

VIII. Eternity in Biblical Perspective
If I Should Die Before I Wake...
“Christ’s Return According to Christ”
Matthew 24
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The passage we will start with will be Acts 1. This study will be a distillation of passages of Scripture designed to add another piece of information from the Word of God concerning the matters of eternity in the series, *if I should die before I wake*. We ended out last study in this series at a place where the perfected body and soul are joined together in the new heavens and the new earth, and those who are raised under judgment, then the soul and the body are subjected to the judgment of Gehenna or the lake of fire. This is post Judgment Seat, which is post second coming of Christ. I believe that this is crucial for many reasons. I think one of the things that allows people in this present effort, as one cultural elite has said, ‘We’re going to have a big cultural reset’ is it is rooted in the fact that the church has lost its eschatological, that is the doctrine of last things, it’s eschatological focus. What do I mean by that?

Jesus tells us very clearly that while we have the triumphant progressive movement of the Kingdom of God throughout the world of saving sinners, and wherever this movement goes, there will be the evidences of blessing, He also tells us clearly there is no utopia. That does not mean that we embrace a dystopia. It does not mean that we are not concerned about matters of public policies and matters of justice, but it does tell us that we are those who understand that the heart of the problem is the problem with the heart. And when men and women get saved, even saved men and women have an old man within them, therefore there will be no perfect Christians and no perfected utopia on this side of eternity. I have heard many times people say this; ‘well, he is so heavenly minded he is of no earthly good.’ While I understand the sentiment that people get so fascinated with going to the new heavens and the new earth that they think they honor Christ by passivity or just playing the ostrich, but I don't really see that too often in the lives of people.

I actually think it’s the opposite. For you to do the earthly good of extending the Kingdom of God through the Gospel of God, I believe you have to set your hope on the world to come. Behold, He comes, come quickly Lord Jesus. We are fully aware as much as we hate poverty, the poor will be with us. As much as we hate partiality, men are going to engage in such acts of partiality because of their sinful hearts. Do we address those sins? Yes. Do we call to repentance? Yes. Do we equip God's people to live differently? Yes, but we are living in a sin cursed world and therefore the utopia that beats within our heart where we know things aren't right, there is One who will make it right, and that is Jesus. He, from His victory on the cross and His ascension is coming again and then He will make all things new – the new heavens and the new earth.

When is He coming? How is He coming? For many in the branches of the evangelical church, how many times is He going to come again? There is one whole system of theology that says He is coming two more times where He’ll come to set up a Kingdom and there will be a rebellion after 1,000 years, and then He will come again. There are those who say, no, He is coming actually two and a half times where He will come seven years before that time, but He doesn’t come all the way. He just comes part of the way and He doesn’t bring everything to a conclusion, He just takes His church out by rapturing them out and then there will be a

tribulation for seven years and then He will come again. Then after 1,000 years, He will come back again at that rebellion. That is their two and a half second comings.

I actually believe they will be just one more coming of Christ. He is coming again and when He comes that will be it and then the judgment and the new heavens and the new earth with all its glories. Now that brings up question, what about the millennium? I will be doing a study on the millennium in this series. Perhaps another question on your mind might be, what about the increasing tribulation at the end of time? I came to another conviction given what is happening in the world today, and given some questions that recently our young people were asking me, I believe that it would really be important for me to deal with the text in Revelation of the two beasts and the loosening of Satan at the end. So I will do a study on that along with a study on the Judgment Seat itself.

In this study, we will look at some texts and I'm going to do some expositional statements from each of these texts that relate to the second coming. This will not be exhaustive and I will refer to other texts to support them but each one of them is going to help us build some statements. So, the answer to when and how Christ will come I will give you at the end we go through the distillation from the exposition of these various texts.

The first text will be from Acts 1. To give a little context this is where we get the victorious ascension of Jesus after the 40 days past His resurrection and He takes His Disciples out to the Mount of Olives. He had told them He was going to ascend and that they were to wait for power from on high. Then when they received that power, the Pentecostal declaration of the New Covenant and the outpouring of the Spirit of God in the New Covenant temple, which is His church and the individual believer, then He says to go and fulfill the Great Commission. So, let's start by looking in verse 6.

Acts 1:6–11 says [6] *So when they had come together (language used for to indicate church), they asked Him, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" [7] He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. [8] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* [9] *And when He had said these things, as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud (I believe is referring to the Shekinah glory of God) took Him out of their sight. [10] And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, [11] and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven."*

I don't believe it's any accident that Jesus is ascending from the Mount of Olives, not only in the fulfillment of Scripture concerning His victorious ascension, but also that when the angels then say, 'as you saw Him lifted up in glory, He will come again in glory.' So as you see Him lifted up in the angelic presence, He will come again with the angels. In other words, what you're seeing in the ascension will be repeated in a retrograde, that is a return of Christ back here to be with us as it says in Zechariah 14. Zechariah 14:4–5 says [4] *On that day (referring to His return) His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. [5] And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with Him.* So, He will take His stand in the last day at the Mount of Olives.

We see this glorious statement about Christ's bodily Ascension, bodily return, angelic presence, and angelic presence in His return. So in between the glorious ascension of Christ from the Mount of Olives and His return back to the Mount of Olives, we are empowered to do a mission until He returns. Now let's look at I Thessalonians 4 because I'd like to enumerate a couple of things from this. I Thessalonians 4:13–14 says *[13] But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep (already died), that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. [14] For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.*

In other words, those saints whose bodies are in the grave, but the spirits have gone into the perfections of the comforting presence of the Lord, in the intermediate state, when Jesus comes back, they are coming back with him. So, He will not only be accompanied by angels, but He will be accompanied by those who have already gone to be with Him and they will meet their resurrected bodies to have a perfected body and soul for a new heavens and a new earth. Let's continue in I Thessalonians.

I Thessalonians 4:15–18 say *[15] For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. [16] For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together (the church universal, in its purity) with them in the clouds (that is, the glory of the Lord) to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. [18] Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

So again, we have affirmed the personal return, the bodily return, we now have the glory and majesty of it, the voice of the Archangel, the sound of the trumpet. The trumpet was a regal instrument announcing the coming and the presence of a king, and when the King comes all rise. So we will be raised up to be with Him and deposited as the church of Jesus Christ, now the established Kingdom of God, into the new heavens and into the new earth. Now let's look at II Thessalonians 2. The people in Thessalonica seemed to need some regular instruction concerning the second coming. Before the second coming of Christ, Paul says something else has to happen.

II Thessalonians 2:1–11 says *[1] Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to Him, we ask you, brothers, [2] not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. [3] Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, [4] who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. [5] Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? [6] And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. [7] For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only He who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. [8] And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing **by the appearance of His coming.** (This phrase is why I think this will be at His second coming, the Epiphany, the out shining of the appearance of Christ.) **[9] The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, [10] and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. [11] Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may***

believe what is false, [12] in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

In other words, there's going to be this significant rebellion at the end and in concert with that is the man of lawlessness also called the antichrist of which there has been many, but the text seems to indicate, while John will tell us there have been many antichrist, here, Paul indicates that there is a singular captivating declaration of being against Christ in terms of the false prophet that will rise up against the Savior. I believe that that particular prophetic word has had what happens many times in scriptures – immediate fulfillments, and then ultimate fulfillments and Christological fulfillments. In other words, the prophecy unfolds with greater and greater fulfillment. This is seen with Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century BC and in 70 AD when the Romans trampled the courts of the temple of God and declared and brought their objects of worship into that place. As much as I've tried to just embrace that as the fulfillment of it, I don't think that works in the context. This seems to indicate that the beast of the sea and the beast of the land will be led into this final rebellion in the time of the loosening of Satan when he who restraints is taken out of the way and there is this movement of the antichrist.

I think II Thessalonians 2:7 refers to the Holy Spirit's work and the work of God's grace in and through His church. We already have antichrists, these rebellions, the beast of the land and the beast of the sea. The beast of the sea is the tyrannical radical government and the beast of the land is the apostate church. I would say if there is any verse in your Bible for you to underline today, II Thessalonians 2:9–10 should be two of them for how will Satan deceive the nominal church? He will come through the antichrist and the false prophet. He shall come with faults, signs, wonders, and miracles done with power. This is why I keep hammering it home. Your Christian life is built on sound doctrine through sound preaching, and sound study of the Word of God, not own experience, because if you want to build your life on experience, you just created a highway to your heart for Satan. He can give all kinds of experiences and he can do signs, wonders, and miracles that are done with power beyond our explanation. If you don't believe it, go see what the magicians did for Pharaoh. It wasn't sleight of hand.

So what you and I want to do is we do not want to go searching for the next miracle, the next sign. That's what an evil and adulterous generation does. We are looking to fix our eyes on Jesus. What saves God's people in the day of the antichrist? They love the truth and His Word is truth. The truth gives them the armor of Christ, and the weapons of the spirit for Christ. They love the truth so as to be saved. What will happen to the nominal church? I think you're seeing it right now in the sifting and shifting that's going on in the world today. They don't know the truth, so they become the prey for the predatorial work of Satan through the professing and nominal evangelical church.

In the text when it says “God sends them a strong delusion” it's just like in the days with Pharaoh where God hardens the heart – you have a brick, you have water, and you have mud, what does the sun do with that? The sun hardens it. Then what God is doing is He will affirm that process of the hardening effect of their sin and rebellion against God in following the antichrist, the false prophet. This is why we keep giving a call to the Christian life in the pursuit of holiness. Hebrews 12:14 says *[14] Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.* It's not your pursuit of holiness that saves you. It's your pursuit of holiness that number one evidences your salvation, number two, works out your salvation, and number three, encourages other believers to stay the course. So that is what He tells us about this antichrist and his work. Now, let's look at II Peter 3.

II Peter 3:8 says [8] *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* So why does he say that? Paul says that because of the accusations that Jesus promised to come again, but He hasn't come. Perhaps He is going to be late. No, that is not what happened. In fact, let's back up to II Peter 3:1–7 which says [1] *This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, [2] that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, [3] knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. [4] They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." [5] For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, [6] and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. [7] But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.*

II Peter 3:8 is not a formula. It's telling us that God is not put in the box of time. God made time, God made matter, God made space. God is infinite, eternal, and patient. God is not governed by what He made. Therefore, when God acts, one day is as 1,000 years, He is not measured, He is eternal. The reason the Lord has not come yet has to do with His patience and we see that as we go further in II Peter 3.

II Peter 3:9–13 says [9] *The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. [10] But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.*

[11] *Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, [12] **waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God,** because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! [13] But according to His promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

So new heavens and the new earth comes at the judgment and the judgment happens when Jesus comes, but Jesus hasn't come. Is He late? Has He forgotten? What is the problem? Why hasn't He come? First of all, the text is telling us the God of glory is not controlled by time. Secondly, He controls time. Thirdly, His not coming yet is not Him being late, but is the evidence of His patience toward you and according to II Peter 3:8 the 'you' Paul is talking to is the beloved, those in Christ. This is the second letter the beloved have received so let's look at the first letter.

I Peter 1:1–2 says [1] *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those **who are elect exiles** of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, [2] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*

So who are the beloved? They are the elect of God. So why has Jesus not returned yet? Peter, here, gives us a salient reason. When Jesus came, He came to save His people from their sins. When Jesus rose and ascended into heaven, the declaration was made, "Father, I lose not one" (John 6:39) and the Jesus who finished the work of redemption to save any and all of His people from every tribe and nation and not one will be lost, has ascended into heaven and sent

His Spirit. So, the One who has finished the work of redemption is now finishing His work in the gathering and perfecting of the redeemed and it's not till that is over that He comes. He won't come until all of His beloved has been brought to faith and repentance.

So how do you hasten the coming of the Lord? Evangelize. Somewhere out there, someday that last one of God's elect is going to be led to Jesus and the trumpet will sound. Then the coming of Christ will happen. So the second coming of Christ awaits not only an antichrist, but it awaits the gathering of all the elect of God, from all of the nations of the work of the Gospel. Now, I'd like to look at one final text in Matthew 24. There are six sermons of Jesus and I like to refer to them as three major, three minor. Five of the six discourses/sermons of Jesus are found in the Gospel of Matthew. I don't think it's any accident that Matthew who is speaking to a Jewish population gives the five sermons of Jesus, as the One greater than Moses who gave us the five books as the opening author of Scripture.

Matthew 24 is one of those discourses. This is the second longest discourse and it's known as the Olivet discourse. I want to first show you how it opens up. Matthew 24:1 says [1] *Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple.* The temple being referred to is the Zerubbabel temple that has been refurbished into what many called the eighth wonder of the world by Herod. It was done beginning before the birth of Jesus and finished sometime during the life of Jesus. It was absolutely extraordinary, exquisite, magnificent, with 150 foot doors. It was amazing, the glory and the majesty of this. The gate that led into the very temple proper was lined with gold and when the rising of the sun hit it, it was utterly blinding to anyone that looked at it in its reflections. So it's obvious that this became something of hopefully sanctified pride for His Disciples for they showed Him the buildings of the temple. They were obviously boasting on it and this is what Jesus answered. Matthew 24:2 says [2] *But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."*

One of the most amazing moments of my life have been my trips to Israel. I have now taken 15 trips, and hopefully there will be another one. We can't do it this year because Israel won't let us, but the trips are called learning the Bible in the land of the Bible. During the trip, I take people to the pinnacle of the temple to show the stones that are tons in weight that were cast down so that there was not one stone upon the other. You can see this today the fulfillment of the Scripture in 70 AD and the destruction of Jerusalem, which is what Jesus has prophesied here. As He makes this prophetic word, it sounds like they just kind of shut down as they begin to think through this and after some time, they leave the temple Mount, go across the Kidron Brook and they arrive at the Mount of Olives. Here, Jesus takes the position of a teacher.

As we go further in this text realize to understand Matthew 24 and 25 that in this discourse Jesus is not answering when He is coming again but He is actually answering three questions. These temple stones are so gigantic that when Jesus tells them this will be torn down with not one stone upon another their only thought is 'He must be talking about the end of the age and what He has been telling them about Him coming again.' While they didn't understand all of that, they didn't even understand His resurrection yet, but they had heard Him talk about it and so they then associate this that He is describing with the cataclysmic end of the age.

Matthew 24:3 says [3] *As He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"* Here we see they ask Him three questions. They want to know when the destruction of the temple will be with the tearing down of the stones. Two,

they want to know what *the* sign of His coming and thirdly, what the sign of the end of the age will be. Jesus begins to answer them and the first one of the three He takes up is the one about the end of the age.

Matthew 24:4–6 says [4] *And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. [5] For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. [6] And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.* Those aren’t the signs of His coming. It seems like every time we get all of these events, a book comes out and people think it means Jesus is coming again. That is just business as usual for we live in a sinful world. We have catastrophic events, wars, and rumors of wars. That has been with us ever since the fall but now He will set it in context for us. Let’s continue on.

Matthew 24:7–8 says [7] *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. [8] All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.* These are just beginning and are not even the final birth pains. This is the creation and humanity groaning to be delivered. We see this groaning with catastrophic events, political events, military events, but that is not the end. It is business as usual in a fallen world. It is telling you the world is groaning to be delivered from all this. Birth pains, think of this metaphor. What happens with birth pains? They become sharper, more intense, more regular, and more rapid and are expected to intensify, but this is the beginning of anticipating the end, not the sign of the end. Don’t listen to anybody who tells you you’re going to escape the tribulations of this world. Let’s continue in the text.

Matthew 24:9–14 says [9] *“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. [10] And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. [11] And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. [12] And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. [13] But the one who endures to the end will be saved. [14] And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

Those who persevere are not perfect but their perseverance is the evidence of their salvation. We see here the elect of God can’t all be saved until the Gospel goes to all the nations, because faith comes from hearing the Word. The sign is not the brokenness of a sin cursed world. The sign is the Gospel through His people going to all the world and all the nations, then the end will come. So, what about those temple buildings? Let’s continue in the text.

Matthew 24:15–21 says [15] *“So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), [16] then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. [17] Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, [18] and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. [19] And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! [20] Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. [21] For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.*

He is prophesying a very intense tribulation that would accompany this destruction of the temple. It is helpful to read some of the extra biblical historians to see the anger that the Roman soldiers evoked. You have to have a lot of anger to tear down eight-ton stones and they came with a vengeance over the four-year siege that had taken place. Cannibalism had taken place in the siege with all kinds of horrific acts that had been inflicted from 66 AD to 70 AD.

Jesus goes on to say in Matthew 24:22–28, [22] *And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.* [23] *Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it.* [24] *For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.* [25] *See, I have told you beforehand.* [26] *So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.* [27] *For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.* [28] *Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.* It will be not only like a thief, it will be sudden as well as glorious is what we have learned to this point. I think this very intense tribulation is looking to being fulfilled at 66 AD to 70 AD, which is when the temple was destroyed.

Now He has answered two of their three questions which was, when will these things be and when the end of the age will be. There is the anticipation of that at the end of time, when Satan is loosed and the work of the antichrist, which we will take up at a later date. The end of the age will come when the Gospel is preached to all the nations and all of God’s elect have been saved. When will the temple be torn down? He just told them this temple is going to be torn down when this great tribulation that is going to be inflicted upon God’s Old Covenant people from 66 AD to 70 AD that will include a replication of the desolation of Daniel and that is the profaning of the temple itself. Now let’s go to the third question which He is now about to answer about the second coming of Christ.

Matthew 24:29 says [29] *“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

I believe because of Matthew 24:29 that what happened in 66 AD to 70 AD we’ll have a replication right before the second coming of Christ that will be accompanied by these signs of what will happen in those days. Those signs are actually quotes from the Old Testament. Now, many believe that this is looking at the spiritual warfare where the stars would represent the pastors that are in the hands of the Lord, even as they are in the book of Revelation and the sun and the moon is the work of the Spirit of God and the Word of God to give the light of the Gospel. Then there are some who believe that this is climatic dynamic that will be seen. So, what about the sign of His coming?

Matthew 24:30–31 says [30] *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man (the sign is Christ Himself appearing), and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* [31] *And he will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

I think the mourning that will take place here will be a mourning of rebellion. Here we see all the elect will have been saved now and then Jesus appears – the trumpet, the voice, the gathering of His people from all of the nations to Himself and as He comes in the clouds with power and great glory, this sign is Himself appearing where everyone will see Him when He comes. Let’s continue in the text.

Matthew 24:32–35 says [32] *“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near.* [33] *So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.* [34] *Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.* [35] *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*

Here, I think there He is referring back and that's one of the things that you have to do when you work through this. You have to ask, which one of these questions is He dealing with? The presence of the generation deals with the initial question of when will these things take place which was at the destruction of the temple. That will take place before the generation in front of Him perishes and is set aside. Now, people try to make generations say about three or four different things. I think it just means what it means which is that generation and what it's referring to is that generation is in the mid-30s AD and so by the time 66 AD to 70 AD comes that generation that's in front of him will still be living. So when the destruction of the temple happens that sets the clock ticking toward the gathering of the elect, the gospel going to all the nations and then the coming of Christ. As it says in Matthew 24:35, 'God's Word will not pass away' means all that He has promised will be fulfilled.

Now, what about the day or the hour? I hope you didn't come to this study looking for that. Matthew 24:36–44 says [36] *"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son (speaking of His humanity here), but the Father only. [37] For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [38] For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, [39] and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. (So what happened to the unbeliever? They all were swept away.) [40] Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. (One will be taken, swept away to what judgment. The other will be left – just as Noah and his family were secured in the Ark. They will be left secured in Christ.) [41] Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. [42] Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. [43] But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. [44] Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

I need to sum up now so I'll close with this. I can't tell you how many times I have been given this book that say 'you don't want to be left behind.' My response to that is 'Oh yes, I do.' I don't want to be taken away for in the context in the days of Noah who got taken away? It was the unbeliever who was taken away to judgment. I want to be left secure in the redeeming work of Christ, the Ark of my salvation. The text tells us those who are taken away are taken away in judgment. This is not a secret second coming to get believers out. This is *the* second coming and unbelievers will be swept away to judgment as it takes them unaware and unprepared. Believers who are looking at the times are ready and ready to serve. They are like the fig tree that knows the season and they are ready to serve Him. They are not going to be overtaken, but they will be ready.

I want to leave you with these statements to sum up what we have just looked at. Christ will return in His glorified body at the Mount of Olive after the antichrist is revealed, the Gospel is preached to all the nations and all of the elect have been brought to Christ as Lord and Savior. Furthermore, that coming will be sudden, glorious and visible. What will you be doing? Here's what all of these verses keep telling those who are in Christ – you will be found, not perfect, but ready, faithful waiting for His coming, not in passivity, but in Biblically informed activity, waiting for and looking for the blessed hope of Christ. You won't be trying to find the date or the hour. You will be focused upon Christ and when He comes it will not be in secret for every eye shall see Him, will hear that trumpet and the command of the Archangel as all of the people will be gathered together. Now we have church perfect for the new heavens and the new earth.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Would You receive our thanks for the privilege to go through Your Word, and would you take these basic Biblical truths and seal them into the hearts and lives of Your people? We'll give You the praise and the glory even as we close this prayer with the prayer of John that He is coming quickly. Behold, Lord come quickly in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

“CHRIST’S RETURN ACCORDING TO CHRIST”

WHEN? AND HOW?

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