

# Explore the Bible: November 5

*Returning • Mark 13:24-37*

*By Rick Henson*



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A full 79% of Christians believe that Jesus will return, while 66% believe the Bible is accurate, according to Pew Research (<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2009/04/21/the-second-coming-of-jesus/>). Interesting that more believe in His return than His Word that reveals His return, demonstrating the confusion of sinful humanity. Current mid-eastern events involving Israel and her enemies cause both believers and nonbelievers to speculate about the end of times and the second coming of Jesus. Many seem to speak with absolute certainty that modern events are the beginning of end times. From the teachings of Scripture, we understand it could be soon or in a thousand years. All we are promised in the Scripture concerning "when" is described in Romans 13:11 which states that the day of salvation, "*is nearer than when we believed,*" (KJV).

The Apostle Paul taught in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, "*For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night,*" (KJV). No one knows when Jesus will return. After His return, the world will be judged. Jesus told the disciples that the angels would gather the elect from the four winds, or from every direction. This expression, "four winds," is used eight other times in the Bible, including once in the Matthew version of this event. Each time it referenced heavenly action across the globe and not human activity. Just as salvation is wholly from God, this action will be ordered by the Father.

Jesus told the disciples the elect will be gathered from everywhere, not simply Israel or America. God's people cover the planet. Jesus revealed in Matthew 13:49-50 that the angels will also collect the unbelievers for judgement and eternal fire. Hebrews 9:27 reads, "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,*" (KJV). While New

Age and Eastern beliefs view time as cyclical, God's word teaches it is linear. All creation and every individual soul moves along the conveyor belt of time, rushing towards death and judgment.

Jesus did give some signs of the unfolding of time, though His revelation simply hints at its inevitability more than some date. As the fig tree approaches the fruit-bearing season of summer, it's tender branches bring forth leaves before fruit. Jesus said that when the events He foretold in Mark 13:5-23 began to unfold, the season of harvest approaches. Jesus warned in Mark 13:33, *"Take ye heed, watch and pray for ye know not when the time is,"* (KJV). He stressed believers' readiness above all else. Being prepared far eclipses knowledge and understanding of the signs of the times.

In the early 1970s, many speculated that John F. Kennedy could be the Antichrist, especially if he had secretly recovered from a mortal head wound, which some believed and taught. That did not happen. In the 1980s, some posited that Henry Kissinger, a German-born Jew might fit the Biblical model for the son of perdition. Again, this did not happen. While many yield to the temptation of speculation, Jesus stated that He Himself did not know when this would occur. According to teachings in Philippians chapter two, Jesus emptied Himself in the incarnation. Of course, in Heaven He knows the times, but not while on earth. In Matthew 28:18, Jesus revealed that, *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,"* (KJV).

Bill Gaither's *The "King Is Coming"* captures a glimpse of the glorious Second Coming of Jesus:

I can hear the chariots rumble. I can see the marching throng.

The flurry of God's trumpets spells the end of sin and wrong.

Regal robes are now unfolding. Heaven's grandstand's now in place.

Heaven's choir now assembled start to sing Amazing Grace.

O the King is coming. The King is coming.

I just heard the trumpets sounding and now His face I see.

O the King is coming. The King is coming.

Praise God. He's coming for me.

*Henson is minister of outreach and evangelism at Bethel Church, Brandon.*