Briefing Document: "He Must Return" (Lesson 4)

Sunday PM-November 15, 2026

Executive Summary

This briefing document synthesizes the core teachings, scriptural analyses, and community announcements from the presentation titled **"He Must Return" (Lesson 4)**.

The primary focus of the lesson is explaining why Jesus Christ must return to Earth. The speaker divides God's plan into two main areas: **God's Person** (His prophecies, statements, and guarantees) and **God's Program**. This lesson examines **God's Program**, showing how it requires Christ's return through three main areas:

1. **The Program for the Church:** The Church Age must end with the Rapture. This event fulfills the ancient three-stage wedding pattern: the legal contract, the betrothal, and the final marriage feast.
2. **The Program for the Nations:** God must eradicate sin and judge the nations. Because all judgment is given to Jesus Christ, He must return to Earth to carry out this judgment as predicted in Old and New Testament prophecies.
3. **The Program for Israel:** Israel's current partial spiritual blindness will continue only until the full number of Gentiles comes into the Church, after which God will restore Israel.

Local News and Community Updates

Before entering the main teaching, the speaker shared several local news items, personal anecdotes, and church announcements:

Church Announcements and Ministries

- **Memory Verse:** The memory verse for November is 1 Thessalonians 5:18: "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
- **Rush Family Updates:**
    - A Celebration of Life for Arlene Rush is scheduled for the 4th at New Life Church. A graveside service will take place tomorrow at 10:00 a.m.
    - Brian Rush took his wife, Emelda, to Tucson due to severe health issues (she is dragging her right leg and cannot write or speak coherently).
- **Operation Christmas Child (OCC):**
    - Set up for the packing party begins tomorrow at 10:00 a.m.
    - The youth will pack between 150 and 200 boxes on Wednesday night.

    - Online box construction is available through December 23.

- **Community Outreach and Events:**
    - **New Life Kids Christmas Store:** Accepting donations and gift cards through December 16.
    - **WeCare Pregnancy Center:** Hosting a baby clothes giveaway on Saturday the 21st on Adams Street by the park.
    - **New Life Women's Fellowship:** Hosting a "Friendsgiving" potluck and recipe exchange on Saturday the 21st from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
    - **Leadership & Worship:** Elders meet on November 23. A "Fifth Sunday Sing" and Ice Cream Social will take place on November 29.
- **Prayer Requests:**
    - **Carrie's Brother:** Testing for potential esophageal cancer caused by long-term acid reflux.

Theme 1: God's Program for the Church Demands the Return of Jesus

The first reason why God's program requires Jesus to return is that the Church Age must reach its planned conclusion.

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|              THE DIVINE PATTERN                             |
|                                                             |
|  1. Church Age     2. The Rapture     3. Rebuilding Israel  |
|  (Gentile Focus) -> (Church Departs) -> (Kingdom Established)  |
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The Pattern of the Church Age

In Acts 15:14–16, Peter quotes Amos 9 to explain God's timeline:

1. God calls out a Gentile people for Himself (the Church).
2. The Church Age reaches its full completion.
3. Christ returns to rebuild the tabernacle of David and establish His kingdom.

The Holy Spirit added the phrase "After this" in Acts 15:16 to show the exact sequence. Nothing further can happen regarding Israel's kingdom setup until the present Church dispensation is fulfilled and the Church departs.

The Rapture vs. The Second Coming

The end of the Church Age occurs through the Rapture, described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17:

- **The Descent:** The Lord descends into the sky (the air above us) with a shout, the voice of an archangel, and the trumpet of God.
- **The Resurrection:** The dead in Christ rise first.
- **The Catching Up:** Living believers are caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

"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

This event is distinct from Christ's physical return to Earth seven years later, when His feet will touch the Mount of Olives. The Rapture is the opening act that ends the Church Age.

Ancient Oriental Marriage Customs as a Biblical Model

In the New Testament, the Church is pictured as a virgin bride waiting for her husband (2 Corinthians 11:2). To understand this metaphor, one must examine ancient Near Eastern (oriental) marriage customs, which contained three specific stages:

Stage	Cultural Custom	Biblical Parallel
1. Legal Contract	Fathers agreed on a binding contract. A dowry was paid based on the bride's worth.	Christ paid the binding legal dowry for the Church using His own precious blood on the cross.
2. Betrothal	A ceremony took place in front of witnesses where gifts were exchanged, though the marriage was not yet physical.	Believers receive spiritual gifts and are sealed by the Holy Spirit as an engagement guarantee.
3. Marriage Feast	The bridegroom traveled to the bride's house to take her to the final wedding feast.	Christ must return as the Bridegroom to take His Church to the marriage feast.

Scripture confirms this process in Ephesians 5:25–27:

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."

Current End-Time Indicators in the Church

The speaker noted that the current condition of the global church indicates that the Church Age is closing quickly:

- **Apostasy and Heresy:** 1 Timothy 4:1 warns that in the latter times, some will depart from the faith to follow deceiving spirits. 2 Peter 2:1 warns of false teachers introducing destructive heresies and denying the deity of Christ.
- **Modern Cults and Technology:** Cult groups like Jehovah's Witnesses continue to deny the full deity of Jesus. Additionally, the rapid spread of misdirected doctrines through the internet and Artificial Intelligence (AI) accelerates these end-time trends.

Theme 2: God's Program for the Nations Demands the Return of Jesus

The second reason God's program requires Jesus to return is the divine necessity of judging the nations and removing sin from the world.

The Son as the Divine Judge

God has promised that sin will not be tolerated in His final kingdom. According to John 5:22, God the Father has committed all judgment to Jesus Christ. Because Jesus is the appointed Judge, He must physically return to Earth where these nations exist to carry out their judgment.

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|              PROPHECIES OF NATIONAL JUDGMENT                      |
|                                                                   |
| Joel 3          Matthew 25          Revelation 14                 |
| (Nations Gather   (Sheep & Goats      (The Harvest &              |
|  for War)     ->  Separated)      ->  Winepress of Wrath)         |
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Old and New Testament Prophecies of National Judgment

1. **The Prophecy of Joel (Joel 3):**
    - Joel predicts a time when God rebinds and gathers Israel.
    - God commands the Gentile nations to prepare for war, telling them to beat their plowshares into swords (Joel 3:9–10).

- The nations gather in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (the Valley of Decision). Although they believe they are gathering for the Battle of Armageddon, God is actually gathering them to receive His judgment (Joel 3:12–14).

2. **The Sheep and Goats Judgment (Matthew 25):**
    - Jesus confirms Joel's prophecy in Matthew 25:31–46.
    - When the Son of Man comes in His glory, all nations will gather before His throne.
    - He will separate the people as a shepherd divides sheep from goats. The righteous (sheep) inherit the kingdom, while the unrighteous (goats) are sent into everlasting punishment.
3. **The Harvest of Wrath (Revelation 14):**
    - Revelation 14:14–20 pictures Christ holding a sharp sickle to reap the ripe harvest of the Earth.
    - The wicked are thrown into the winepress of God's wrath outside Jerusalem. The resulting judgment produces blood that reaches as high as a horse's bridle for a distance of 1,600 furlongs (approximately 180 to 220 miles).
    - Revelation 11:15 confirms the ultimate outcome: "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

<u>Current Global Signs Among the Nations</u>

The speaker listed several modern geopolitical developments that line up with biblical predictions of the end times:

- **Religious Shifts in Europe:** The growth of Islamic influence across Europe, where many historic churches have been converted into mosques.
- **Rise of Eastern and Southern Powers:** The growing strength of China and eastern nations, matching prophecies in Daniel 11 and Revelation.
- **Global Governance:** The development of a revived Roman Empire and international bodies like the United Nations, setting the stage for a centralized world government.

<u>Theme 3: God's Program for Israel Demands the Return of Jesus</u>

The third aspect of God's program concerns the nation of Israel.

In Romans 11:25, the Apostle Paul details the temporal nature of Israel's current condition:

"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in."

- **Current State:** Israel is in a state of partial spiritual blindness today, failing to recognize Jesus as its Messiah.
- **Duration:** This partial blindness is temporary. It will last only until the full count of Gentiles enters the Church.
- **Future Restoration:** Once the Gentile Church Age is completed and caught up in the Rapture, God will resume His direct work with Israel, leading to their national restoration and Christ's reign on Earth.

Key Biblical Quotations Summary

Reference	Scripture Text (NKJV)	Theological Significance
1 Thess 5:18	"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."	Church memory verse; highlights the daily attitude required of believers.
Acts 15:16	"After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down..."	Proves the sequence: Church Age completes first, then Christ restores Israel.
1 Thess 4:16–17	"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout... And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them..."	Outlines the mechanics of the Rapture ending the Church Age.
Eph 5:25–27	"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her... that He might present her to Himself a glorious church..."	Establishes the marriage metaphor requiring a physical presentation/feast.
Joel 3:14	"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."	Prophecies the divine gathering of nations for final judgment.
Matt 25:31–32	"When the Son of Man comes in His glory... All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another..."	Confirms Christ's role as the active Judge of all Earthly nations.
Rom 11:25	"...blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in."	Defines the timeframe for Israel's spiritual blindness.

Greek Terminology Guide

The transcript contains a spoken reference to the biblical guarantee given to believers regarding their ultimate union with Christ. The spoken text stumbles over the Greek term used to describe an engagement ring or pledge.

Greek Word	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
Arrhabon (transcribed as oton)¹	ah-rah-BOHN	A legal or commercial term for a pledge, down payment, or earnest money given as a binding guarantee. In New Testament theology (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:14), it refers to the Holy Spirit given to believers as an spiritual engagement ring, guaranteeing full final redemption.

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¹ **Footnote:** In the original audio transcript, the speaker stumbles while attempting to recall the Greek term, resulting in the transcript phonetic rendering "an oton." The underlying Greek word referenced in biblical theology regarding the Spirit's pledge or "engagement ring" is arrhabon (ἀρραβών).