

UNLEASHED!

DAY 3— Meet Jesus When He Surprises Us

Acts 1:9-11

Time Alone with God

Prayer

Explore the Word

1. Read John 14:1–3. What is Jesus personally preparing before He returns?
2. Read Acts 1:9–11. How will Jesus return?

Insights from Ellen White:

When the time came for Christ to ascend to His Father, He led the disciples out as far as Bethany. Here He paused, and they gathered about Him. With hands outstretched in blessing, as if in assurance of His protecting care, He slowly ascended from among them. "It came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Luke 24:51. (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 32)

While the disciples were gazing upward to catch the last glimpse of their ascending Lord, He was received into the rejoicing ranks of heavenly angels. As these angels escorted Him to the courts above, they sang in triumph, "Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord, to Him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens. . . . Ascribe ye strength unto God: His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the heavens." Psalm 68:32–34, margin. (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 32, 33)

Prayer Focus

Ask God to prepare your heart to meet Jesus soon.

Family/Friend Circle

Connect Activity

1. Invite everyone to think about how many minutes you like to arrive before or after a scheduled appointment.
2. Ask everyone who likes to arrive early to raise their fingers indicating how many minutes they like to arrive early.
3. Ask everyone who is comfortable arriving later to raise their fingers indicating how many minutes they are willing to arrive late.

Prayer for the Holy Spirit

Explore the Word

1. Read Matthew 24:42–44. How will Jesus' second coming be like a thief?
2. How may we best prepare for Jesus to return?

Insights from Ellen White:

The promise of Christ's second coming was ever to be kept fresh in the minds of His disciples. The same Jesus whom they had seen ascending into heaven, would come again, to take to Himself those who here below give themselves to His service. The same voice that had said to them, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end," would bid them welcome to His presence in the heavenly kingdom. (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 33)

Prayer Focus

Pray together that the Holy Spirit will prepare each person in your circle to meet Jesus when He returns.

Church Family

Welcome

Worship in Prayer

LEADER TO EVERYONE: Sit with your small groups. Our prayer team will invite your small group to pray through the Word of God together. After praying for a few minutes, you will hear the prayer team begin to sing one stanza of a song. When you do, please transition from prayer to song.

Praise Jesus for His coming!

1. (SMALL GROUPS) Read Revelation 22:7, 12, 13, 20. Choose one of these promises and praise Jesus for what the promise says about Him.
2. (EVERYONE) Sing a song about Jesus' second coming.

Repent:

1. (SMALL GROUPS) Read Revelation 22:10, 11. Pray for God to call us all to repentance while we have time to turn to Him.
2. (EVERYONE) Sing a song of repentance.

Ask for the Holy Spirit:

1. (SMALL GROUPS) Read Revelation 22:17. Ask to receive the Holy Spirit to meet our spiritual thirst. Pray to find our joy, peace, and love in the Holy Spirit.
2. (EVERYONE) Sing a song of the Holy Spirit.

Testify

(SMALL GROUPS)

Form groups of two or three within your small groups. Ask and answer: "What did God help you do with yesterday's 24-Hour Challenge?"

(Yesterday's 24-Hour Challenge: List your four top priorities in life right now—being honest about the present reality of where your heart and focus are. Pray and read James 1:5–8. Ask God what He wants your top four priorities to be. Make a list and place it where you will see it every day. With God's help, take a faith step now to live according to His priorities for your life! Read Acts 1:9–11 in preparation for tomorrow.)

Connect Activity

LEADER TO EVERYONE: Stand in a circle with your small group. Ask each person to take turns acting out something that is difficult to wait for in life. Group members may guess what each person is acting out.

Worship in Word

(SMALL GROUPS)

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18. What is it that will make Jesus' coming the best day on this planet?
2. Read Matthew 25:1–13. What can we learn from this parable about preparing for Jesus' soon coming?

Insights from Ellen White:

After the Saviour's ascension, the sense of the divine presence, full of love and light, was still with them. It was a personal presence. Jesus, the Saviour, who had walked and talked and prayed with them, who had spoken hope and comfort to their hearts, had, while the message of peace was upon His lips, been taken from them into heaven. As the chariot of angels received Him, His words had come to them, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." Matthew 28:20. He had ascended to heaven in the form of humanity. They knew that He was before the throne of God, their Friend and Saviour still; that His sympathies were unchanged; that He would forever be identified with suffering humanity. They knew that He was presenting before God the merit of His blood, showing His wounded hands and feet as a remembrance of the price He had paid for His redeemed ones; and this thought strengthened them to endure reproach for His sake. Their union with Him was stronger now than when He was with them in person. The light and love and power of an indwelling Christ shone out through them, so that men, beholding, marveled. (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 65)

Prayer Focus

LEADER TO EVERYONE: Pray together for God to give us urgency in preparing to meet Jesus face to face at His second coming.

Appeal

LEADER TO EVERYONE: Jesus is preparing a place for you to live with Him in eternity. Who here tonight needs the Holy Spirit to help you prepare for Jesus' soon coming? Please come and join me in prayer.

24-Hour Challenge

Ask God, "What do You need to do in my relationship with Jesus so that I am ready to meet Him in person when He comes?" Open your heart to whatever God wants to do in you. If He impresses you to do something, take that step in your relationship with Him. Read Acts 1:12–14 in preparation for tomorrow.