

## TWO PHASES TO THE SECOND COMING

In Matthew 24:3 the disciples asked Jesus about the sign of His coming and the end of the age. The remainder of the chapter is the answer to this question. Jesus begins by connecting end time sign events to the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel prophecy as seen in Matthew 24:15. In Matthew 24:4-35 Jesus is dealing with the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel that climaxes in His return to the earth.

But then as we come to Matthew 24:36 a great TRANSITION takes place. And unless one gets this transition right what Jesus has to say will be misunderstood. And it is right here that I believe many of my dispensational brethren have messed up in a MAJOR way. They have failed to see the significance of this TRANSITION and therefore missed the essence of what Christ is saying in Matthew 24:36-44.

The Jews to this day as a people group generally have failed to see the reality that the Messiah has TWO comings – a first coming in which He would die for the sins of the world – and a second coming in which He comes to reign. As those who have seen the truth of NT revelation, we see that God's plan involves two comings which is in fulfillment of OT prophecy.

However, in addition to the reality of two comings, there are also two different phases to His second coming. The first phase relates essentially to the Church and the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase relates essentially to Israel. Both phases of Christ's Second Coming – both the first phase and the second phase are both presented in Matthew 24.

Jesus was the first one to present that there are two phases to His second coming and He does so with precision here in Matthew 24. This is why I call Matthew 24 the prophetic seed plot of the New Testament. The prophetic seed plot of the OT is Daniel 9:24-27. The prophetic seed plot of the NT is Matthew 24.

“I believe that Jesus was the one who first taught and explained the pretribulation rapture, and that He taught this in both the Discourse and John 14:1-3. Paul, John, and Peter (and perhaps James) have all gained many of their insights into the pretribulation rapture and the day of the Lord from Jesus' teachings in the Discourse.” – **John F. Hart**

We now come to Matthew 24:36 which has a major transitional marker in place which shifts the focus from phase 2 of the Second Coming to Phase 1 of the Second Coming.

It shifts from what can be known in relation to the tribulation period that climaxes in Christ's Second Coming to what cannot be known prior to His coming at the rapture.

### **Matthew 24:36 (NKJV)**

**36** "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

The words translated here in the NKJV as "But of" are two words in the Greek which are "peri de". They are sometimes translated as "Now concerning" or "But concerning". This is consistently used in the New Testament as a TRANSITIONAL PHRASE. It consistently denotes a transition to a different but related subject.

"Peri de is a frequent device for introducing a change from one subject to another phase of the same subject or from one subject to another." – (**Robert Thomas**, Imminence in the NT – p. 193-94)

Consistently it denotes a TRANSITION of one kind or another. Paul often uses this in his epistles. For example, in 1 Corinthians as Paul is moving from one topic of correction to another he consistently uses "peri de" as seen in 1 Cor. 7:1, 25; 8:1; 11:2; 12:1; 15:1; 16:1, 12).

Notably Paul uses this phrase in transitioning from his discussion of the Rapture in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 to his discussion of the Day of the Lord in 1 Thess. 5:1-11.

We have the same type of transition here in Matthew 24:36 – only here Christ is transitioning from talking about the Day of the Lord to now addressing the time of the Rapture. It is a related but different subject – namely the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the Second Coming.

To show you that a clear distinctive transition is in view note that Christ has just been emphasizing that they (the people living at that time) CAN KNOW about the timing of His Second Coming to the Earth, but now after this transition He emphasizes that they CAN'T KNOW about the timing of His

coming. That only makes sense if there are two different aspects to His second coming.

- “When its branch...puts forth leaves, you **know...near.**” (v. 32)
- “When you see all these things, **know that it is near**” (v. 33)

### ***TRANSITION – v. 36***

- “But of that day and hour no one knows” (v. 36)
- “and did not know...” (v. 39)
- “Watch therefore, for you do not know” (v. 42)
- “if the master of the house had known” (v. 43)
- “the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (v. 44)

How much more plain can it be? You cannot know and not know at the same time. This only makes sense if Christ is talking about two different aspects of His second coming – one aspect can be known when it is at hand and one aspect cannot be known because it comes as a total surprise. Only the pretribulation rapture really makes sense here. And the language of ***peri de*** is a clear linguistic marker that such a transition has taken place.