

RESCUE!

At 7:30 on the morning of Sept. 23, 1994, Tom Hargrove, a business executive working in Cali, Colombia, found himself in a lot of trouble. He was driving down a familiar stretch of the Pan American Highway when he encountered a road block. No big deal, he thought. Police and military roadblock are common in Colombia.

But it was a big deal! This was no police roadblock. This was a rebel roadblock. He had survived three tours in Vietnam and now he feared he would die in Colombia. He was led away at gunpoint. Kidnapped. Eighteen days passed without a word from his kidnappers. Then came the first ransom demand. The kidnappers wanted \$6 million. By that time, Tom Hargrove was long gone, hidden away in the cold and forbidding Andes mountains. He was so isolated that for the next 11 months he would not see a wheel, a road, a window with glass. He would lose 50 pounds.

Over many months the \$6 million ransom was negotiated down to \$500,000 and paid. But no Tom. Finally, one day, in the words of his wife, “This very strange man walked into my bedroom. He smelled like ashes and had lost 50 pounds.” But her Tom was safely back home again. How much would you pay to ransom a loved one? \$1,000? A million dollars? Everything you owned? Your life?

That was how much Jesus Christ paid to ransom you and me after we were kidnapped! His life! Here’s Jesus Himself speaking about the very fact that He ransomed us: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45).

I tell you the Tom Hargrove story today because it illustrates a wonderful truth the Bible teaches: the Second Coming of Jesus and the rescue of those who’ve been kidnapped by Satan. The Bible has hundreds of texts that specifically refer to this event.

The Second Coming of Christ

- “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:1-3)
- “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” (Titus 2:11-13).
- See also Hebrews 9:27-28.

KEY POINTS

There are many Bible verses that speak of the great promise of the coming of Christ. In the box to the left are a few.

The Bible explains clearly the manner of His return. Speaking of Christ’s ascension to heaven the Bible states: “And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.” (Acts 1:9) Notice what happened next? “And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:10, 11)








Soon Jesus will return to rescue us from this sin-sick world.



Two things stand out here. First, “this same Jesus” WILL come back. It will be Jesus Himself Who comes back, not some emissary, spirit-guide, or angel. His return will be literal and personal. Notice, also, that He will return in the same manner as He went to heaven. We saw that He was lifted right off the ground and went up into the sky in the sight of many disciples. So, when He returns, Jesus will come down literally from the sky. In other words, He’s not going to just appear in the desert, or some secret place some day. He is going to come right out of the sky. Jesus said: "See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be ... Then will the Son of Man appear in heaven..., and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24: 26, 27, 30)

Revelation puts it this way: “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and EVERY eye will see Him.” (Revelation 1:7) Look at what this next text adds: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

Let’s review:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus Himself will come, literally, just the way that He left. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is going to come from the sky. • His coming will be a world-wide event, something that everyone will see. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His coming is going to be LOUD. With a shout and a trumpet blast! (Read 1 Corinthians 15:52-53) • The dead will be resurrected. 	

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 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.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17)

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Dead or alive at Christ’s second coming, if you have trusted in Him, you will be given a new body that will never see sickness, pain or disease again. Instantly, through the supernatural power of the God who created the universe, you will be given a new body that will last forever.

Are you suffering now? Are you sick? Soon Jesus will return to rescue us from this sin-sick world. He will make all things right. His second coming is indeed our Blessed Hope!

BETWEEN YOU AND GOD

When Jesus returns, there will be only two classes of people: Those who He takes to heaven and those who are left behind. My friend, God doesn’t force us to follow Him. He gives us a choice. Have you made a choice to follow Jesus?