

Is Jesus coming Soon?

Revelation 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

But Anti-Christ must come first and the battle of Armageddon cf:

I John 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

Nothing has to happen before the Lord comes again ...

Highly learned brethren in the Churches of Christ such as J.W. McGarvey, B.W. Johnson who wrote Peoples New Testament Commentary, and James Burton Coffman and his Commentary have a slightly different understanding of the 2nd Coming of Christ regarding:

Matthew 24:27-31 when compared to Luke 21:20-24

These brilliant brethren believe these verses Matthew 24:27ff have 2 meanings.

Matthew 24:34-35 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Some hold that these verses refer only to the fall of Jerusalem. Others have contended that these verses refers directly to the end of Jerusalem, which was a type of the end of the world but also includes the second coming.

Let's examine Luke's account which gives us more information.

Luke 21:20-24 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

“... for these be the days of vengeance ...” vengeance is prophesied when the Messiah comes in Isaiah 61:1-2. In Jesus’ first sermon in Luke 4:16-21, He read those verses from Isaiah 61 and left out the word “vengeance” thus postponing vengeance for His 3 ½ year ministry ... now Jesus tells us when the “vengeance” will come upon the Jews ... it will come in 70AD in the destruction of Jerusalem.

“... they shall fall by the edge of the sword ...” Josephus gives the names of the tribes and villages with the numbers put to death, arriving at the fantastic total of 1,100,000; and as Josephus was a Jewish historian, his record must be received as the most reliable that has reached us concerning this disaster.

“... led away captive into all nations ...” Titus alone deported some 97,000 at one time; and the scattering of Israel, as often promised by Jesus, was most thoroughly accomplished.

“... Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles ...” means occupied by the Gentiles. They did not tread down the city during the siege, nor as they devastated it, but as they occupied it for 1,897 years from 70AD to 1967.

“ ... until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled ... here we learn there is a period of time during which the Holy City would be subject to Gentile domination, and it is far easier for Christians now to know what this meant than it was for the apostles who first heard it.

For a proper understanding of "the times of the Gentiles" one must take into account the following things:

The fact that nineteen hundred and eighty five years is clearly a part of the period indicated, that much time has already elapsed since AD 70 in the year 2015.

The Times of the Gentiles can be compared to the times during which Jerusalem and the Jews held the favored position with God as His own “chosen people”.

But in the end the Gentiles will fully rebel against God just as the Jews fully rebelled when they will-filly murdered the Christ, knowing He was a prophet, killed the apostles and persecuted the Church unto death.

In the light of the above considerations, the true meaning of "the times of the Gentiles" would appear to be:

The interval between the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the Christian Age is called "the times of the Gentiles," during which the gospel is announced to the Gentiles and the vineyard is given to other people Matthew 21:40ff the Gentiles rather than the Jews See Coffman

To the Jews God granted a time of privilege and gracious opportunity. Near the close of that time the Son of man wept over Jerusalem, saying, "If thou hadst known the time of thy visitation" In like manner, the Gentile nations have now had their times, which in due course are now being fulfilled, as was the case with Jerusalem.

The times of the Gentiles is also known as the church age.

"The times of the Gentiles" signify the whole period of time which must elapse between the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the beginning of the times of the end when the Lord will return

There is not much disagreement among commentators that the "times of the Gentiles" represents a very long period of time

Furthermore, the times of the Jews did not mean their "full conversion," but just the opposite it means their total fall into willful apostasy to the known will of God. The times of the Gentiles means the period when Gentiles are being saved. Then there is a powerful inference in this text that, just as Israel finally rebelled completely against the Lord, so will the Gentiles completely rebel and bringing on the time of the End by their turning from God's way. Coffman

Today, after over nineteen hundred years of Gentile dominion over Jerusalem, during which the Romans, the SAR-a-cens, the Franks, the MA-me-lukes, the Turks, and the British have, in turn, held authority over Jerusalem, the city is, today, controlled by secular non believing Zionist Israel. See Coffman

If the interpretations which we have advocated above, the same interpretations that have been in vogue among Christian commentators for centuries - if those interpretations are true, then there is a powerful indication in the current status of Jerusalem that suggests the awesome possibility, if not the certainty, that "the times of the Gentiles" have about expired.

The current status of true faith in Christ in our troubled world is weak and precarious. Multiplied billions of the Gentile nations have either not heard the gospel at all, or have totally repudiated Christianity. Coffman

If the six-day war that lifted the Gentile yoke from Jerusalem in 1967 is in some manner related to this prophecy. The practical applications of the words which Jesus spoke should now concern people more than ever, lest "that day" come upon them unawares. Coffman

The term: "times of the Gentiles" is also used by the Apostle Paul cf:

Romans 11:25-26 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

"... this mystery ..." is that the Jews are judicially condemned and blinded or hardened by God Himself, in consequence of their own rejection of the Messiah.

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [*thou*] that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under [*her*] wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

The Jews shall nevertheless continue to exist in that condition of blindness and hardness until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, which may very well mean the end of time See Coffman

"... that blindness in part is happened to Israel ..." Paul's phrasing of this announcement was equivalent to saying, "The Jews will be here as long as any Gentiles are being saved."

"... And so all Israel shall be saved ... Could this possibly have any reference to the blind, hardened Zionist Israel who still refuse to accept the Christ? The very fact of their being "saved" identifies the Israel spoken of here as the spiritual Israel which is the Church made up of Jews and Gentiles saved by Christ.

What Paul is saying is that when the Gentile harvest has been reaped, that

"...And so all Israel (the entire spiritual Israel of Jews and Gentiles and whomsoever) shall be saved See Coffman

Matthew 24:27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Of course, the primary meaning of the prophecy would apply to the sensational, worldwide, glorious revelation of Christ at his second coming. B.W. Johnson

There will be no doubt about Christ's coming when He does come, there will be no discussion, no need that any one shall tell others of it. It will be manifest as the flash of lightning across the sky. There can be no mistake.

B.W. Johnson says: "Such language shows how much those are in error who claim that Jesus coming was only at the destruction of Jerusalem."

Matthew 24:28 For where so ever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Extending the figure of speech to its ultimate fulfillment at the end of the age, when the world itself will have become corrupt, morally dead and when her day of grace has ended, God will also overwhelm it with destruction. See Coffman.

Matthew 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

Reference to the sun, moon, and stars presents a problem. Language such as this is hyperbole, and is not literal. Such terms were sometimes used in the Old Testament concerning the removal of illustrious princes and rulers from their estates. See Coffman

Christ's reference to the prophecy by Daniel, a little earlier, indicates a long separation between the two events. Therefore, the words of this verse should be understood as a reference to the end of time and the final judgment, of which things the destruction of Jerusalem was only a type or shadow. See Coffman

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days..." The tribulation which came upon the Jewish people merely began with the destruction of Jerusalem, other woes followed, and, coming down through all the centuries of wandering and dispersion, they were yet unfulfilled and incomplete (and have continued on for the past 2,000 years). JW McGarvey

Matthew 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The sign of Jesus' coming is thus His actual appearance on the clouds of heaven in great glory.

Revelation 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they [*a/so*] which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

The second coming will be a personal and glorious return of Christ in the skies. Our modern materialistic, secular, and wicked age will not accept such a view, a fact prophesied by Christ in the revelation that all the tribes of the earth would "mourn" when they see it. This is a mourning that would not occur if His coming was expected or on the other hand if it were some invisible, psychological, or spiritual return occurred. Christ plainly taught that His second coming would be bad news indeed for the great majority of mankind. See Coffman

Matthew 24:31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

These words show the strong grounds for referring this portion of the discourse to the final judgment. The parables of the tares and of the fishnet mention the angels that shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just. The sound of the trumpet is also invariably associated with the judgment and the resurrection I Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and II Thessalonians 1:6-9 stresses the appearance of angels with Christ in his coming for judgment. Coffman

II Thessalonians 1:7-9 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

"... And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet" To the Jews the trumpet would naturally be associated with the assembling of the people, for silver trumpets were used to call Israel together (Exodus 19:13,16,19; Numbers 10:1-4; Psalms 81:3-5) J.W. McGarvey

Luke 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles,

until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. 25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Matthew 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer [*is*] nigh:

The putting forth of the leaves is the sign that summer is near. It puts forth leaves usually in April. So "all these things" show when the Lord is at hand.

Matthew 24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, [*even*] at the doors.

Matthew 24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

B.W. Johnson said in 1880 : "I believe, rather, that "all these things" embraces all thus far predicted, and that "this generation" means the Jewish race, instead of only those then living. The Greek word so rendered is used in the sense of race in the Greek classics, and as examples of such use in the New Testament, Alford points to Matt. 12:45 and Luke 16:8 , as examples of such use in the New Testament. Christ has described the awful end of the Jewish state; after such a destruction and scattering of the remnant to the ends of the earth, all the examples of history would declare that the Jewish race would become extinct. Christ, however, declares that, contrary to all probability, it shall not pass away until he comes. They still exist, 1850 years after the prediction, distinct, but without a country (in 1880)"

Matthew 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no [*man*], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

How foolish then to be figuring out the time of the Lord's coming. There are 242 false dates listed on www.bible.ca/pre-date-setters.

An untold number of people have tried to predict the Lord's return by using elaborate time tables. Most date setters do not realize mankind has not kept an unwavering record of time. Anyone wanting to chart for example 100 BC to 2000 AD would have contend with the fact 46 BC was 445 days long, there was no year 0 BC, and in 1582 we switched from Julian Years (360 days) to Gregorian (365 days). Because most prognosticators are not aware of all these errors, from the get go their math is already off by several years.

Matthew 24:37 But as the days of Noe (Noah) [*were*], so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

Matthew 24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

As the deluge surprised the world, so will the Lord's coming.

Matthew 24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Matthew 24:41 Two [*women shall be*] grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

The hand-mills still used in the East. The grinding is done by women, usually two, as the work is hard for one.

It will be the time of separation of the evil from the good.

Now both Mark & Luke give us information Matthew does not record.

Mark 13:33-34 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34 [*For the Son of man is*] as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

Luke 21:34-35 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and [*so*] that day come upon you unawares. 35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

Matthew 24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Then Both Mark and Luke add more information to the Matthew 24:42 watch verse.

Mark 13:35-37 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: 36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Why would Jesus tell us to watch if we could not know the season of His return?

Matthew 24:43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Matthew 24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

The lesson of the illustration is a constant state of preparation. Elsewhere in the New Testament, Christ's coming is compared to that of a thief in the night.

Matthew 24:45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

In Luke 12:42-46 , is given a similar parable in answer to a question of Peter. There the Lord speaks of "the faithful and wise steward;" here he describes a steward, but speaks of him as a servant. Preachers, elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers.

Matthew 24:46 Blessed [*is*] that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Matthew 24:47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

This blessedness applies equally to those who are faithful unto death and those who are so found at the Lord's coming.

Matthew 24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

The worst enemy of Christ is the professed servant of the Lord who practices evil, and who supposes he can evade punishment for his crimes.

Matthew 24:49 And shall begin to smite [*his*] fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

There is no sin more common among those who are clothed with authority than oppression. There have been no worse oppressors than priests. "... And to eat and drink with the drunken." What first disgusted Luther with the faith in which he had been reared was the drunkenness of the priests and monks. It has often been the case that the Vatican was the very hot-bed of scandal.

Matthew 24:50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for [*him*], and in an hour that he is not aware of,

He will certainly come, and come when the servant is unprepared for him. The majority of the wicked who die in their sins have expected to be better prepared for the end of life.

Matthew 24:51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint [*him*] his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The cutting asunder was an ancient method of punishment which was practiced among the Jews. Cf: 1 Samuel 15:33, 1 Samuel 15:2 and 2 Sam. 12:31. The idea here is that very severe punishment shall be inflicted upon him, while weeping and gnashing of teeth would indicate a life of intense suffering. Indeed both these expressions must be regarded as metaphors, indicating nothing more clearly than a terrible and certain punishment.

Mark 16: 15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**16** He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned ... **20** And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with [*them*], and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Sources: KJV Bible, theWord.com, Clarkes Commentary, Coffman's Commentary, B.W. Johnson's Commentary J.W. McGarvey and the 20th Century Christian