

CHRIST'S TEACHING ON THE SECOND COMING

In our study, we are in Matthew 24-25 which is called the Olivet Discourse. It was given on Tuesday – just a few days before Christ was crucified. The Olivet discourse is essentially prophetic in nature. It is the KEY prophetic passage in the NT because the rest of the NT builds on it. I call Daniel 9:24-27 “God’s Prophetic Seed Plot of the OT” and I call Matthew 24 “God’s Prophetic Seed Plot of the NT”.

Revelation was Progressive...

Daniel 9:24-27 – Outline of God’s Prophetic Program for Israel.

Matthew 24 – Jesus builds on Daniel introducing new revelation.

The New Testament Epistles then build on Jesus’ Teaching.

Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 17 and Luke 21 are considered parallel passages. And while there is overlap there are also distinctions. What makes Matthew 24 stand out is that it is most clear in presenting the reality of two different phases to Christ’s 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 (“peri de”) – 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)

“...Mathew 24:36 begins with the word ‘But’...He is now introducing a new subject, and that is the Rapture.” - **Arnold Fruchtenbaum**

"The pretribulation rapture is the best exegetical and theological interpretation of Matthew 24:36-44. Other rapture theories do not do justice to the transitional nature of verse 36, to the nature of the Noah illustration,

or the imminence resident in the passage as illustrated in the thief imagery and the very “to be alert” (gregoreo). It should be acknowledged that Jesus was the originator of the pretribulation rapture teaching (both in the Olivet Discourse and John 14:1-3), and that Paul, Peter, and John were dependent upon the Discourse for much of their teaching about the rapture.” – (**John F. Hart**, Evidence for the Rapture – p. 65)

We commonly call the 1st Phase of Christ’s second coming the Rapture and the 2nd Phase His return to the earth.

Note that the phrase “***that day***” or “***the day***” in parallel passages often is used in an elastic way in that it may embrace the entire package of both aspects of Christ’s second coming as well as the 70th week of Daniel. But note that while it may refer to the entire package, it may also have just one particular aspect of the package in view – all depending on the context.

“After 24:36 Jesus looks at the events of Daniel’s seventieth week as a whole and how the beginning of that week will catch everyone by surprise.”
– **Robert Thomas**

This is why I describe both the 1st and 2nd phase of the second coming as bookends to the 70th week of Daniel that are closely connected and yet are distinct from the 70th week. This is a package and yet made up of distinct parts.

This is why the coming of the Lord in the Rapture is described as a thief coming in the night as is the coming of the Day of the Lord (Mt. 24:43-44; 1 Thess. 5:2). It is like two sides of the same coin. On the one side, you have the coming of the Lord (the Rapture)– on the other side, you have the coming of the day of the Lord (Judgment).

It's like the doorway of the ark. On one side you have the Lord locking Noah inside signifying deliverance – on the other side you have judgment. And it all happened on the same day (Gen. 7:16). Note the language of Matthew 24:38-39, “*Until **the DAY** that Noah entered the ark....until the flood came and took them all away.*” This same day meant deliverance for some and judgment for others. “The coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah” (Mt. 24:37)

“The Rapture should not be studied as a stand alone issue. It is directly related to the Day of the Lord, and functions as an evacuation for the church before the Day of the Lord begins (1 Thess 1:10; Rev 3:10).” – ***Dr. Michael Vlach***

Christ is the first one to reveal that there are two phases to the second coming but then the NT goes on to make many clear distinctions between the two.

Christ in Matthew 24 introduced the reality of two phases to His second coming and in doing so He introduced what is called the doctrine of imminency in relation to the first phase – which we call the rapture.

The Jews commonly saw a time of great trouble coming before the Messiah would come but they knew nothing of imminency. That is because they did not know about the first phase of Christ's second coming (the Rapture) which is imminent. The Old Testament strictly dealt with Christ's coming to the earth in relation to Israel in which He will set up His kingdom. In contrast, the first aspect of Christ's coming (the Rapture) is Church truth and is therefore dealt with only in the New Testament.

Unless you keep God's program for Israel distinct from His program for the Church confusion will reign in the study of prophecy.

When we say the first aspect of Christ's coming for the Church is imminent it means that it could happen at any time.

Perhaps Today!
Live Ready!
Maranatha!