

Rapture Ready **Discussion Notes- July 12, 2026**

1. If you found out you had exactly one week left before a huge life change, what's the first thing you'd do?

This week's message, "Rapture Ready," reminded us that the next event on the prophetic calendar is the rapture, when believers, living and dead, will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air. Scripture is clear that not everyone will be taken; some will be left behind, which is why evangelism matters so much right now. Rather than something to fear, the rapture should be something we're genuinely excited about, because a far greater reality awaits us than anything this world offers. The message ended with a clear challenge: Jesus is coming at an hour we don't expect, so we need to stay ready.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 (ESV)

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. 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.

This passage comes from Paul's earliest letter, written to a young church anxious about believers who had already died. They worried those loved ones would miss out on Christ's return. Paul writes to comfort and correct them, describing the rapture in vivid detail: a command, an archangel's voice, a trumpet. The dead in Christ rise first, then the living are caught up together with them. Paul's main point isn't the mechanics of the event, it's reassurance. No believer is left out, and this reunion is meant to be a source of hope, not anxiety.

2. When you picture the moment described in this passage, believers rising to meet Jesus in the clouds, what emotion comes up first for you: excitement, fear, longing, or something else? Why do you think that's your instinct?

Read Romans 13:11–12 (ESV)

Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Paul wrote Romans while under constant threat from Rome, in a culture that prized status, comfort, and self-interest, much like our culture today. Here he shifts from doctrine to urgency, telling believers to "wake up" because salvation is nearer now than when they first believed. It's a call to alertness: don't get lulled into spiritual sleep just because Christ hasn't returned yet. This verse sets up our application question well, since it moves straight from "wake up" to how we're meant to actually live differently because of it.

3. What does it look like practically for you to "stay awake" spiritually in this season of life?

Read Colossians 4:5–6 (ESV)

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Paul wrote this letter from prison, near the end of his ministry, giving practical instructions for how believers should live among nonbelievers. "Walking in wisdom toward outsiders" meant being intentional, not accidental, about how Christians represented Jesus in daily interactions.

His instruction to season speech “with salt” was a common idiom for words that were thoughtful, engaging, and effective, not bland or careless. It's a direct, practical picture of what evangelism can look like in ordinary relationships.

4. What do you think holds most Christians back from inviting someone to church or sharing their faith, and what do you think would actually help people move past that?

Read Mark 13:35–37 (ESV)

Therefore stay awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning, lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.

This is part of Jesus's final teaching before his crucifixion, where he prepares his disciples for what's ahead. Using the image of a master returning home at an unknown hour, Jesus emphasizes readiness over calculation. The point was never to guess the timing, but to live consistently alert. His closing line, “what I say to you I say to all,” makes clear this isn't just for the disciples in the room; it's for every believer, including us.

5. Given that we don't know the hour, what's one area of your life you sense God calling you to get “more ready” in this week, spiritually, relationally, or in how you're sharing your faith?

Prayer Points

- Pray for boldness and open doors to invite friends and family to church or into a conversation about faith.
- Pray for genuine excitement and readiness for Christ's return, rather than fear or apathy.
- Pray for anyone in the group who has loved ones who don't yet know Jesus, that God would draw them close.

Deeper Dive: Understanding the Second Coming

The return of Christ is one of the most anticipated and most debated topics in Scripture. Christians throughout history have disagreed on the details and timing of end-times events, and this guide won't try to settle those debates. Instead, this section is meant to give a clear, foundational look at what the Bible plainly teaches about Christ's return: that it's certain, that it will be visible and unmistakable, and that it's meant to shape how we live now. Below are three key passages that build a basic biblical framework for understanding this event.

The Promise of His Return

Read Acts 1:9–11 (ESV)

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "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."

This passage takes place immediately after Jesus's resurrection, as he ascends into heaven in front of his disciples. As they stand staring upward, two angels appear and ask why they're looking to the sky, then give a direct promise: Jesus will return "in the same way" he left, visibly, physically, and unmistakably. This moment matters because it's the first clear statement that Christ's departure isn't the end of the story. The disciples didn't need to speculate about whether he'd come back; they were told plainly that he would, and given a picture of what to expect: not a quiet, symbolic, or secretive event, but a visible return similar to how he ascended.

A Visible, Unmistakable Event

Read Matthew 24:29–31 (ESV)

"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. 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. 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."

In this passage, Jesus is talking with his disciples on the Mount of Olives, answering their questions about what the end of the age will look like. He describes dramatic signs in the sky, the sun and moon going dark, stars falling, followed by his own return "with power and great glory." This kind of dramatic, sky and earth imagery shows up elsewhere in the Old Testament (in books like Isaiah and Joel) whenever God was about to do something major and world changing, so it would have stood out to Jesus's listeners as a signal that something huge was coming. The main point here isn't to figure out exactly what each sign means, but to see how clear and public this event will be. Jesus says "all the tribes of the earth will see" him coming; there won't be any confusion about whether it's happening. Whatever else people debate about the end times, this passage makes one thing simple: Christ's return will be something everyone sees, not something quiet or hidden.

Living Ready, Not Just Waiting

Read 1 John 2:28–3:3 (ESV)

And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

John was writing to a group of churches that had recently gone through a painful split. Some people who had been part of the community left and started teaching things that weren't true about Jesus (1 John 2:19). This left a lot of believers confused, discouraged, and unsure who to trust. John writes to reassure them: they truly do know Jesus, they truly do belong to God, and that identity isn't up for debate just because others walked away. Out of that reassurance, John points them forward, reminding them that when Jesus appears, they'll be like him, seeing him as he truly is. But he doesn't stop at future hope; he connects it straight to how they live right now, saying that everyone who has this hope "purifies himself." This is a helpful anchor for the whole topic of the second coming. No matter where someone lands on the timing or details of end-times events, Scripture consistently ties the hope of Christ's return to how we live today, with confidence, purity, and readiness, instead of fear or confusion.

Discussion Questions

1. Which of these three passages felt most new or clarifying to you, and why?
2. Scripture is clear that Christ's return will be visible and certain. How does that shape how you personally engage with end-times teaching?
3. 1 John ties the hope of Christ's return directly to how we live now. What's one way this hope could practically shape your daily life this week?