



Old Testament Reading – Isaiah 65:17-19
New Testament Reading – Revelation 21:1-6, 22-27

The Pillar and Ground of Truth **“The Imminent Return of Christ”** **Matthew 24:1-50**

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On the night before He was crucified, Jesus made two prophetic promises to His disciples.

- The first promise was that He would not leave them comfortless. Jesus said He would ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit, who would abide with them forever.
 - That prophetic promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit inspired those 120 disciples to preach the gospel in the languages of the 30,000 people from all over the world who were in Jerusalem for Pentecost.
 - That prophetic promise is fulfilled each time a lost person is born again, indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- The second promise was in two parts:
 - First, He was going to the Father’s House to prepare a place for those who received Him as their Savior and Lord.
 - Second, He would return and take those who received Him as their Savior and Lord, to live with Him in the Father’s House.

- That event is known as the “Rapture of the Church.”

The synoptic gospels of Matthew 24 and 25, along with Mark 13 and Luke 21, are called:

- The “Olivet Discourse,” because Jesus spoke these words from the Mount of Olives.
- The “Little Apocalypse,” because Jesus gave the disciples the sequence of events from the final days of the church-age to His return to establish His kingdom upon the earth.
- Jesus said certain events would begin to happen on earth, and then, over the years, those events would increase in intensity and rapidity.
- However, when they saw all of those events happening at one time, the people living in that generation would know they were in the season of the end of the age, and some of them would actually see the second coming of Jesus to the earth.

In Matthew 24:3-6, the disciples asked Jesus when these things would take place, what would be the “sign” of His return, and the end of the age? In Matthew 24:36, Jesus said, ***“Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, but My Father only.”***

- However, in Matthew 24:1-50, Jesus described the “signs” preceding His return.
- **4 – Apostasy – “Take heed that no one deceives you.”**
 - Apostasy describes those who claimed to be Christians for many years, but then turned away from the faith and were deceived by Satan’s lies.
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:3 – ***“Let no one deceive you by any means, for the Day of the Lord will not come until the falling away comes first.”*** To fall away from the faith is apostasy.

- **6 – International Terror – “Wars and rumors of wars.”**

- There are as many as 67 active wars in the world today. Many of them are connected to the nation of Israel.

- **7 – International Poverty – “Famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.”**

- Nearly 10% of the world is affected by hunger – over 780 million people will not eat today, and 60% of those are children.
- Fifty years ago, doctors were confident they had the cure for every disease, but today, scientists are warning us of new diseases on the horizon for which there are no known cures.
- In 2023 there were over 15,000 earthquakes, including 19 with a magnitude of 7.0 or higher.
- The World Meteorological Organization says today’s extreme weather patterns are breaking all records.

- **9 – Christian Persecution – “You will be hated for My sake.”**

- Two-thirds of the Jews who are alive at the beginning of the tribulation will be killed, along with those who refuse to take the mark of the beast.
- 365 million Christians are subject to high levels of persecution and discrimination in the world today.

- **14 – World Evangelization – “And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world.”**

- Just before the bowl of judgments are poured out and the final holocaust begins, God will super-naturally present the gospel to every person on earth.

- **15 – The Abomination of Desolation – *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place.”***

- The Jews will see how they were deceived by the Antichrist, and they will run to Petra for safety.
- Those who do not worship the image of the Antichrist will suffer his wrath, but those who do worship the image or take his number will suffer the wrath of God.

- **29-31 – The Glorious Return of Christ – *“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”***

- The “sign of the Son of Man,” is not a flashing star, or a flaming cross that appears in the skies. The sign of the appearance of the Son of Man will be the Shekinah Glory of God glowing against the backdrop of the darkness of the world.
- The whole world will be in such a panic that many people will be dying from sheer terror.
- With the sun, moon, and stars no longer shining, they will be living in total darkness. They are cold, hungry, helpless, and without hope.
- But then, in the midst of such darkness, chaos, and confusion, the Light of the World appears – the glorified Son of Man, the unveiled majesty of the Son of God, the king of kings and the Lord of Lords, riding on the clouds like a chariot, and every eye shall see Him.

Final Warnings:

- **32-33 – The Parable of the Fig Tree – *“When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So, you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!”***

- The fig tree is a metaphor for the nation of Israel. While Gentiles controlled Israel for a time, Jesus said the Jews would return to Israel and control Jerusalem. Since 1967, the Jewish people have controlled Jerusalem – that is, the “budding” of the fig tree.
- Jesus said the generation that saw this “budding of the fig tree” in 1967 would not pass away until the return of Christ.

- **37-41 – The Example of Noah’s Day – *“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be, for in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them away. So, also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”***

- According to Genesis 6:1-5, the days of Noah were marked by untamed violence and demonic oppression, just as we see today.
- Even though they saw the Ark being built, and they heard Noah preaching about the coming flood, the people of that day were so apathetic, they went about business as usual, as if nothing was going to happen.

- However, God's judgment came upon those who ignored the warnings.
- A new study from Pew Research finds that the religiously unaffiliated – a group comprised of atheists, agnostics and those who say their religion is “nothing in particular” – is now the largest cohort in the U.S.

- **45-50 – The Faithful and Evil Servant – *“Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.”***

- Almost two thousand years ago, Peter warned us that in the last days, people will mock the idea of Jesus returning to this earth, which is why they have no fear of the future.
- However, the rise in the global prophetic events, including the scoffer's mocking, should cause us to see our Lord's return is near, and the rapture of the Church is even nearer.
- Since we don't know the day or the hour of our Lord's return, we should live each day as if “this could be the day.”
- What difference would it make in your life if you knew the rapture of the Church would happen tonight at 6:00 PM?