

# The Glorious Appearing of Jesus

## Matthew 24:15-31

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Kingdom Come! (Gospel of Matthew Series)

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Sunday, October 2, 2016, 10:30am at Living Hope Church of Roselle, Illinois

**livinghopechurch.net**

“He who loves the coming of the Lord is not he who affirms it is far off, nor is it he who says it is near. It is he who, whether it be far or near, awaits it with sincere faith, stead-fast hope and fervent love.”

~ **Aurelius Augustine**

### Announcements

- Sign up for a new ladies' Bible study led by Marie Anderson. Every Monday at 7pm beginning on October 24.

Open your Bible to **Matthew 24**. We are getting back to our series in the book of Matthew entitled “Kingdom Come.” This morning we are looking at a message entitled: “The Glorious Appearing of Jesus.”

**Proposition:** We need to be on the alert and be ready for Jesus to come at any time.

### Never the Same

Do you remember where you were when something happened and you knew life would never be the same again? Some things are happy, and some sad. Some sad things I remember...

- I remember the moment my parents told us they were divorcing
- I remember when my mom died on Jan 1, 1990.
- I remember 9/11

Some happy things...

- I remember when Jill said YES on the beach in Pensacola Florida
- I remember when we learned we were going to have our first child
- I remember when our churches voted to become Living Hope Bible Church

But there is one event that will supersede everything else! Jesus is coming again!

This is one of the most exciting passages of Scripture in Jesus' teaching. I'm excited and ready to read it, aren't you? Let's read it now!

### Holy Scripture

**Matthew 24:15-31**, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

<sup>15</sup>“So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), <sup>16</sup>then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup>Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, <sup>18</sup>and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. <sup>19</sup>And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in **those days!** <sup>20</sup>Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. <sup>21</sup>For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

<sup>22</sup>And if **those days** had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect **those days** will be cut short. <sup>23</sup>Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. <sup>24</sup>For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. <sup>25</sup>See, I have told you beforehand. <sup>26</sup>So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. <sup>27</sup>For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup>Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

<sup>29</sup>“**Immediately after the tribulation of those days** the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup>Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup>And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

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## THE BIRTH PAINS ILLUSTRATION

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### A Time of Birth Pains: Marks of the New Covenant Age

Jesus here in verses 4-28 is going to give them clarity that they did not have at this time. He’s going to tell them of a time of “birth pains” before His Second coming. In verses 4-7 Jesus describes what is going to occur in the time period before He comes again in glory. Verse 8 is a key verse in understanding what Jesus is saying. Jesus says in Mt 24:8, “All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.”

Jesus describes the birth pains before His Second Coming. Just as a woman has horrible labor pains before delivering the beautiful child, so Jesus says there are horrible labor pains that come before Him making the earth new again in His Second Coming. Jesus says there will be 10 labor pains, or 10 characteristics of the New Covenant age before he comes.

### Outline

1. Be ready for tribulation
2. Be ready for Christ’s visitation (coming)

## I. Be ready for **tribulation**, (vs. 1-28), birth pains.”

Jesus says in Mt 24:8, “All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.” In other words, these are the characteristics that describe the new covenant age. This era will be marked by these things.

### Don't Be Alarmed: **Be READY!**

He says in Mt 24:5, “**See that you are not alarmed**, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.” These are things that are characteristic of the entire new covenant age. It's going to be a difficult time, so don't be surprised! Don't be alarmed! These things must take place. They don't signify the end is near, for Jesus could come at any moment. His return is imminent – He could come at any moment. Paul and the first Christians expected Him to come in their generation. Every generation experiences all these things.

All these things “must take place, but the end is not yet” (vs. 5).

- 1) false teachers and false christs (vs. 4-5, 11, 23-26),
- 2) international rivalries (“kingdom against kingdom”), “wars and rumors of wars” (vs. 6-8),
- 3) persecution of the church (vs. 9),
- 4) a falling away of some who profess Christ (vs. 10-11),
- 5) a time when lawlessness and wickedness increases in society (vs. 12),
- 6) a time when “the love of many will grow cold” (vs. 12), - Christ is heaven now!

### 7) Be ready for **Christians to endure**, (vs. 13).

**Mt 24:13**, “But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

**Galatians 6:9**, “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

The doctrine of perseverance is a very comforting doctrine. We see in Hebrews 10:39, “But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and **preserve their souls.**”

### The Doctrine of God's Preservation

The doctrine of perseverance is really the doctrine of God's preservation of the saints.

- The Lord will keep us from falling (Jude 24-25)
- The Lord who has begun the work in us will finish it (Phil 1:6)
- The Lord said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb 13:5).

## 8) Be ready for **the worldwide preaching of the Gospel**, (vs. 14).

Mt 24:14, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

Who would have thought that the little group of disciples would bring the Gospel into all the world? It went into the then-known world. Paul, finally, with whatever rationale, could claim that by at least the late fifties, the gospel had gone out to all the *oikoumenē*—*known world* or *empire* (Rom 10:18).<sup>1</sup>

### Stronger Birth Pains of Evangelism

But do you see how it goes stronger and stronger like birth pains? With the advent of the internet and mass communication, the Gospel is going farther and reaching more than ever before.

I have friends around the world that fly to remote villages to reach the most unreached people groups. The Lord’s coming is nearer than ever before!

### Revival and Tribulation

There is the great time of tribulation, but also a time of great revival. Times of tribulation bring revival. People begin to think a lot about eternal things.

## 9) Be ready for the **destruction of the Temple**, (vs. 15-21).

Mt 24:15-21, “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),<sup>16</sup> then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.<sup>17</sup> Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house,<sup>18</sup> and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak.<sup>19</sup> And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days!<sup>20</sup> Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.<sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.”

### The Abomination of Desolation

The Abomination that makes desolate standing in the holy place. Jesus says, you need to understand that when the abominable Romans come into the Temple courts not to worship, but to destroy.

Can we be sure that the Abomination of Desolation is the arrival of the Roman armies? Yes. How? Because it is written in Scripture.

Luke 21:20-24, “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.<sup>21</sup> Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it,<sup>22</sup> for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written.<sup>23</sup> Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people.<sup>24</sup> They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations,

<sup>1</sup> Blomberg, C. (1992). *Matthew* (Vol. 22, pp. 356–357). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

So we see the destruction of the Temple begins the “times of the Gentiles” when the Gentiles will be gathered into to the Church.

So this great **ingathering** is preceded by the Roman armies that **abominate** and bring the Temple to **ruins** and **desolation**.

- And so the abomination that makes the holy place (the entire Temple complex) desolate enters in and raises their **Roman flags bearing the eagle on to the Temple**, defiling it.
- Josephus records that a drunken soldier sets the temple on fire and the **desolation begins!**
- This is one of the sharpest birth pains that Jesus gives. It’s **unthinkable** to the disciples that this would happen, but it does.

How do we know what this “abomination of desolation” is? Well, it is something to flee from. Verse 15, “when you see the abomination of desolation...” then what should you do? Verse 16, “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup>Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, <sup>18</sup>and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak.”

In AD 68 the Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem. Jesus said, whatever you are doing when you see those armies, flee!

- Vs 17, “Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house”
- Vs 18 – If you are in the field when you see the Roman armies, do not stop to get your coat. It will be your death-knell if you do so.
- Vs 19, Pray your women aren’t pregnant.
- Vs 20, Pray you are not fleeing on a Sabbath day when the gates to the city are barricaded.

### **The Jews Did Flee**

When they see the Roman armies coming, the need to flee! “They must interrupt whatever they are doing—whether relaxing, as customary on the flat rooftops of their homes, or working, as typically in the fields—and flee with the utmost of haste.”<sup>2</sup>

We know from the historian Eusebius that the church at Jerusalem did leave the city, relocating to the hill country, the same place where the Jews hid during the Maccabean revolt. They did obey Jesus’ commands and were saved! Soon after the desolation, the Romans left the region.

### **Horrible Tribulation for the Jews**

When you see the abominable armies that will make the Temple a desolation, then you need to flee! Why?

**Matthew 24:21**, “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.”

Because it’s going to be a time of great tribulation like the Jews had never experienced and never will experience. You say, how is that possible? What about the holocaust?

<sup>2</sup> O’Donnell, D. S. (2013). *Matthew: All Authority in Heaven and on Earth*. (R. K. Hughes, Ed.) (p. 709). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

### What about the Holocaust?

The Jewish Holocaust of WWII was definitely more catastrophic on a quantitative scale. Six million Jews died. But as far as intensity, the Jewish War of 70AD cannot be compared to any other time in human history since the beginning of the world to the end of the world.

Josephus (a personal witness to the events) claims that over 1,100,000 people were killed during the initial siege. 97,000 were captured and enslaved, and many fled to areas around the Mediterranean.

During the siege, there was:

- mass starvation that was so intense that cannibalism widely occurred
- some mothers even devouring their own children.
- Later, there were so many mass crucifixions that wood eventually became unavailable

For the **Jewish people**, there was such an intense and great tribulation “such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.”

**Chrysostom** from the 300s said, “All you need to do is study the writings of Josephus to learn the truth of these predictions. No one who knows the fact of history can say that Christian believers have exaggerated this tragic history or been any part of trying to see that Christ’s words were fulfilled [in 70AD].”<sup>3</sup>

**Eusebius** says that the Christians did heed the Lord’s command to flee. He says, “the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella.”<sup>4</sup>

### 10) Be ready for a time of **danger and peril**, (vs. 21-22).

**Mt 24:22**, “And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.”

Its possible that Jesus is referring to the days of the destruction of the Temple, but it is more likely (*according to D.A. Carson and John Murray among others*) that this is referring to all the days of the New Covenant period.

The days of the New Covenant period are going to be so full of turmoil that they need to be cut short, or else kingdom would rise against kingdom, perhaps in nuclear holocaust, and “no human being would be saved.”

### Nuclear Holocaust – Perilous Times!

It is not shocking that the Lord would have to cut the days of the New Covenant period short, since if it went on NO FLESH (SARX) would be saved. No human being would live.

What a perilous, dangerous time we live in. As **2 Tim 3:1-5** says, “...understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty [peril, danger]. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.”

<sup>3</sup> Simonetti, M. (2001). *Matthew 14–28* (p. 196). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press as in PG 58:695; NPNF 1 10:457.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, Book III, Ch. 5.

Praise God that our Lord does not make this go on forever. There will come a day when Jesus comes again!

### Don't Give Up

Don't give up! You need to "fight the good fight, finish the course, and keep the faith!" Don't give up! Be faithful! Look for the coming of Christ.

**Lift up your heads, for your redemption is nearer than you can imagine!**

## II. Be ready for **Christ's divine visitation**, (vs. 29-31).

### Great Tribulation

The new covenant age is one of "great tribulation." But immediately after the birth pains reach a fever pitch, the trumpet will sound.

**Mt 24:29-31**, "**Immediately after the tribulation of those days** the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup> Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then **all the tribes of the earth will mourn**, and they will see the Son of Man **coming** [PAROUSIA] on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

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### COSMIC DISTURBANCES

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There will be cosmic disturbances that precede Jesus' coming. **Mt 24:29**, "**Immediately after the tribulation of those days** the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

**Luke 21:25** says it this way, "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, <sup>26</sup> people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

The news channels will be reporting these things, but they will try and give themselves false comfort. In some ways, there will be mass panic.

In other ways, things will be carrying on as they were. **Mt 24:37-39**, "For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

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### PEOPLE HIDING FROM THE WRATH OF THE LAMB

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The book of Revelation **6:12-17** records this and the reaction of the people on earth at this time: “When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood,<sup>13</sup> and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.<sup>14</sup> The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.<sup>15</sup> Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains,<sup>16</sup> calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,<sup>17</sup> for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?””

The people of the earth want the hills and rocks to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb!

### **The Day of Wrath has Come**

The day of Christ’s wrath against sin has come. He has died for sins of His elect, and now He prepares the earth to be judged.

The cup of God’s wrath is now full. It will be poured out. “All the tribes of the earth will mourn” (Mt 24:30).

As earthquakes shake the earth, tsunamis swell and take out towns and cities and villages. The cosmic disturbances increase, the birth pains are about to give way to the birth of the new heavens and the new earth.

People “fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (Lk 21:26).

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## THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL 7

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He came the first time lying in a manger; however, He will come the second time riding on the clouds. This is what Daniel prophesied centuries before:

**Daniel 7:13-14**, “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”

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## THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN

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**Mt 24:30**, “Then will appear in heaven the **sign** of the Son of Man, and then **all the tribes of the earth will mourn**, and they will see the Son of Man **coming** [PAROUSIA] on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”



## Faith Made Sight

This sign is so amazing that it will make your heart burst with HOPE! But it is so dreadful that the people of the earth will be crying out for the rocks and hills to fall on them.

The sign of the coming of Jesus is so great, that ALL PEOPLE on the earth will mourn when they see the sign of the sign. What is the sign of His coming? It will be unmistakable. It seems before we are gathered together, faith will be made sight.

The evidence of all that we believed will be brought out. Christ will become visible! And He will be there in the clouds with a great multitude of angels.

I believe it is called the “sign” of His coming because we will not yet be gathered with Him. It will be enough time that the people of the earth will mourn.

And as we saw in **Revelation 6:15-17**, “Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup> calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, <sup>17</sup> for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?””

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## ANGELS APPEARING

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### Angels Appearing

Angels will appear with Christ!

**Mt 25:31**, “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and **all the holy angels with him**, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory.”

**Mk 8:38**, “...he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

**2 Thess 1:7**, “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels...”

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## THE GATHERING OF THE ELECT

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We shall be gathered together with Jesus!

**Mt 24:31**, “And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

### Meet Christ in the Clouds

**1 Thess 4:16-18**, “For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

### We Shall All Be Changed

1 Cor 15:51-52, “Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.”

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## SAINTS WILL JUDGE THE WORLD

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1 Cor 6:3, “Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life.”

“Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his **saints**” (Jude 1:14).

Sometimes when we think of the Second Coming, we are frightened, and in a sense, we might say, rightly so. But remember you will not be condemned when Jesus sees you. “There is now therefore no condemnation...” (Rom.8:1).

The truth is, Jesus is preparing a place for a very humble people. John 14:1-3, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2 My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.”

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## THIS GENERATION

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Mt 24:32-25, “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 34 Truly, I say to you, **this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.** 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

### **Not Including, but Preceding the Second Coming**

It doesn’t mean “this ethnicity” genos. It means this generation will see all these things. Not all these things **including** the Second Coming, but all these things **preceding** the Second Coming.

This was shocking because they could not conceive of the Temple being destroyed.

This is made clear by Luke 21:20-24, “But when you see **Jerusalem surrounded by armies**, then know that its desolation has come near. <sup>21</sup> Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, <sup>22</sup> for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. <sup>23</sup> Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. <sup>24</sup> They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

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## CONCLUSION

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All the **difficulty** will be done. All the **tribulation** will be put away and we will celebrate our king for eternity. One day all the trials and difficulties will end.

### **Jesus Be My Hiding Place**

If you are here today without Christ, don't wait for the rocks and hills to hide you. Cry out to the Lord: "Jesus, be my hiding place!"

"Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen" (Rev 1:7).

Are you ready? Come quickly, Lord Jesus!