. He pointed to the clock. In Romans 13, after firing off commands to serve, teach, feed the hungry, and live lawfully, Paul lands on the ultimate motivation: "Owe no one anything except to love one another… Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." Then comes the urgency: "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. The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Quit procrastinating. Stop delaying. Love your neighbor today. The Second Coming wasn't presented as an escape hatch or a crystal ball for decoding headlines. It was a divine alarm clock, jolting believers into ethical seriousness and immediate obedience.

This pattern repeats throughout the New Testament. The promise of Christ's return sharpens moral vision. It pulls people out of lethargy. Writer Malcolm Cowley once described how the shadow of possible death during the Spanish Civil War made his senses "immeasurably sharpened." The doctrine of the Second Coming does something similar for Christians. It heightens awareness that time is short, that ordinary acts of love and faithfulness carry eternal weight. Imagine living as if Jesus might return next week. Would you still scroll endlessly? Nurse that grudge? Postpone the hard conversation or the generous gift? The expectation creates healthy urgency…not panic, but purposeful living.

In our anxious age, people react to uncertainty in two unhealthy ways. Some obsess over the future… building elaborate retirement plans, doomsday bunkers, or prophetic timelines…while keeping real life at arm's length. Others deny any meaningful future altogether, chasing fleeting pleasures in the here and now.

The gospel offers a better path. It affirms that God will accomplish His redemptive purposes. What He began in Christ, He will complete. The future is not a terrifying unknown but the glorious fulfillment of the grace we already taste. This knowledge frees believers to work, love, and serve with calm confidence rather than speculation or denial.

"Cast off the works of darkness, and… put on the armor of light," Paul continues in Romans 13. "Let us walk properly, as in the day… But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh." That means loving neighbors now. Working for the Lord now. Pursuing holiness now. Not because the world might end tomorrow, but because the Lord who rose from the dead is coming again to make all things new.

The University of Michigan Cadillac buyers eventually had to face reality when payments came due, and the world kept turning. Many end-times predictions throughout history have similarly crashed against the rocks of time. Yet the core promise remains unshaken. Jesus is coming again. That truth should not lead to reckless speculation or paralyzed waiting. It should wake us up…to love more fiercely, serve more joyfully, and live with eyes wide open to the needs around us. It should sharpen our senses, just as Cowley described, so that we feel and act with greater intensity in the time we have.

What about you? Does the thought of Christ's return fill you with dread, distraction, or holy urgency? Does it change how you treat the person next door, the stranger in need, or the tasks before you today? The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Wake up. Love boldly. Live ready.