

FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH



AMAZING FACTS

Lesson 9

Second Coming: A Shout,
a Trumpet, and an Earthquake



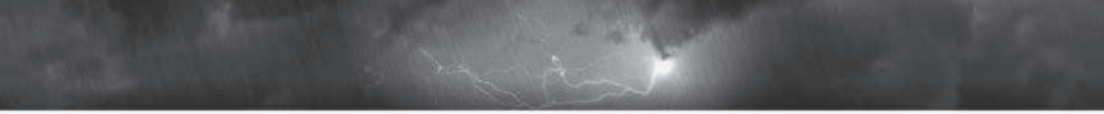
The people of Jericho were terrified. They knew the Israelites were coming to destroy their city. From the high walls of their fortified metropolis, they could see the vast multitude of God's people camped on the other side of the Jordan River and preparing to invade Canaan. The stories of the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt, of the food that fell from heaven, and of the pillar of fire that protected them put fear in the bones of those in the city.



But one person in Jericho was filled with hope. Rahab, a harlot, had taken two Israelite spies into her family's home near the city wall. When the king heard about it, he came knocking at her door. But she hid the spies on her roof and later helped them escape through a window by letting them down with a scarlet rope. But before they fled, she asked them to vow to protect her household when they came back to attack Jericho. They agreed, but under one condition—she keep the red rope hanging from her window.

When Joshua's army, accompanied by seven priests of Israel, marched around Jericho—once a day for six days—the people peered over their walls with trepidation. It was a strange battle strategy. No arrows were shot, no swords were raised, and no direct attacks were made. But on the seventh day, the soldiers and priests marched around Jericho seven times. Then trumpets blew and a great shout pierced the air as the earth trembled and the walls crumbled.

What happened to Rahab? Did Joshua honor the promise of the spies?



A day is coming when the foundations of the world will be shaken. The Bible speaks of a heavenly trumpet that will sound and a divine shout that will pierce the air. This momentous event is called the Day of the Lord, the second advent, and the return of Christ. Nothing in history compares with the colossal significance of the Second Coming. When will it take place? Will everyone know when it happens? What are some of the signs of Christ's soon return?

The destruction of Jericho is a symbol of the end of the world.

The city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent (Joshua 6:17).

The Bible uses the imagery of Israel's enemies in the Old Testament to foretell the destruction of the wicked that will take place when Christ returns. A woman symbolizes God's people (Jeremiah 6:2), so Rahab and her household are comparable to the church. The two spies are likened to the Old and New Testaments that we should hide in our hearts. The coming of Joshua (the Hebrew name for Jesus) is likened to Christ's coming. Rahab was saved by faith when she let out a red rope. In the same way, we may be saved by clinging by faith to the blood of Christ that redeems us from eternal destruction.





Joshua's march on Jericho parallels the second coming of Christ.

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 (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

In the Bible, Joshua is a type, or symbol, of Christ. There are many correlations between Joshua's march on Jericho and Christ's return. When the Israelite army marched around the city seven times, they ended with a shout, with trumpet blasts, and with the walls of the city falling down. When Christ comes back, the Bible says, "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). See also Revelation 16:18.

Jesus promised His disciples that He would come again.

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also (John 14:1-3).

Just as the two Hebrew spies promised Rahab they would return and save her and her household, so Christ promised His disciples of His return. Jesus left His followers waiting but vowed to come back. Not only will Christ rescue us at His second coming, but He promised that He would prepare a home for us, His family, in the heavenly Canaan. Rahab became a part of God's family and was even an ancestor of Christ. (See Matthew 1:5.)

While we do not know the day or hour of Christ's return, we may know that it is near.

Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only (Matthew 24:36).



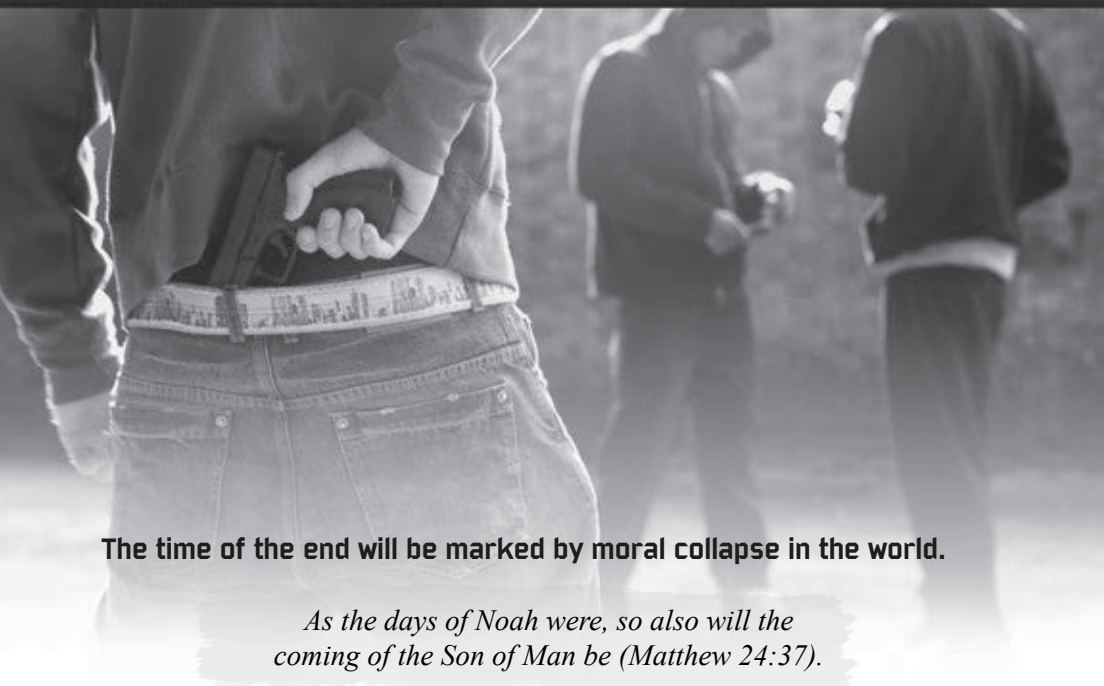
The Bible not only reveals the manner of Jesus' coming but gives us signs that tell of the nearness of His return. Christ illustrated this point by telling His disciples that when a fig tree puts forth leaves, "you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!" (Matthew 24:32, 33).

Jesus shared with His closest followers many signs of the nearness of His return.

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. ... Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places (Matthew 24:6, 7).

Some of the signs of Christ's return will occur (or have occurred) "in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars" (Luke 21:25). Other signs will occur in the religious world, such as the advancement of the gospel (Matthew 24:14). The Bible also predicts an increase of wickedness in the world. "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" (2 Timothy 3:1, 2).





The time of the end will be marked by moral collapse in the world.

As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be (Matthew 24:37).

What were the days of Noah like? “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). It is clear this is happening today. Sexual immorality is paraded openly, divorce has skyrocketed, and most children are born outside God’s design for a family.

One of the greatest deceptions before Jesus’ return will be produced by Satan himself.

False christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect (Matthew 24:24).

Jesus warned, “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many” (Matthew 24:4, 5). Many throughout the centuries have tried to impersonate Christ, and they continue to do so to this day. Paul warned us of these dangerous deceptions. “Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). Any supposed appearing of Jesus must be in harmony with the Bible.

Christ's return will be literal, visible, audible, and observed by every living person on the earth.

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 (Acts 1:11).

Just as the disciples physically saw Jesus ascend into heaven, so will His return be literal. Christ will not come quietly nor alone, but with “all the holy angels” (Matthew 25:31). He will appear in the sky. “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). Jesus’ return will also be audible. Peter described the day of the Lord making “a great noise” (2 Peter 3:10).

When Jesus comes back, the righteous dead will be raised to life, the righteous living will be caught up in the clouds, and the living wicked will die.

The trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:52).

Christ’s return marks a division in the human race between those who have accepted His offer of salvation and those who have rejected it. When Jesus comes again, “He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:31). At that time all the righteous will be raised from their graves with new bodies. The brightness of His appearing is a welcoming sign for the redeemed but a fearful sight for the wicked (Revelation 6:15–17).

I look forward to the literal, visible, and audible return of Christ and want to be ready to meet Him by hiding God's Word in my heart.



Reformer Highlight



Jerome of Prague (1379–1416) was a Czech theologian, reformer, professor, and a chief follower of John Hus. He studied at Oxford University where he became familiar with—and convicted by—the teachings of John Wycliffe. Jerome spoke boldly against the abuses of the Roman church and was finally captured, imprisoned, and burned at the stake in Constance, Germany.

“I am ready to die: I will not recoil before the torments that are prepared for me by my enemies and false witnesses, who will one day have to render an account of their impostures before the great God, whom nothing can deceive.”