

## **Bible Study for March 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>**

Alright, everyone get out your calendars! Just kidding. The Bible doesn't give us a precise date for the second coming, but it does tell us some things about it.

**The Second Coming Will Occur Suddenly, vv. 2-3.** The disciples had asked Jesus, "Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus answered, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power." (Acts 1:7-8)

Paul must have taught them regarding the Old Testament teaching regarding the Day of the Lord. He must have also taught them about Jesus' teaching regarding the second coming. He reiterates here many of the ideas found in Matthew 24-25.

He compares the suddenness and surprising nature of the second coming with a robber and an expectant mother.

John Stott - "The trouble with burglars is that they do not tell us when they are coming."

The comparison to an expectant mother is to point to the inevitability of something that you know is coming.

## **The Second Coming Should Not Surprise Believers, vv. 4-7.**

We are not of the night, so we will should be surprised when Christ comes. It will be like a thief in the night to those in the night, but for those are in the light, we will not be surprised. Note the contrast in these verses between believers and unbelievers.

The contrast is between people of the night and people of the day. People of the night are characterized by sleepiness and drunkenness. People of the day are characterized by alertness and soberness.

## **The Second Coming Should Not Scare Believers, vv. 8-11.**

We are clothed with the armor of God. Cf. Romans 13:12, "The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."

"God has not destined us for wrath." A promise to believers. Cf. 1:10. Leon Morris - "One of the things that gave salvation so full a meaning for New Testament Christians was that they were sure of the wrath of God and had a deep gratitude to Christ for saving them from it."

H. Richard Niebuhr summarized the gospel of theological liberalism (not to be confused with political liberalism): "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a Cross."

I like how Leon Podles explained that the doctrine of God's wrath is an actual proof of the genuineness and trustworthiness of Scripture's message. In an article paradoxically titled "The Comforting Doctrine of Hell," he wrote,

However, the darker parts of the Gospels are a sign of their genuineness, because they are not what we would have made up if we were inventing a religion to satisfy our desires. Promises of comfort on this earth, yes; promises of eternal bliss, yes; even viewing earthly troubles (whose existence can scarcely be denied) as an educational tool to discipline us and to make us grow spiritually, yes; but threats of eternal punishment, fires that are not quenched, and worms that do not die—no, no, no.

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The fires and worms have been eliminated to make Christianity less dark, but the darkness guarantees that the Faith is a divine Word, and not a human construct. The gospel is good news, *evangelion*, like the imperial proclamations, not because it makes us comfortable but because it is an announcement from the innermost heart of a reality that is itself beyond our comprehension, a message we could never have dreamed of ourselves, even though creation contains hints and foreboding and dark promises.

<http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=15-09-011-c#ixzz4YTjGy6hQ>

Our hope comes from the central truth of Christianity, that Christ died and rose again. Cf. 4:14, 17. And 18 - Encouragement for believers!

### **The Second Coming Should Inspire Godly Living, vv. 12-28.**

*How to Live Toward Christian Leaders, vv. 12-13.*

Paul describes Christian leaders in three ways in these two verses. They “labor among you,” “are over you in the Lord,” and they “admonish you.” There are three titles given to the kind of Christian leaders that Paul is referring to here in the New Testament. “Pastors,” “Elders,” and “Overseers.” Paul gives three ways that they are to respond to these Christian leaders. “Respect” them, “Esteem them very highly in love because of their work,” and “Be at peace among yourselves.” One of the greatest gifts you can give your pastors is to be at peace with them and each other.

*How to Live Toward One Another, vv. 14-15.*

- Admonish the idle...
  - Encourage the fainthearted...
  - Help the weak...
  - Be patient with all...
  - Do not repay evil for evil...
  - Always seek to do good to one another and to everyone...
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*How to Live Toward the Lord, vv. 16-22.*

- Rejoice always...
- Pray without ceasing...
- Give thanks in all circumstances... (for this is the will of God)

Matthew Henry was once robbed. How can you possibly give thanks to God when you’ve been robbed? That night Henry wrote in his diary: “Let me be thankful, first, because I was never robbed before. Second, because although they took my purse, they did not take my life. Third, because although they took my all, it was not much. Fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed”

- Do not quench the Spirit... (put out fire, be a wet blanket)
- Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. (Ex. Bereans, Acts 17:11) There is great danger when pastors are blindly followed.
- Abstain from every form of evil. Tied to verse 21. Not a stand-alone command.

When will the second coming occur? Well, we don’t know a precise date. But we do know that Jesus is coming again. Deliverance from the wrath of God will only be for those who have put on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of the hope of salvation. This is another way simply to say that only those who have put their trust in Jesus will escape God’s wrath. All who do, will. All who don’t, won’t. This is a sobering word in light of the suddenness and inevitability of the return of Christ. It could happen any day! Are you ready?