

## The Gathering of Nations

**I**n the Canadian Northwest Territories during the months of December and January, an amazing sight can be seen in the sky. Because of the clearness of the air in this far northern location and the position of the earth

during the shortest days of the year, the stars and planets appear to be very close to the earth. Often at night, just above the treetops, some planets seem so close they look like large aircraft coming in for a landing. The brilliance of the light shining from these planets makes a person realize that we really are part of a great solar system, a larger system than just our Earth.

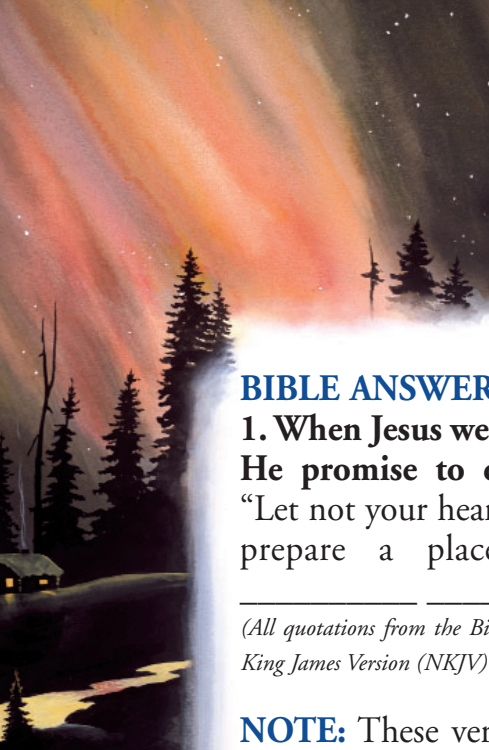
Have you ever thought that you would like to travel in outer space? Someday you actually will be able to when Jesus comes again. The second coming of Jesus is one of the greatest promises of the Bible. The Bible says that at that time God's people will be transported through space to a place called heaven. One out of every twenty-three verses in the New Testament refer to this great event.



**T**he second coming of Christ is one of the greatest promises in the Bible

**Key Thought.** At the end of His ministry on earth, Jesus promised to come back and gather all His people since the beginning of time and take them to a heavenly place He is now preparing for us. This will be the most glorious event of all time! Jesus taught us to prepare our hearts and lives today so we will be ready to be in heaven as citizens with Him forever. Here is what the Bible teaches concerning the soon coming of Jesus.





*Just like the great northern lights appear in the night sky, the second coming of Christ will be visible to all.*

## **BIBLE ANSWERS**

**1. When Jesus went back to heaven, what did He promise to do someday? John 14:1-3.**

“Let not your heart be troubled . . . if I go and prepare a place for you, \_\_\_\_\_”

*(All quotations from the Bible in these lessons are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) unless otherwise noted.)*

**NOTE:** These verses have been referred to by Christians as “the Lord’s promise.” The best part of this promise is that when Jesus comes again we will be with Him throughout eternity, enjoying heaven and all its pleasures. Jesus is not only the Creator of heaven but the One who made it possible for us to be there. Imagine the wonderful security His presence will give us.

**2. What two things will Jesus do at His second coming? 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.** “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout . . . And the dead in Christ will \_\_\_\_\_ first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be \_\_\_\_\_ together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”

**NOTE:** At Christ’s second coming He will rescue us from this old sinful planet and take us to a new home

that is without sin and its terrible results. He accomplishes this by first resurrecting those who have been faithful but have died “in Christ” previous to His return (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Then the righteous who are living will be translated, caught up together with those who are resurrected, and will be taken to heaven with Christ.

**3. How will Jesus return? Acts 1:9-11.** (*Circle one*)

(1) Secretly. (2) In the sky. (3) In the desert.



**NOTE:** According to the Bible, Jesus went up to heaven in a cloud, and He will return in the same way. The Bible gives evidence that the clouds will be clouds of angels (Matthew 25:31). Just as Jesus went up into the sky at His ascension, He will return in the same way.

**4. How many will see Jesus when He comes again? Revelation 1:7. (Circle one.)** (1) Every eye. (2) A few people. (3) Only the righteous.



**O**ne out of every 23 verses in the New Testament refers to the second coming of Jesus.

**NOTE:** Some think that the second coming of Jesus will be a secret happening. However, the Bible tells us that it will be a spectacular event that “every eye” will see. It will be a glorious, striking experience like lightning shining across the sky from the east to the west, like the great northern lights that flash and glow across the sky on some Arctic nights (Matthew 24:27). The previous verse warns that if anyone tells you Christ’s coming will be a secret experience, don’t believe it.



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he Bible tells us the Second Coming will be a highly visible, spectacular event, like lightning across the sky (Matthew 24:27).

**5. How will those who have been preparing and looking for Christ’s coming feel when He returns? Isaiah 25:9, last part.** “We will be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in His salvation.”

**NOTE:** Those who are prepared for Christ’s coming are those who have been “watching” and preparing to live in heaven. Actually, Christ’s coming would seem almost instantaneous for any of us if we should die today. The Bible says that the next thing we experience after death is being awakened in the resurrection at Jesus’ second coming. There is no awareness of passing time when we are dead (Psalm 146:3-4; Ecclesiastes 9:5-6). The time

between our death and Jesus' coming to us will go by "as a twinkling of an eye," the scripture teaches. This is one reason why those who are waiting for Christ's return should prepare as if it could happen at any moment.

**M**atthew points out that if anyone says that Christ's second coming will be in secret, don't believe it (Matthew 24:26).

**6. What will be the reaction of those who are not ready for Christ's appearing? Revelation 6:16.** "And [all the lost] said to the mountains and rocks, '\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!'"

**NOTE:** The worst agony for the wicked will be to miss heaven when they realize that they had every opportunity to prepare to inherit it. They will be sorry that they didn't take time for spiritual things. Because of the selfish and disobedient lifestyle they chose, they will be lost.

**7. What is the attitude of the believer who is waiting for the second coming of Jesus? 1 Peter 4:7.** "But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and \_\_\_\_\_ prayers." (See also Luke 21:34-36.)

**NOTE:** To be "watchful" means to continually prepare in expectation of living as a citizen of heaven. The best way to be ready for Christ's coming is *continual* depen-



**G**od has loved us with  
an everlasting love.  
He offers us abundant  
life (John 10:10).

dence on God. He loves us and has promised to help us live as His children should be living (Matthew 24:42). Daily communion with God is essential to maintain our faith in Jesus. Being “watchful” means keeping an alert mind and allowing Jesus to help us with every decision we make each day. We need to continually ask Jesus to change the things in our character that we learn make us unfit to live in heaven. There is no doubt that many habits and lifestyles we see being practiced today won’t be practiced in heaven.

**Closing Thought.** As surely as the sun rises each morning and the stars come out each night, our Jesus has faithfully promised to come again to take us to heaven. Are you choosing to allow Him day by day to prepare you for this great day?

**Next Lesson.** How do we know when Jesus is coming again? Lesson 12, *The Signs of Christ’s Second Coming*, gives us this information.



## Native New Day

P. O. Box 53055, Los Angeles, CA 90053-0055

EDITORS: NATIVE MINISTRIES NORTHWEST EDITORIAL COMMITTEE;

RUSSELL HOLT

ILLUSTRATIONS: A. J. McCOY

DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY: ED GUTHERO DESIGN: MICHELLE C. PETZ

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**R**ead through the lesson, then fill in this Answer Sheet. You should refer back to the lesson to find the correct answers. Referring to the lesson helps fix the answers in your mind.

*Place an X before each TRUE statement.*

**1. What did Jesus promise His followers when He went to heaven?**

- To prepare a “place” for them to live with Him throughout eternity.
- To give them power and victory through the Holy Spirit.

**2. How will Jesus rescue us from this sinful planet when He comes again?**

- He will force all the bad people to become good—so there will be no more sin.
- The righteous who are living when Jesus comes will be “caught up” and taken to heaven with the faithful who are resurrected from the dead.

**3. How will Jesus’ return to earth take place?**

- He will appear in a secret chamber in a certain church in North America.
- He will appear in the sky in a “cloud” of His angels.

**4. Who will actually see Jesus come again?**

- Just a few people who were His closest friends when He was on earth.

- Everyone on earth—both the righteous and the wicked.

**5. How will the righteous respond to Jesus’ coming?**

- They will be afraid because they aren’t prepared to meet Him.
- They will rejoice because they have been waiting for Him.

**6. How will the wicked respond to Jesus’ coming?**

- They will know they are unprepared to meet Him and will be terrified.
- They will repent when they see Jesus coming and be saved.

**7. Because the end of all things is at hand, what should our attitude be?**

- Ignore what the Bible says about the end of the world since we can do nothing about it.
- We should depend on God to change the things in our character that make us unfit for heaven.

*Answers to questions often asked about the second coming of Christ.*

**Can we know that Jesus’ return is really near?**

- Jesus described what the world would be like just before He would return to take His faithful people home to live with Him forever. For example, He spoke of wars, famines, epidemics of disease, persecution, and earthquakes (see

Matthew 24:4-8; Luke 21:10-13). He went on to describe signs in the sun, moon, and stars, and fear and anxiety on earth (Luke 21:25-27). To a degree, these conditions have existed all through human history, but they are reaching crisis proportions today. This, together with the time prophecies of the Bible, indicate that we are indeed living in the last days just before our Savior comes. Jesus said, “When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near” (Luke 21:28).

### How can “every eye” on a round world see Jesus come in the sky?

- Jesus says that “every eye” will see Him when He comes (Revelation 1:7). Exactly how He does this, the Bible doesn’t tell us. But if our Creator can display the northern lights of the aurora borealis across the top of the earth surely

He can be seen by everyone around the world at His second coming.

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