

UNDERSTAND SERIES

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UNDERSTAND THE SECOND COMING!

Christians have spent the last 2,000 years guessing at the season, the year, even the very date of the Second Coming. The apostle Paul—who expected the imminent return of Christ—had to warn the Christians of his day to get on about their business, for apparently some were spending all their time waiting for Christ’s return instead of working and earning a living for themselves and their dependents. No freeloading, Paul declared (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

More date-guessing was indulged in by some early Christians, who thought they caught a clue in these words of Jesus to Peter, about John the “beloved disciple”:

“If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.” Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that [John] would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?” (John 21:22-23).

These verses implied to early Christians that Christ would return before John would die. Add to this belief the fact that John actually did outlive the other disciples and died a natural death on the Mediterranean island of Patmos sometime during the last quarter of the first century. Needless to say, these Christians held their breath with expectancy as John’s life passed away.

Sadly, Christians have been date-guessing ever since. Today fortunes have been amassed by Bible preachers from supposedly reading the signs of the times—signs that are usually recent and current events, particularly in the Middle East, events that supposedly must occur before the Second Coming itself.

Yet this reasoning, this interpretation runs counter to what Jesus said: everything that had to be fulfilled before the Second Coming would be

fulfilled before his generation died out. Even Paul expected the return of Christ in his immediate future. Yet modern prophecy preachers imply that Paul didn't understand the Scriptures as well as they do, and that of course Jesus could not have returned in the first century—not before any one of several events of the 20th and 21st centuries that prophecy preachers point to as prerequisites of the Second Coming.

Such an assumption is arrogant. I believe that Paul was not mistaken and that modern prophecy preachers are inflating current happenings in the world with a prophetic significance that is utterly unbiblical.

Please understand that I do not disbelieve in prophesying. It's only that when the word is used in the New Testament, it means to preach the message of God—to tell forth rather than to foretell. If you want to prophesy as the New Testament describes it, you will tell people what God expects of them—not make specific predictions about the Second Coming based on esoteric interpretations of recent or current events.

What Does the Scriptures Say?

- "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. (Matthew 25:13)
- "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (Matthew 24:36)
- "You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." (Luke 12:40)
- "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me,

I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." (Matthew 25:31-46)

- "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:1-3)
- It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night. (Luke 12:37-38)
- Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as lightning that

comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. (Matthew 24:4-5; 11; 23-27)

- "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. (Matthew 24:30-31)
- As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. (Matthew 24:37-39)
- For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. ((Matthew 16:27)
- "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:34-36)
- "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. (Luke 17:28-30)
- Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he

would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. (Matthew 24:40-44)

- "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' "'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. "Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' "But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.' (Matthew 25:1-12)
- It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night. (Luke 12:37-38)
- If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38)

Please understand my watching is an anticipation! I am to hold on to the hope of His coming. Our Lord asks us to "be careful of our hearts". My watching is NOT to predict the time of His coming! Christ is coming back to reward those who trust in God", NOT according to our rapture position.

The Problems with Imminence

Warning Signs Yet to be Fulfilled

1. Battle of Gog and Magog
2. First Conversion of Jews and Gentiles
3. Rebuilding of Babylon
4. Moving of One World Church
5. World Church and False Prophet
6. World Economy
7. World Government
8. World Government breaks into 10 Divisions
9. Rebuilding the Temple
10. Antichrist
11. Overflowing Scourge
12. Appearing of Elijah
13. A Time of Peace and Safety
14. Signs in Space and on Earth
15. Distress Among the Nations
16. Rapture
17. Jews Sign Covenant with Antichrist

Bottom line: The Second Coming is not a theory to be discussed. But a truth to be lived! Walk in holiness!