

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

Matthew 24:27-31 I Thessalonians 4:15-18

Pastor Tom Parrish

Introduction: It has been said that the most exciting experience of life is to be shot at and missed! I know that is true through real life experience.

Another exciting experience is to face persecution, imprisonment, and martyrdom for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A very interest phenomena has emerged regarding the way Christians around the worldview the second coming of Jesus. It has a lot to do with whether they are facing great danger or whether they are speculating on the second coming from the comfort of a lazy-boy recliner.

If you view the second coming, the words of Jesus in Matthew, Paul's words in I Thessalonians and John's words in Revelation from an easy chair you end up with numerous speculations on when the second coming will occur, the sequences, the meaning of the rapture, and you even write a series of novels that dramatize what that will be like.

ON THE OTHER HAND:

If you view the second coming, the words of Jesus in Matthew, Paul's words in I Thessalonians and John's words in Revelation from the position of persecution, imprisonment, and martyrdom then these promises take on a whole new meaning. Instead of speculation they become words of hope and comfort in the face

Today we will focus on that hope and comfort when Jesus visibly returns again.

I. Two Major Passages

A. Out of the 107 references to the second coming of Jesus Christ two stand out with the most information, detail, insight into that event.

1. Matthew 24:27-31 *27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. 29 "Immediately after the distress of those days "'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' 30 "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.*

31 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."

2. I Thessalonians 4:15-18 *"15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words."*

3. What are the specific teachings of the Bible on the Second Coming?

a. First: Jesus Second coming will be a worldview, visible event.

1. No secret return as promoted by Jehovah Witnesses.
2. No mistake as to who is coming! Not Rev. Sun Yun Moon!
3. Everyone on the earth will see and know the one coming on the clouds-the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

b. Matthew vs. 29 says that the world will be in great chaos. In fact, the entire universe will be in chaos.

c. Matthew vs. 30 points out that the world will be well aware of the impact of Jesus' coming-it will be a time of great mourning for those who have not believed.

d. Second: Jesus will come as he left, on the clouds.

e. The angels will accompany the Lord-there will be a loud trumpet blast to initiate his appearance.

f. Third: He will gather his elect-believers-from the four corners of the earth.

So whether you're buried in the ground, cremated, or buried at sea
The Lord will bring your body back together with your spirit.

g. Fourth: Paul states in I Thessalonians that the dead in Christ will rise first.

h. Paul gives us further insights in vs. 17-18

1. vs. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

Three significant promises emerge from this verse.

a. we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds

- No believer in Jesus will be left behind.

- If you are on your deathbed-you will not be left behind.
- If you are giving birth will not be left behind.
- If you are in prison you will not be left behind.
- No matter where you are-you will not be left behind.

b. to meet the Lord in the air. Often called **The Rapture!**

Lord means boss-master.

Who was called the master in the N.T.? JESUS.

Reminds me of the old sing group the Imperials song:

**No, it won't be old Buddha that's sitting on the throne
And it won't be old Mohammed that's calling us Home
And it won't be Hare Krishna that plays that trumpet tune
And we're going to see The Son, not Reverend Moon!**

This may not be politically correct but it is the truth!

Mark 13: *Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— 36 lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. 37 And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.*”

Key insights to be aware of and practice:

1. **Stay Awake:** indifference, laziness, a ho-hum attitude.
2. The master may come “suddenly.” The point: It will be a surprise to all of us both believers and unbelievers.
3. Vs. 36 Don't be asleep-second warning about indifference, laziness, a ho-hum attitude.
 - How do you guard against this?
 - Daily we must acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Savior.
 - We Must pledge to live this day as if it were the last.
 - We need to remain excited about Jesus return.
4. Vs. 37 Jesus says again: Stay awake! **Do you get the message? The biggest enemy we face in “staying away” is an indifferent attitude.**
Worst yet is the attitude Satan loves the most.
Story of Satan and the demons with an unbeliever:
One demon: “No heaven!”
Second demon: “No hell!”

Satan: "Convince him that he has plenty of time!"

Transition: As we reflect today on these passages two issues emerge.

The first major issue is that of **being prepared-watchful-for the Lord's return**.
The second major issue is for us to **live in encouragement** since the Lord's return is assured.

II. Be Prepared-Watchful

A. The most important commitment we can ever make is our commitment to Jesus Christ, to his mission, to this congregation as the body of Christ.

1. When we make these commitments it is vital for us to realize what happens at that moment.
 - a. We said YES to Jesus Christ, to his mission, to his church....
 - b. In response, do you know what Jesus says? He says: YES to us!
2. He take us seriously-and he set into spiritual motion the events and motivation for those commitments to become reality.
3. At the same time-do you know what Satan says?
 - a. "OH NO!!"
 - b. Satan then set into motion those things and events that will attempt to discourage us, divide us, and defeat us.
4. **Therefore**-as we await the second coming of Jesus Christ-how ought we to live?

B. JESUS SAYS THAT WE ARE TO LIVE PREPARED FOR HIS RETURN.

1. William. Barclay, the great Christmas Scholar and writer said:

"Once we get a real glimpse of eternity, of our heavenly destination, the priority of things in this life dramatically begin to change. When life is viewed against eternity we have a basis for making wise, fruitful decisions in the present."

2. If we knew for a certainty that Jesus Christ was going to return tomorrow, end history as we know it, and judge the universe-how would that change the priority of how we live today?
 - a. For most of us there would be dramatic changes.
 - b. The things that often divide us, create quarrels among us would appear foolish.
 - c. Those whom we hold anything against, we would be eager to forgive.
 - d. Those things left unsaid, like "I love you Mom, Dad, or whoever" would get said by this afternoon.

- e. Those sins we have not confessed, that we would never voiced to someone else, would come flowing out of us like a river overflowing its banks.
- f. This is Jesus point: **Live this way continually! If you do, you will be well prepared.**

3. SECONDLY: WE ARE TO BE WATCHFUL OF HIS MOVEMENT IN OUR DAILY LIVES.

- a. One thing I continually do with Christians when I teach is to ask them how they have seen Jesus act or move in their life or the life of someone else in this past week or month.
- b. 95% of those I ask make no reply.
- c. Why is that? Fear-that we might be ridiculed, called a fanatic or worse.

MAJOR REASON: WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR.

- a. Have you ever asked a family member to pick up something on the table and they just stand there looking and looking but don't see what is right under they nose?
- b. We often see but don't see.
- c. Jesus tells us to be watchful. That means we need to start seeing Jesus in our daily lives.

4. WE ALSO MUST BE WISE CONCERNING THE RULER OF THIS WORLD AND HIS BAG OF TRICKS.

- a. **Satan has absolutely no power over believers since Jesus rose from the dead, except the power we give him!**
- b. Satan is a master of illusion-and he will attempt to get control of us by playing upon our worse fears, beliefs, or insecurities.
- c. If you are preoccupied with Satan, he will exploit that preoccupation so that he is on your mind and actions more than Jesus.
- d. If you poo-hoo Satan as a myth, as many Liberal Christians have done, he is delighted and will work well behind the scenes putting doubts, speculations, and repeated questions into your mind.

- e. For those who call themselves evangelicals-he delights in getting us into arguments about things that, in the end, do not promote the Gospel or glorify Jesus Christ.
- f. Where is the balance?
 - 1. Recognize Satan's reality.
 - 2. Be aware of how he attempts to divide and defeat us.
 - 3. BUT, BUT, BUT.....Concentrate entirely on Jesus Christ.

TRANSITION: St. Paul puts the finishing touches on how we are to live until the final advent of Jesus Christ. His closing touch is found in I Thess. 4:18 where he says:

"Therefore encourage each other with these words."

III. People of Encouragement

- A. We are living in a world where people are continually beat up: physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
 - 1. Having been a High School teacher I have discovered that there are **two kinds of teachers:**
 - a. Those who view the kids as people who are created unique and need to discover their talents and gifts. That underneath the problem exterior of some kids is a boy or girl who has hurts, pain, confusion, fear and God given potential.
 - b. Their role is to do more than teach a curriculum-their role is to shape the individual.
 - c. "Teachers do more than teach, they change lives."
 - 2. The second kind of teacher is one who views the educational setting as a factory where everyone is to come out in the same mold.
 - a. Students are viewed as people to conform to the system, their system, rather than unique individuals who learn differently.
 - b. These teachers collect paychecks, become more cynical each year, and count the years to retirement.
 - c. Unfortunately, students come out scarred with low self-esteem, and feeling like misfits.
 - 3. This happens everywhere-in school, at work, even at church.
 - a. Men or Women, after giving their whole adult life to a company are given the pink slip and told to clean out their desk.
 - b. Athletes, who are bragged about, played up to, until their usefulness is over, then discarded like a worn-out piece of paper.

5. Parents, who have poured their life into their kids, only to have their kids adopt different values, and resent their parents involvement in their lives.
6. Little was different for the Christians to whom St. Paul wrote those closing words: ***18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.***
 - a. What words?
 - b. Jesus Christ is Lord and King. He will HAVE THE FINAL WORD!!!
 - c. One day he will return and set all things right.
 - d. One day he will raise the dead and give children back to their parents.
 - e. The day is coming when the atrocities of war, murder, rape, kidnapping will be undone.
 - f. A day when cancer does not take the lives of any person, especially the life of children.
 - g. A day when the lion will lie down with the lamb.
 - h. A time when there will be no more tears, no heartache, no pain no suffering.
 - i. Therefore, encourage one another with these words.

Conclusion: This morning I want us to be encouraged and stay awake.

Some of you have lost your job and the economy is tough **but rest assured**
Jesus is coming again.

Many of us are suffering from physical aches and pains **but rest assured**
Jesus is coming again.

Some our children have rebelled against our values **but rest assured**
Jesus is coming again.

Some of us have been hurt and suffered at the hands of others **but rest assured**
Jesus is coming again.

Some of us have carried sorrow for a lifetime **but rest assured**
Jesus is coming again.

Some of us have buried loved ones, even grandchildren, **but rest assured**
Jesus is coming again.

Many of us have had our dreams shattered **but rest assured**
Jesus is coming again.

Terrorists have killed thousands and undoubtedly will kill more **but rest assured**
Jesus is coming again.

_____ **At this moment I will turn my greatest worry or problem over to Jesus who is coming again.**

_____ **This week I will share with one other person the sure hope we have that Jesus coming again.**

_____ **I will read the second coming text from I Thessalonians 4:13-18 every day this week including Christmas day.**

