

# Prepare to Meet God

by Jack Hibbs

---

*Jack Hibbs emphasizes the urgency of being spiritually prepared to meet God through faith in Jesus and living out that faith in our daily lives.*

**Duration:** 1:00:17

**Scripture:** Matthew 22:1, Romans 13:1

**Topics:** "Judgment Day"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being prepared to meet God. He warns against living with a sense of invincibility and urges listeners to consider the possibility of the Lord's return. The speaker highlights current events, such as Russia's support of Iran and the spread of Islam, as signs that the end times may be approaching. He also references a news report about the tragic bridge collapse in Minnesota, which serves as a reminder of the unpredictability of life. Overall, the sermon encourages individuals to examine their hearts and ensure they are ready to meet God.

---

## Transcript

Father, we ask Lord that going forth from your throne room to our hearts, the truth of your word in us, Lord, we pray that by your powerful, glorious spirit, you would work into the fiber of our very existence, the truth of your word. Father, like never before, may we be a church, a Christian, a people galvanized to the days and age in which we live in. Lord, you are God, there's none other.

Your word is holy and true and inspired, there is no other, we are your people. Lord, we pray that you would just cause us to arise and stand as our brothers and sisters. In fact, right now we pray for our dear brothers and sisters, our South Korean Christian brothers and sisters in Pakistan that have been arrested by the Taliban, two of them killed already this week, and the rest are being threatened to be beheaded.

Father, we pray in Jesus' name that you would set our brothers and sisters free, or if you have ordained, Lord, them to be martyred for your name, then God, your will, your grace be done. But we pray now that you'd set them free, and Lord, that you'd even save their captors, show them a vision, may an angel visit them, Lord, may the sky part and get their attention. But Father, we pray right now for South Korean brothers and sisters in Christ who are right now being held by these Muslims there in Pakistan.

We pray in Jesus' name and all God's people said, amen. Let's grab your Bibles if you would then and turn to Amos this morning. As we conclude this conference together, Amos chapter four, verse 12.

Amos, great, great, wonderful Old Testament prophet, man of God, throughout the book of Amos, Amos, here's the Lord say through him to the people of Israel, yet after all these things, you have not turned to me. You've not turned your heart to me. And God speaks to the prophet Amos and in Amos four, verse 12, the Lord says there, that therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel, because I will do this thing to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel.

Well, God could say the same thing to us today. He could say to America, if God were to raise up a prophet and maybe God is raising up prophets in pulpits around America, I don't know. But maybe God could say to America, prepare to meet thy God.

You know, the Bible teaches that the Lord, he is God and that he is judge and that he rules and reigns from heaven above. The Bible makes it very clear that concerning the Lord, that he is the governor of all. God is watching from heaven and he's seeing what's going on in all of the world.

And yet in all these things, we would love to see, wouldn't you love to see a great revival in America and a great turning of hearts toward the Lord? Maybe God would say this morning, yet in all these things that have happened to you, O America, you have not turned your heart toward me. But maybe perhaps God would say, and maybe he is saying today, are you prepared to meet your God? So as we look to this and prepare our hearts, that was the title that Dr. David Hawking gave me for this. Prepare to meet thy God.

I almost feel like I should have a sandwich board on with a long beard. Prepare to meet God, the end is near, you know. Nobody's laughing about that old guy carrying a sandwich board anymore though.

A lot of people are very tense about the world and they should be. When we talk about to prepare to meet God, what does it mean and what are we talking about? When we think about these things and talk about these things, the Bible says in Exodus 3, 6, God spoke to Moses and he says, I am the God of your father, Abraham, the God of Isaac and of Jacob. And Moses hid his face from God for he was afraid to look upon God.

You guys listen, I know Tommy Lasorda some years ago said that God is the great Dodger in the sky. First of all, that's ridiculous to talk about God so casually like that. And if God was to be a baseball fan, he wouldn't be a Dodger fan.

We have some California angels that attend this church. I wanna make sure that. Hey, we not only have fans, we have some angels that attend this church.

In fact, we even have some baseball players who are angels that attend this church. But Moses was afraid to look into the presence of God. He is holy, he is loving.

Yes, he is merciful, yes, but he's the eternal God. And we will see him someday Christian. And listen, I don't wanna disappoint you either non-believer, you're gonna see him too.

Everybody will see God in the end. It all depends on what end you're on. Smoking, non-smoking, air-conditioned, not very, very serious though.

A lot of people say all roads lead to God. That's true, but read the fine print. All roads do lead to God.

Every man will answer to the Lord in the end, but only one road leads to heaven. Amen. And Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, said Jesus.

And no man comes to the Father, but through him. As we get ready for this message, there'll be five points this morning. One thing I wanna point out to you, and it just shocked me in light of the message and what I saw on the news.

You guys don't know Charlie Gibson, ABC News? Charlie Gibson said something, I had to write it down. Charlie Gibson said this week in light of the tragic bridge collapse in Minnesota, he was obviously affected, he was very, very grieved by what had happened, and he was kind of angry, as many of us in America were scratching our heads as to what's going on. Charlie Gibson said this, this seems impossible to me.

What good does it do to be careful to look both ways before you cross, to carefully wear your seatbelt only to have the road beneath you give out? Nobody expected that bridge to give out. And now you and I cannot even go across the freeway bridge without thinking about what happened last week. Bridges don't fall, as people are saying.

The road is there to be firm to support you. You put your seatbelt on, you look both ways before you go, you make sure you don't blow the lights, only to have the road fall out from beneath you? A lot of people are living like that today. Oh, I go to church on Sundays, maybe, sort of, Christmas and Easter, I give to the little kids fund, I'm okay, I'm not immoral, I'm a nice guy, I don't cheat on my wife, haven't beaten my kids, come on.

Of course, I'm gonna go to heaven. This may be offensive, but I think it's true. Statistics tell us that most people in the world are religious, but being religious doesn't get you to heaven.

I think hell is full of religious people who missed heaven in regards to what Jesus said. God does not grade on the curve, he doesn't grade according to how sincere you may be, he grades based upon, listen, not what you know, who you know, it's not what you know. I got a letter last week from a man, he wrote me this dirty letter, I heard you on the radio, and blam, blam, blam, blam, blam, bang, bang, bang, boom, boom, boom, boom, and he was telling me all of his achievements and his degrees and his doctrine and all of this stuff, and I wrote this and I did the other, and all this stuff, and his whole letter, he's announced in there, he goes, I don't need God, I want you to know that I'm an American, I'm the most moral person, he was impressed with himself.

He was a legend in his own mind, I tell you. He doesn't need God. Hell is full of people who don't need God.

This conference, you've heard great messages by great men of God, stimulating and challenging, and this message sums it up by saying, are you prepared to meet God? Jesus said in Matthew 7, 13, enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction. And there are many who go in by it, because narrow is the gate, and difficult is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it. And we see such an onslaught and a growth of things that are massive in the world, about people making up their own way, they've got all this new stuff, and listen, if it's new, it's dangerous.

You got all these Hollywood people promoting their thing, okay, look, you got Tom Cruise promoting whatever his thing is, you got John Travolta promoting whatever his thing is, you got Oprah Winfrey promoting whatever her secret is, you got all these things that are going on, you got all this, and then you got people knocking on your door, church, friend, atheist, unbeliever even, pick up the Bible, read it, read it, read it, and when you're done reading it, read it again, know the way, there's only one way, and I'm not making it up, I'm not in the club, we've gathered together this morning, because Jesus Christ is that way,

we're following him, we're not asking you to follow us, you can't prepare to meet God by following us, but you can join us as we follow God, because our desire like yours, I would think anyway, is to see the Lord in heaven above. Number one, in our study this morning, are you prepared to meet God? Listen, what are you wearing? What are you wearing if you're gonna go meet God? Do you really believe that you're gonna go meet the Lord? Yes, I do, well, then what are you wearing? See, what do you mean, what am I wearing? I dress up my Sunday best to go to church, that's not what I'm talking about. The Bible says in Matthew 22, verse one, and Jesus answered and spoke this parable unto the people, and he said, the kingdom of heaven is like a certain man or king who arranged a marriage for his son, but when the king came to see the guest, he saw that there was a man there who did not have a wedding garment on, and he said to him, friend, how did you come in without a wedding garment? And the man was speechless, and then the king said to the servants, bind this man hand and foot and carry him away, and cast him into outer darkness, for there there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for many are called, but few are chosen.

That last statement of verse 14 means this, God puts his plea out to all mankind, come and know salvation, come and be ready for heaven, come and be prepared to meet thy God, but listen, you gotta put something on, it's not membership to a church, it's not how good you are, what we're talking about putting on, the Bible says it, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, what you and I wear matters, and it's nothing that you and I can see physically, in Romans 13 verse one, the Bible says, know this, by the way, that's a commandment in the Greek, it's pretty amazing, Paul spoke to the church at Rome, and he said, know this, that now it is high time that we awake out of our sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed, this is good news, the night is far spent, the day is at hand, therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, that's sinful stuff, throw it off, get away from it, and let us put on the armor of light, let us walk properly as in the day, not in revelry or drunkenness, not in the lewdness and lust or strife or envy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and no longer make provision for the lust of our flesh, do you know what that means?

Before you were a Christian, your flesh just did whatever it wanted, remember? It just, whatever, flesh says, come on, let's go do this, and you just went, and then we became a Christian, how do we know we became a Christian? I can tell you this from personal experience, the first thing I knew that I was a Christian was, my flesh got up the next day and said, come on, party, let's go, come on, and all of a sudden, there was this block, one part of my body was saying, come on, and inside of me, there was this struggle, I don't think I should do this anymore, something had changed, how great it is that when you really give your heart to Christ and the Spirit of God moves into your life, something so happens that you can't even sin good anymore, used to be, you and I were so proficient at sinning, and then you become a Christian and you try to backslide or you goof off, you start doing stuff you ought not to be doing, you can't even sin like you used to, it's great, it's great, isn't it?

Why? Because you're owned by the Lord, you're owned by God now, do you understand that? It's so very important, we have got to be a people that realizes that we are wearing now the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives, and I wanna ask you, do you know what that's like? If you're religious without that struggle, then maybe you don't know the Lord, it matters, the Bible tells us in Revelation 19 verse 7, let us be glad and rejoice and give glory to him for the marriage of the lamb has come and his wife has made herself ready.

And to her, it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, Bible scholars, look it up, the tribulation saints wear white robes and the Old Testament saints wear white robes, the bride of Christ wears fine linen, clean and bright, and the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints and the armies, that

is the church, the bride of Christ in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Christ on white horses. If you read Revelation 19, it is an awesome chapter because you've got the church in heaven above while all hell is breaking loose on the earth in the seven year tribulation period, you've got the earth on all of this mayhem, you've got the church in heaven above in Revelation 19, and then the scripture says the doors open up, Christ leads out his bride who is an army, that's some girl, isn't it?

She's got a veil on with white gown and army boots, and it says that he's on a white horse and it says that we're on a white horse, now I don't like, I like horses, I like to look at them, I think they're beautiful, but you can ride them, I'm not gonna ride them, I don't, they're big, anything big like that, I just don't trust those things, but they're beautiful, and I know you guys have a lot of horsey people here, I don't do that stuff, I don't do it, but the thing is, apparently you and I are gonna learn how to ride horses in heaven above because we're coming back with Jesus at the end of the tribulation period, it's called the second coming of Christ, we'll hear more about that in a moment, but listen, we are gonna be wearing this linen clean and bright, why?

Because when you trust Christ according to the scriptures, the Bible says we are born again and we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, the Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17, beginning there down to verse 21, that yes, we are new creations in Christ, and what a glorious thing, all the old has passed away and we've become new, but it goes on to say that he who knew no sin became sin for us that we might receive the righteousness of God that is in him through faith.

Jesus Christ, the moment you say, yes, Lord, be my savior, you are now wearing the righteousness of Christ, that's why the Bible says of the believer that we are saints, I know that none of us would say, call me Saint Jack, we don't talk like that, call me Saint Martha, we don't say that, but you know what, according to God, you've been declared saints in heaven above. By the way, you wanna hear some fun, it's H-A, listen, something that is damned or condemned or to be discarded is H-A-G-O-S, hagos, it means something that's damned. Do you know what the word for saint is? H-A-I-G-O-S, I, the I inserted, like the I am, inserted into the condemned thing, when the I is inserted, it becomes a saint.

How cool is that? The condemned, damned thing becomes the glorious redeemed thing, Jesus does that. Do you know what it's like? Are you wearing him today? Are you prepared to meet your God? You can say, yes, I am, because by my own righteousness, I've done nothing, Jack. In fact, in me dwells no good thing, but I have received Christ, I'm in the family of God, I know that and there's a struggle in my life against evil now and against sin and my own passions, I've put on Christ, I know what that's like.

Welcome to the family of God, you're wearing him. That's a good thing. Number two, are you prepared to meet God? Are you prepared for the meeting? You gotta wear something, nobody goes to a meeting with their bathing suit on, I guess, you know.

Unless it's a board meeting out on the ocean, you'd wear your bathing suit. But if it's a board meeting in an office, you'd put on something. It's not only what you wear, what are you prepared for? Are you prepared for the meeting? You say, what are you talking about? When you stand before God, do you know what the answer, do you have the answers to the questions he's gonna ask you? So what are you talking about? Do you know that when we talk about answering God, is your faith in Christ Jesus alone? You cannot say, as many cults teach, yes, of course, they give Jesus almost lip service.

Yes, we know he died for our sins, but we also add that righteousness of ours. You have that. Do you know that when you and I stand before the Lord, will we be prepared if he were to ask us, what did you do

with my son? What did you do with my son, Jesus? The answer has got to be, I've put my faith in Jesus Christ and all that he has done and nothing else.

You say, well, wait a minute, the Bible speaks about good works. Of course, the Bible speaks about good works. Why? Because those who know God should produce good works.

We should be known as believers for our good works. Church, you know what that means? I got news for you. Please, ushers, guard the doors, don't let anybody out.

This, what you're doing right now, what we're doing here right now, this is expected. This is normal. We should be doing this.

What really matters is when we leave this building today, good works happens mainly outside these doors. What will the world see? Jesus said, when the world sees your good works, your light, your salt, they'll glorify my father, which is in heaven. When we leave this building today, how is the world affected by us knowing Christ? Do we really know him? Then listen, church, we should be, you know what? We should be a loving, firm, confident nuisance in the ears of the world today.

With all the evil that's going on, we should be shaking the cage and ringing the bell. But no, you know what? We are so polite. And I haven't read politeness in the Bible.

We need to be salt and light. I don't know if there's anything passive about salt and light. You ever get salt in your eye? Or in a cut? Hey, listen, we need to leave this place today, having been prepared to meet the Lord.

You know what? It's not like we're just gonna kind of get through this life and then cross over into eternity and say, whoo, wow, made it. Now I can full on be a Christian. Uh-uh, no.

Now's the time. And by doing that, we are preparing to meet our God. Do we really believe the Bible? Do we really believe in him? Do we really believe that all this is gonna come to an end someday? Or is this what we're living for? I hope we're living for him.

Are we prepared to meet him? Because it matters what we do. What we're doing matters now in how we live. The Bible tells us in 1 John 1, verse five, this is the message which we have heard from him, says John, and we declare to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him and we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. Is that not good news? Hey, can I say that again? And you guys act like that's great and say amen.

Okay, ready? I'll cue you here. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. That's good news.

Are you having fellowship with God? Then you know what? When you walk down that street, okay, and you have that thought, whoa. Or you see that billboard and it causes a thought. Or you hear that word and it causes a thought.

When you're walking in the light, you're gonna be tempted. But when that thing hits you, you're gonna say, Lord, that was not good, that was not right. In Jesus' name, get that away from me.

Thank you, Lord, forgive me, amen. Guess what? You just get up and keep walking. If you understand what John is saying in 1 John 1, you will be free.

Why? You're prepared to meet your God. You're prepared to meet the Lord. And listen, as I said earlier, Paul said it's time now that we walk in the light and the day is at hand.

The night is far spent. What if? Now don't Mickey Mouse the tape and say something I'm not saying. Hear me clearly.

What if the Lord was coming back Tuesday at three o'clock? I didn't say that, I'm saying what if? What would you do? Here's the funny thing. If you love the Lord and you're ready, you're gonna go run around, grab all your friends, tell them. You're gonna do everything you can to just make sure they all know.

If you don't know the Lord, but you're religious, this is what you'll think. Three o'clock Tuesday, huh? Wow. I'll just go crazy nuts until about 2.45. I'll leave enough room in case my watch is off.

I'm gonna go live it up and then repent. I talked to a guy in Balboa Pier. He told me that.

If I knew Jesus was coming back, I'd go live it up. And then right before he came back, I'd just get it all right. What are you, crazy? Because here's the funny thing.

Everybody wants to know when Jesus is coming back. We'd probably mess it up if we knew. But here's the thing.

That's when Jesus is coming back. What if you went today? This is second service, isn't it? You're probably hungry. You're gonna go eat.

What if you choked? What if you choked today? God bless you. What if you choked today at breakfast? Oh man, that pastry drives me nuts. I'm never going back to... Could you imagine? Forget about Jesus coming back.

You could choke on a banana or slip on one. Think about it. I'm gonna go live it up until he comes back.

You could die today. Are you ready to meet the Lord? Here's what's scary about young people. God bless them.

They're so cute. But boy, are they dumb. They're dumb.

You know why they're dumb? Because they think the other guy's gonna fall. Watch him, he's gonna fall off the roof. Young people never think it's gonna happen to them.

That's why you send young people to war. They think the other guy's gonna get shot. The general's back there smoking his cigar at 50 miles away.

He's like 50 years old. Send those young guys, go! There's a sense of being invincible. Watch out, a lot of people live like that.

We could choke today, but the Lord could come back today too. We need to be very careful. Point number three, are you prepared to meet God? What time is the meeting? Yeah, what time is the meeting? Because what time it is matters now.

Man, I gotta tell you something. You guys, I got saved in the late 70s. I remember Pastor Chuck.

Man, he would give us prophecy teachings. It was so great, study through the Bible, stuff going on in the world. I never dreamed that I would be 50 years old.

Man, I thought, come on, let's go. He said, yeah, Pastor, you know what? My grandmother said Jesus was gonna come back and he still hasn't come back. So what are you implying? That the Bible's wrong? Grandma wasted her time? Or are you closer to the Lord coming back than Grandma was? Depends on how you look at it.

If Grandma told you Jesus would come back in her day, which she was right, he could have come back in her day. Paul thought Jesus was coming back in his day. Then how much closer are we now? Then you have people saying, well, you know what? The Bible says that he was, you know, where's the promise of his coming? Where's the promise? I don't see anything going on.

You know what, you need to shake, when you see something like that, you need to shake their hand. Say, man, you're fulfilling Bible prophecy, let me shake your hand. Because when somebody says, where's the promise of his coming? Since the fathers have fallen asleep, all things have continued since the beginning.

He ain't coming back. Give the guy a hug and tell him, dude, you are fulfilling scripture. The Bible said there'd be people just like you right before he came back.

It's true, they're very encouraging. They're very encouraging people. But what time is it? If you knew that the Lord could come back today, as a believer, you get all excited, but maybe you don't listen.

Maybe you're not a believer, or you're a backslidden believer today. Maybe that is that you're Christian, but you're not living for the Lord. Man, that's serious stuff.

Are you prepared to meet your God? In the grace of God, God would tell King David, prepare the troops, for in three days they go to war, have them sanctify themselves. Man, that's warning, isn't it? They're going to go to battle. They got their hearts right before the Lord.

How much more for the believer each and every day living in this nutty, dangerous world that you and I live in. Are you ready to meet the Lord? Listen, let's talk about some of those things very quickly that could really, really mess us up. And maybe for some, it's messing you up today.

Galatians chapter five, verse 17, says something about regarding timing and how we could really, really mess up our timing with the Lord. Galatians 5, 17 says, "For the flesh lusts against the spirit, "and the spirit against the flesh. "And these things are contrary to one another, "so that you do not do those things that you wish.

"But if you are led by the spirit, "you're not under the law. "Now the works of the flesh are evident." This is the stuff that God will not allow in heaven, and nor is it accustomed to his children. Adultery, that's having sex with somebody who's married.

Fornication, that's sex with two people who are not married. Uncleaness, lewdness, dirty, that's dirty. Everything's dirty.

Somebody says something, and they're all dirty about that. Oh, look at that palm tree. Oh, and they got some dirty comment.

Just a reprobate mind, sick. Jerry Springer would be a good definition of lewdness. Filthy, everything's filthy.

Idolatry, worshiping things, cars and money. Sorcery, that's drug abuse. Strange name, huh, sorcery? Drug use, hatred, contentions, jealousy, outburst of wrath, temper out of control.

Selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders. By the way, murders is not only killing somebody, it's hating them. Drunkenness, reveries, and the like, of which I tell you before, just as I told you in time past that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control, against such there is no law. Beautiful, huh? Timing, what's keeping you regarding this thing about timing? Didn't Jesus say, behold, I come quickly? You read that at the end of your Bible. Behold, I come quickly.

I remember being a brand new believer, first book I read in the Bible was the book of Revelation. Came to the end, he says, behold, I come quickly. And the first thought in my mind was, I come quickly? That was 2,000 years ago.

The word in the Greek means once these things happen, it's gonna conclude fast. It doesn't mean he's gonna come soon, 2,000 years ago. He's saying, when you see all this stuff start cooking, man, I'm gonna come fast.

It's gonna be quick. Behold, I come quickly, he announces. Well, listen, there's two things that you need to keep in mind concerning the meeting.

And this is pretty heavy stuff. Listen carefully, you guys awake? You guys okay? Watch this. Technically, let's talk about two things regarding the timing or time that it matters.

Number one, when you talk about the coming of the Lord, the return, you can't talk about what is known as the second coming of Christ without talking about the first coming of Christ. When was the first coming of Christ? The Bible makes it very clear. It was not in Bethlehem.

It was not in the little manger with baby Jesus. The first coming was when Jesus Christ came to the temple on that week called Passion Week. During the month of April, it was 32 AD.

Remember Palm Sunday? Remember when he wrote on the back as Zechariah 9, 9 talks about, that behold, Israel, Jerusalem, your King comes to you humble, meek, lowly, riding on the back of a donkey, an unwritten donkey, a donkey that's never been ridden before. Israel was to know that verse, among others, like in the book of Daniel as well. They were to be watching and looking.

And what happened? Jesus on Palm Sunday gets on that little donkey. There are over, according to Josephus writes, over 100,000 people shouting with palm branches, laying them down, Hosanna, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And Jesus came to the temple.

Do you remember that? Somebody say yes. Do you remember that? Yes. That was technically his first coming.

Why? He arrived at the temple in Jerusalem, in Israel. First coming to the Jewish people, to the nation. Second coming is very much like the same.

He will come on a, not a donkey, on a white horse. He will come to Cleveland. No, no, no, no.

Where's, what city? Gee, I'll give you one guess. What city is he gonna return to? Jerusalem in the state of Israel. Stop right there.

When Jesus Christ came to Jerusalem, there wasn't Israel being occupied by Rome. Up until May 14th, 1948, there could not have been a second coming. There was no Israel until May 14th, 1948.

Why is that important? Because the first coming, he came to Israel, to the Jewish people, to Jerusalem, to Israel. The second coming, he's gonna come to the Jewish people in the state of Israel. He's gonna come to the Temple Mount, to the nation of Israel.

The second coming is at the end of the seven-year tribulation period. It is a physical coming of the Messiah. There's something that blesses me big when you begin to think about it.

First and second comings, it's to Jerusalem, to Israel. There's something that is not a coming, though we sloppy say such things. Don't never confuse a non-Jewish event as a coming.

It's called the rapture. Don't ever confuse the two. One, he came to Jerusalem, Israel.

The second one, he'll come to Jerusalem, Israel. They're physical returns to planet Earth. In the middle is a Gentile event.

He comes to rapture the church and he doesn't even come to Earth. He's in the atmosphere. And the Bible says that we'll be raptured up.

Listen, 1 Thessalonians 4.17, concerning the timing and what you and I think about and do right now matters. 1 Thessalonians 4.17 says, "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and thus we shall always be with the Lord." The word caught up, two English words have to describe it, caught up. The word in Greek is harpazzo.

Isn't that a great word? Sounds Italian, I know. I want two meatballs, spaghetti and a harpazzo. Extra sauce.

Harpazzo. What does it mean? It means a violent uplifting or snatching away, a taking out of, a pulling away from. Paul the Apostle said in 1 Thessalonians 4 that there is gonna be a time when Christ himself descends.

We'll read it in a moment. And those who are of the church will be violently taken away from this earth and brought into his presence. It's called the rapture.

I hope it happens now or right now. Caught up. The Latin word, you know, rapture.

What's gonna happen? This is what's gonna happen. 1 Corinthians 15.50. This is fun stuff. 1 Corinthians 15.50 says, now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

That means something's gotta happen. You either gotta die or you gotta get raptured. Nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep or we shall not all die, the word means, but we shall be metamorpho, changed in a moment and a twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead in Christ will rise incorruptible and we who are alive will be changed.

Did you hear Paul's statements? Paul thought that he would be in the we group. He didn't say, well, you know, someday when I'm dead, my body's gonna, he said, we who are alive. Paul was living for the imminent return of Christ.

That's the way, by the way, every believer should live through every generation until he does return. It's awesome. But listen, there's more.

First Thessalonians 5.1. First Thessalonians 5.1 says, but concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, Christians, you have no need that I should write to you. You don't need to get a letter from me. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night.

Watch out, the question should be for who? For when they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them as labor pains upon a pregnant woman and they shall not escape. But you brethren, Christians, are not in darkness so that that day should overtake you as a thief. Don't let anyone ever tell you, Christian, if you are prepared to meet thy God, don't let anyone ever tell you that, you know, the Lord's gonna come like a thief in the night.

Oh, yeah, he is to those who are not watching, but not so concerning the believer. The word time here, this gets exciting, especially when you realize, did not Jesus say, no man knows the day or the hour? Did you hear me? Nobody knows the day or the hour. That is very cool.

But listen to what Paul said, concerning the times and the seasons, you'll have no need that I should write to you. Why? We're gonna, we are some generations gonna be discerning something. Number one, the word time is chronos, like chronology.

Chronos is to keep time, chronographer, watch. The word in Greek means a specific time or timeframe, a designated fixed segment of time, otherwise described as an event, an occasion or an interval, time. It's short, but it's not one hour, one minute or one day, it's a collection, but not many.

Then he said, the seasons, you'll know the times and you'll know the seasons. The word seasons here in the Greek is keros, and that word means a time period. Watch, a collection of segments of time.

The word is also used for seasons. We have four seasons in a year, a collection of times. Three months would be viewed as a season.

Paul is saying there's gonna come a time and a season when the believers who are living during the time that the Lord's coming back, they're gonna be discerning something's up. We won't know the day or the hour, but we're gonna start getting a gut feel. Man, you know what? Things are looking pretty biblical.

And I just wanna suggest this, I'm not saying that he's coming back next month, I'm saying he could come back now. But look around, you have Russia fueling Iran at breakneck speed now, I mean, it's crazy. That reminds me of a scripture.

You've got this insanity of what may be the Antichrist religion that is sweeping the earth with Islam, whose mode of conversion, if you don't like the message, is beheading. The Bible says in the book of Revelation,

those who don't worship the religion of the Antichrist is what? Beheaded, hmm, heard that before. Gee whiz, you can look at some violence and people, their minds are thinking evil continually.

Yikes, so much is going on. What about apostasy and apathy among the believers? People giving up on the Bible, people giving up on prayer, people giving up on commitment, people just quitting, people turning in their Christianity like never before. Are those indicators that we should be awake and be watching for we could be entering the times and the seasons? I think so.

What if you're wrong? Then I'm ready. What if you're wrong? Jesus said in Matthew 25, 13, watch therefore for you know neither the day or the hour in which the Son of Man comes. Okay, listen, very quickly.

Actually, you're fine. I'm the one slowing down. I need to pick it up.

First Thessalonians 4, 13 to 18 says, I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren. And yet the church is ignorant about what he's gonna say. He says, don't be dumb.

Don't be stupid, brethren, concerning those who have died in Jesus, lest you sorrow those who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who died in Jesus. For this, we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who have died.

For the Lord himself, thank you, that's not an angel, but it's him, will descend from heaven with the shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. And then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together to, that's that word hapazzo, to meet them in the clouds with the Lord in the air.

And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. Do you know how great that's gonna be? There's gonna be a time.

I'll act it out for you. Watch this. Let's pretend there's a funeral at Rose Hills or Forest Lawn.

We're doing the funeral. And now we commit, you know, brother John's body to the earth and blah, blah, blah. And we're there and everyone's crying.

And we just put the guy in. Voice of the archangel, the trumpet of God. Can you imagine? In Jesus name, amen.

Oh man, the ground's gonna open up. The guy's gonna be resurrected. And then in just a few milliseconds after that, we who are alive and remain will be caught up to meet them in the air.

I would love to be doing a funeral that day. It'd be great. And we'll meet them in the air.

You say, well, I don't understand that. Listen, when you and I die, when we die, see this, this flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. It's gotta be changed.

But if it's not time yet, I bury my mom. I bury my dad. I bury my sister.

There are bodies in the grave, but they're not there. They believed in Jesus. They're with the Lord.

To be absent from the body is to be what? Present with the Lord. They are more alive now than they ever have been, but their body's at Forest Lawn. They don't need their body where they're at right now.

Their body's here. Resurrection hasn't come yet. When the Lord comes and the trumpet blast takes place, their carcass is gonna be raised from the grave and metamorphosed in a second.

It's gonna be reconstituted, resurrected, just like Jesus's body. And they are gonna receive, as he comes with them, they're gonna receive that new body. And then in a second, we are gonna be raptured and meet them in the air.

And we will always be with them. So comfort one another with these words. You know why this is fun? If you, listen, I don't wanna, I was gonna say I don't wanna upset anybody, but if I do and it leads you to hopeful truth, then right on.

Here it is. If you don't believe in a pre-tribulation rapture view, you're bummed. I mean, you're just bummed out.

I gotta tell you, I used to believe in it, and then I didn't, and then I did. And I gotta tell you, it's a lot easier to believe what the Bible simply says than to fight against it. Check this out.

I'm indebted to Dr. John Wolvard who personally showed me this verse as to what convinced him among so many others. But this is a great verse. Are you ready for this? Turn there if you would.

John 14, John 14, verses one, two, and three. If you don't believe, if you wanna say, I believe in my Bible, every verse. Okay, then you're gonna have a great moment here.

John 14, one. This is the most powerful pre-tribulation rapture verse you can imagine. And I'm not here to push some man's view.

I don't have a man's view. This is a biblical view. It was Paul's view.

And apparently, it's Jesus's. John 14, one. Let not your heart be troubled.

You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. Church, where is that? Heaven.

Okay. If it were not so, I would have told you, I go now to prepare a place for you. Where's that? Where did he go? Heaven.

He went to heaven. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself. Oh, really? Yeah.

That where I am, where is he? Heaven. That where I am, there you may be also. That means you've got to have Jesus in heaven right now, preparing for us a dwelling.

Then he's gonna come and take somebody up to where he's at. And there is built into this a period of time. Because if you're looking at any other view, you've got Jesus Christ coming, grabbing and continuing to come down.

You never get in heaven. You never get to the mansions. You never get to what he's been preparing.

Because once he returns in the second coming, the millennium begins. He sits upon the throne of David for a thousand years. Think about it.

It is an absolutely awesome thing. Jesus said, I'm gonna go away. I'm gonna prepare a place for you.

Oh, don't worry. I'm gonna come back and get you and take you where I'm at. Amen.

May it be today. Hebrews chapter nine, verse 28 says, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. And to those who eagerly wait for him, he will appear a second time.

Apart from sin, the word means sins over, dealt with, done for salvation, absolute total redemption, body, soul, and spirit. Point number four, are you prepared to meet God? Are you ready to go to the meeting? Are you ready to go? You can be dressed. You can have all your stuff, but unless you're ready to go, you're gonna flop.

Listen, because what it takes to get ready for the meeting matters. Christian, this is vital. Jesus said in John chapter three, see what does it take to get ready for the meeting? This is such a common verse that sometimes people don't even pay attention to it anymore.

How do I get ready to meet God face to face? Well, I'll give you an example. Remember the thief on the cross? This is a weird moment. Thief on the cross.

Was he a bad man? Oh, he was a bad man. How much money had he tied in his Christian career? Anybody? Did he ever get dressed up for church? Did he work in the children's ministry? Did he ever work in the parking lot ministry? No. In fact, he started out his day cursing at Jesus.

If anybody's ever come in under the wire, it's this guy. In fact, God is so good. And that story is so offensive to so many people's self-righteousness that it offends them.

You say, I don't get it. How about this? As much as we'd like to see Osama bin Laden stand in judgment before God, we should love more the fact that Osama bin Laden right now can ask Jesus to forgive him and Jesus would forgive him. If you don't know that, you don't understand what it's like to be a Christian.

Because you know what? My sins have been worse than bin Laden's. Hitler could have cried out to the Lord right before he died. You don't like that.

You might say, my mother was Jewish and she, I understand that. But God does not think like that. The thief on the cross was the worst of the worst and he turned and he said, Jesus, look, he didn't even pray.

He didn't even go to the Harvest Crusade. He didn't say, Jesus, I'm coming just as I, just as I, he didn't even sing. He didn't even, raise your hand.

He couldn't even raise his hand. He didn't even pray the prayer right. He said, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

He wasn't even asking to come on. And Jesus says, today you'll be with me in paradise. Jesus knew what was in his heart.

Listen, each and every one of us today, how do you get ready for the meeting? How are you to be prepared? And how do you wear? What you wear? And how do you get ready? Jesus told Nicodemus,

unless you're born again, he was the religious leader of Israel. Unless you're born again, you will not see the kingdom of heaven. The word in the Greek is born from above.

Jesus went on to explain, everyone who's born of water has been born of water. You've been born from your mama once. Everyone's born from their mama once.

But you don't get to heaven by being born into this planet. You got to be born a second time. How's that? Ah, born of the spirit, born from above.

There's life here on this planet. There's life in the spirit. Jesus said, the way to get there, the way to be ready to meet thy God is to come to God on his terms.

And God says this, this is it. You must be born again. Isn't it awesome that he didn't say, you got to get on your bike and ride all over the county and hand out these books and do all these good things and marry this way and give all that or strap a belt around your face and go blow yourself up or whatever it is.

He said, you have to be born again. It's impossible. We can do all that stuff.

We could blow ourselves up. We could ride bikes. He told us you have to be born again or else you'll never see the kingdom of heaven.

Just that invitation causes you to fall on your knees and say, Jesus, what do I do to be saved? I don't understand this. Oh God in heaven. That's it.

That's where you start right there. And you believe in him who went to the cross for your sins and mine, Bin Laden's and Hitler's. Jesus died for the sins of the world.

And you can say, oh Lord God, I pray that you'd forgive me now and he'll forgive you. And then number five, which of the meetings are you going to go to? You say, what are you talking about? Which of the meetings? Prepare to meet thy God. Oh yeah, but read the fine print.

Read the fine print. The Bible says in the book of Revelation chapter 20 that there's a great white throne judgment and the books were open. Listen carefully, everybody.

The books were open. And all those who were found in the book, they were judged according to their works. You know why I point that verse out? I have friends who are not Christians and they say, that's what we're looking forward to right there.

That's what they're told. That the book of life is going to be, listen carefully, you miss this, you're going to miss a lot. And we're done by the way, just hang on.

You open up the book and there's these names and they'll tell you if with our name there, we're going to be judged according to our works, but they don't read the first few verses down past that. It goes on to say, and the beast and the false prophet, death and hell, the devil, all these things, and those who were judged in the book were cast into the lake of fire of brimstone that burns forever. Say, wait a minute, weren't their names in the book of life? Listen, yes, they were.

Well, if my name's in the book of life, does it mean I'm going to heaven? No, it doesn't. Read the fine print. The great white throne judgment, no one is saved.

No one goes to heaven. In that sense, all roads do lead to God, but not heaven. Every human will stand before God in judgment, unless, watch, unless you're born again.

Watch what happens. Are you watching? The book of life records the names of all humans that have ever been given life. Everybody is in the book, the book of life.

That's why, by the way, Jesus said, you've been given these talents, go and invest them, go do. But the one man said, no, no, no, I'm afraid of you. I'm going to sit on it.

Remember he buries it and just sits on it. That is a picture of a man who's been given life and doesn't do anything with his life for God. He just protects his own little life.

Every human's been written in the book of life. But when you accept Jesus Christ, the Bible mentions another book. You remember what the name of that book is called? That's right, the Lamb's book of life.

You say, well, yeah, but Jack, doesn't it say that you could get your name blotted out of the book? Oh, yes, it does say that, but not the Lamb's book of life. You want, are you, are you guys awake? Watch this. Everybody's in the book of life.

But the moment you become born again, watch this. It's as though God takes his Mac, his Apple computer there. He highlights your name.

The moment you accept Christ, your name is Apple C, copy, Apple P, paste, into the Lamb's book of life. Your name appears in the book of life, in the Lamb's book of life, watch this. And then, if you die, or when you die, your name, your Christian, your name is there.

It cannot be blotted out. But watch, if you never come to know Jesus Christ, your name is as in Revelation 20. Your name is written in the book of life.

But when the book, when the Lamb's book of life is open, your name's not found. It was never copied and pasted over. It's not there.

And when it's not in this book, in the end, right before eternity begins, when your name is not found in the Lamb's book of life, you're judged according to the things that you did in this life. And Revelation 20 says the end is horrific. You're at the white throne judgment of God.

And then the name is blotted out. How do you keep your name? Get your name copy and pasted into the Lamb's book of life. It's called being born again.

It's very important you understand that. People will wonder, oh, I'm gonna get my name blotted out of the book. Are you born again? Don't worry about it.

You're saved by the blood of the Lamb. Oh, but listen, there is a judgment though. I said there's two, where are you gonna stand? There is a judgment for the believer.

The Bible says it's the Bema seat, the Bema judgment, the judgment seat of Christ. I've been there. When Paul was speaking to the Corinthian believers, they've unearthed it in Corinth.

The actual one is there where Paul stood. They found it, they dug it up. It's awesome.

What is it? It's the Olympic seat. That's where you stand. You get first, second, or third, Bema.

It's the reward seat. If you're a Christian, you're gonna be rewarded for the things that you've done for the Lord. It has nothing to do with your salvation and your judgment is safe.

You're not going to hell. In fact, when we're rewarded for what we've done, you say, well, Jack, I don't want any rewards. I understand your heart.

I'm totally with you. But listen, it says when we're rewarded for what we've done, doesn't it say in the book of Revelation we cast our crowns back at his feet? So here's what you want to do. You want to live for his glory.

Now, you're not going to walk around saying, dude, look at my crown up here. Man, look at that thing. Whoa, it's so big.

You're not going to be like that. When God blesses you at the Bema seat of Christ, we're going to cast all that he's given us back to him and he gets the glory. That's why we want to do all that we can to the glory of God.

Not our own glory. So let me ask you, do we end this? Are you prepared to meet God? Are you born again? Does your life show it? Can people look at you and say, well, it's obvious that guy's a Christian. Drives me crazy, look at him.

Salt and light. Or do people look at you and they can't tell the difference? I don't know, maybe he is, maybe he isn't. Yikes, the Lord's coming back.

Let's get hot for him. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you, Lord God.

I pray that you'd make sense of this message, Lord, to your precious ones. That Lord, like never before, as we look around, we see the world in turmoil and it's getting worse. Seems like every month, internationally, nations, wars and rumors of wars.

We have pestilence, West Nile virus, AIDS, all these crazy things going on. And it's only going to get worse, says the Bible. And Father, everyone wants to talk about global warming.

When the world should be talking about eternal, hot hell. Global warming. The church, Father, I pray that we'd be out there speaking the truth and love.

About an eternity with or without Christ. Forgiven or not. That in the end, simply, Jesus, and Jesus alone was the answer.

That we could have repented of our sins and told God I'm sorry for all that I've put you through, God, and that I and I alone am responsible for putting your son on the cross. My friend, until you own up, grow up and own up to the fact that you need to be forgiven by God. You don't need to ask me to forgive you.

I don't need to ask you to forgive me. We have offended God and him first. My friend, while our heads are bowed and eyes are closed, Christians be praying.

Could it be this morning that you have never truly have experienced being born again? I have to tell you, some people say they feel something when it happens, I never felt anything. I just noticed that my mind changed. Today you're saying, well, I am sick of myself.

I am repentful of my sin and I asked Jesus to forgive me. My friend, do that now, right where you're at. Just tell him right now, just say, Lord, forgive me.

Jesus, I believe you died on the cross for me. I believe you rose again from the dead. I'm so sorry and I wanna live for you now.

I don't want to go to hell, I want heaven. I know that's my choice and I'm asking you, Lord, to receive me into your kingdom of love and grace. Take me off the road I'm on.

Don't let the road fall out from underneath me, unaware. Save me now. While heads are bowed and eyes are closed, is that your prayer? Can you raise your hand, I just wanna know.

I'm not gonna call on you, just raise your hand. God bless you, sir, on the aisle, anyone else? Cluster of you on my left, anyone else up front here? God bless you, anyone else? Those of you who are raising your hands, it doesn't matter if I see your hands or not, but you understand that by putting your hand up, it doesn't save you, but your heart is being changed, your mind is being changed. And as we close in this message, still in an attitude of prayer, Christian, you have wandered from God the hours late.

You could die today or he could come back for you, for us today, and you need to rededicate your life to him now. Will you do that? Right where you're at, will you just say, Jesus, I've wandered and I've strayed, I'm coming back. Don't let me slip, don't let me fall away.

Hold me tight, God, help me. And the Lord is faithful to help you now. Father, in Jesus' name, I thank you for these decisions today and for those that are renewing their walk with you.

Father, thank you for the wonderful men who spoke at this conference this weekend. I ask you, Lord, to bless Dave Hunt and Dr. David Hawking and Don Perkins, and Lord, I pray for your deep, wonderful blessings on Bill Koning and all that's before him, and Father, for Roger Oakland. Father, we pray that in these days, the church would be alive and awake.

We thank you, Father, for your love and your grace. Even so, today, Lord, please come quickly. We pray in Jesus' name, and all God's people said.

Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/20/SID20363.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jack-hibbs/prepare-to-meet-god/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**