

When will the second coming take place? What must happen first?

Scripture very clearly teaches that we do not know the day or hour that Our Lord will return in glory (e.g., Mk. 13:33; Acts 1:7). It could be tomorrow, it could be 1,000 years from now. We don't know. In every age false prophets arise proclaiming the end of the world, but we are much better served by living for Christ in the present moment and not getting caught up in the latest predictions concerning the end times.

All the same, there are some things that will in some fashion occur before the second coming.

First, The Gospel must be proclaimed to the whole world, so that all peoples will have the opportunity to hear and embrace the Good News (cf. Mk. 16:15). The "full number" of the Gentiles who are going to be saved will be converted to Christ (cf. Rom. 11:12, 25). Our Lord says this quite clearly Himself in Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come."

Second, and following upon this, the veil will be lifted and the Jews will recognize Jesus as their Messiah. This concept is addressed in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 674:

"The glorious Messiah's coming is suspended at every moment of history until his recognition by 'all Israel,' for 'a hardening has come upon part of Israel' in their 'unbelief' toward Jesus (Rom. 11:20-26). St. Peter says to the Jews of Jerusalem after Pentecost: 'Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old' (Acts 3:19-21). St. Paul echoes him: 'For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?' (Rom. 11:15). The "full inclusion" of the Jews in the Messiah's salvation, in the wake of 'the full number of the Gentiles' (Rom. 11:12, 25) will enable the People of God to achieve 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,' in which 'God may be all in all' (Eph. 4:13; 1 Cor. 15:28)."

Third, the Church will pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers (see Lk. 18:8; Mt. 24:12). This trial will be led by the [Antichrist](#). See [Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 675-77](#) and the Scripture passages cited therein for more information. Surely one could make the case that our culture's attempts to get along with God is the work of the [Antichrist](#).

What does this teach us? Our Lord over and over again urges us to be vigilant and not let the passing world distract us from our eternal goal: "Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming" (Mt. 24:42).