

What We Believe Lesson 13 – The Second Coming & Millennial Reign

Article 13 of the Church of God Declaration of Faith:

We believe in the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to reign on the earth for a thousand years.

Definition of eschatology: The term “eschatology” means the study of the “last days.” This term deals with many things concerning the last days:

1. Death of Christ
2. Resurrection
3. Judgment
4. Tribulation
5. Heaven and hell

This lesson is to focus our eschatology on God, and we look forward with expectation to the future events: 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”

I. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

A. Its prominence in the Scriptures:

- One out of every thirty verses in the Bible mentions this doctrine: to every one mention of the first coming, the second coming is mentioned eight times.
- 318 references to it are made in 216 chapters.
- The books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and chapters of Matthew, Mark and Luke are devoted to the subject.
- It was the theme of the Old Testament prophets.
- Jesus, Himself, bore constant testimony to His coming again: John 14:3, Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21, John 21:22
- The angels, who told of His first coming, bore witness to His second coming: Acts 1:11, Hebrews 2:2
- The Apostles faithfully proclaimed His second coming: Acts 3:19-20, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Hebrews 9:28, 1 John 2:28, Jude 14-15

B. It is the Christian's hope looking forward to His second coming:

- Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.
- 2 Peter 3:11b-12 what manner of *persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹²looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?
- John 14:3 “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”
- Revelation 22:12 “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.”
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16 “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”

C. This teaching is the greatest incentive and motivation for consistent Christian living until the Lord returns:

- Luke 21:34-36 admonishes the believer to “take heed to yourselves lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting, [an intemperate or immoderate indulgence in something (*such as food or drink and drunkenness, pleasures*)] and cares of this life, and so that day comes upon you unawares. Watch your therefore and pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”
- 1 John 2:28, 3:3 And now, little children abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.
- **Question for our life to answer on every occasion:**
“Would I like to have Christ find me doing this when He comes?”

D. It is a doctrine of great comfort to the believer:

- 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸**Therefore comfort one another with these words.**

- Question to consider: Why would such a comforting doctrine be spoken against by many, even some Christians?
- Reasons:
 - a. The unreadiness of some believers to meet the Lord
 - b. Preconceived views that deny His second coming
 - c. Extravagant predictions on the time of His coming
 - d. Lack of knowledge of the scriptures.
- The denying or rejection of Jesus' second coming is of greater ignorance and denial than that of the Jewish Pharisees and Sadducees and Jewish people of today.

II. What is meant by the Second Coming of Christ?

A. Personal and visible coming:

- Acts 1:11 [angels] who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.
- Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.
- His second coming will be a bodily, personal and visible coming of the Lord to receive His saints and afterward to reign on the earth.

B. Erroneous views concerning the second coming of Christ:

1. The second coming means Christ's death:

- Death is not what is meant by the events of 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.
- The second death is the opposite of "the dead in Christ shall rise" from the dead when Christ comes again.
- According to John 14:3 – "Christ comes for us, and not we go to Him; I will come again and receive you unto Myself."
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-57 – Declares that at the second coming of Christ we overcome death, not succumb to it – Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all

be changed—⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”⁵⁵ “O Death, where *is* your sting? O Hades, where *is* your victory?”⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law.⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- The error of this belief is when we substitute the word “death” for the second coming of Christ in such places where this coming is mentioned.

2. That the second coming means the coming of the Holy Spirit:

- Yes, it’s true the Holy Spirit is coming, but that is not the second coming:
- John 14:21-23 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.
- Response:
 - a. Many of the testimonies and promises of the second coming were given after Pentecost: Philippians 3:21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.
 - b. 2 Timothy 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord.
 - d. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
 - e. At Pentecost - the coming of Holy Spirit - **Christ comes to us**, we don’t go to Him.

- f. At the second coming, **He takes us to Himself**, He does not come to us
- g. The events of 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 did not occur on the day of Pentecost, nor did they occur when the believer receives the Holy Spirit.

3. That the second coming refers to the destruction of Jerusalem:

- Response: The events of 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 did not take place then.
- John 21:21-23 & Revelation 22:20 were written after the destruction of Jerusalem:
 - Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what *about* this man?”²² Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remains till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.”²³ Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but “If I will that he remains till I come, what *is that* to you?” He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.”
 - He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!
- From all the scriptures presented, it is evident that the second coming of Christ is a future event.

C. The need of recognizing the distinction between Christ’s coming **for** His saints and **with** His saints:

There is a distinction between the **presence** and the **appearing** of Christ:

- The presence of Christ refers to His coming **for** His saints.
- His appearing is **with** His saints.
- Remember, the second coming of Christ covers a period of time, not a single event or moment.
- The second coming of Christ includes several events: Christ’s birth, circumcision, baptism, ministry, crucifixion, the rapture, the great tribulation, the millennium, the resurrection, and the judgments.

III. The Purpose of the Second Coming

A. As far as the Church is concerned:

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout,

with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord.

- 1 Corinthians 15:50-52 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
- Philippians 3:20-21 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.
- 1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.
- When Jesus returns at the second coming, He will raise the righteous dead and change the righteous living: simultaneously they shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air to be with Him forever.
- Ephesians 5:23, 32 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ³²This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
- 2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.
- Revelation 19:6-9 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” ⁸And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”
- Matthew 25:1-10 “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. ³Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶“And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ ⁷Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise,

‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’⁹ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

- The Church, the Body of Christ will then be married to her Lord!
- Believers will be rewarded for their faithfulness in service at His coming:
- Matthew 25:19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.
- 2 Timothy 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.
- 1 Peter 5:4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.
- 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,¹³ each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴If anyone’s work which he has built on endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.
- 2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

B. As far as it concerns the unconverted nations and individuals:

- Matthew 24:30 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.
- Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.
- Matthew 25:31-32 “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats.
- Revelation 20:11-12 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead

were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

- Isaiah 26:21 For behold, the Lord comes out of His place
To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;
The earth will also disclose her blood and will no more cover her slain.
- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.
- There is a distinction recognized between the judgment of the living nations, and that of the great white throne judgment.
- They are not the same judgment, for no resurrection accompanies the judgment of the living nations, as will happen at the great white throne judgment.
- Also, there is a 1,000-year gap between two judgments.
- One is at the beginning of the Millennium and the other is at its close.

C. The purpose of the second coming in reference to the Jewish nation:

The Jewish people will be restored to their own land in an unconverted state – Isaiah 11:11 It shall come to pass in that day *that* the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea.

Isaiah 60 also records this restoration to the land. They will:

- Rebuild the Temple and restore worship – Ezekiel 40-48
- Make a covenant with Anti-Christ [7 years, one week], in the midst they will break the covenant – Daniel 9:27, 2 Thessalonians 2
- Pass through the great tribulation – Matthew 24:21-22, 29; Revelation 3:10, 7:14
- Be converted to Yeshua as Lord, become great missionaries during the Tribulation – Zechariah 8:13-23
- Never be removed from their land again.

D. Regarding the Anti-Christ and the enemies of God's people:

- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

- Revelation 19:20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.
- Revelation 20:10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

E. Purpose of the second coming of Christ – to set up the Millennial reign on earth:

- Millennium means 1,000 years – the Millennial Reign is the 1,000-year reign of Christ upon the earth
- Revelation 20:1-4 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. ⁴And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
- The Millennial Reign begins with the coming of Christ **with** His saints: with the revelation of Christ after the great tribulation
Matthew 24:29-30 “**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. ³⁰Then 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.
- This is done at the close of the 70th week of Daniel – Revelation 19:11-14, Daniel 7:21-22, Zechariah 14:3-9
- Then comes the destruction of the Anti-Christ, the binding of satan and the destruction of the enemies of God’s people
Revelation 19:20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.
Revelation 20:1-3, 10 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²He laid hold of the dragon,

that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. ¹⁰The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

- Then the judgment seat of the living nations – Matthew 25 – based on how they treated the Jews – God’s chosen people.
- Then the conversion and ministry activities of the Jewish remnant
Zechariah 8:13-23 And it shall come to pass *that* just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear, let your hands be strong.’ ¹⁴“For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Just as I determined to punish you When your fathers provoked Me to wrath,’ Says the LORD of hosts, and I would not relent, ¹⁵So again in these days I am determined to do good To Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear. ¹⁶These *are* the things you shall do: Speak each man the truth to his neighbor; Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace; ¹⁷Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; and do not love a false oath. For all these *are things* that I hate,’ Says the LORD.” ¹⁸Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, ¹⁹“Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘The fast of the fourth *month*, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, And the fast of the tenth, Shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts For the house of Judah. Therefore, love truth and peace.’ ²⁰“Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Peoples shall yet come, Inhabitants of many cities; ²¹The inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying, “Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD, And seek the LORD of hosts. I myself will go also.” ²²Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.’ ²³“Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard *that* God *is* with you.”’

IV. The Nature of the Millennial Reign

A. It is a Theocracy: Jesus Christ Himself is the King

- Jeremiah 23:5 “Behold, *the* days are coming,” says the Lord, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.
- The Apostles will reign with Christ over the Jews – Isaiah 66, Matthew 19:28

B. The capital city will be Jerusalem:

Isaiah 2:1-4 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ² Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. ³ Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. ⁴ He shall judge between the nations and rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

C. The reign of Christ will be one of righteousness and equity:

Isaiah 11:4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

Psalms 98:9 before the Lord, For He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity.

D. The earth will be renovated:

Romans 8:19-21 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind."

E. The events closing the Millennium are apostasy and rebellion:

- Revelation 20:7-9 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. ⁹ They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.
- Revelation 20:10 *satan is destroyed:* The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

- The Great White Throne Judgment

Revelation 20:11-15 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

F. A new heaven and earth are created – Revelation 21 & 22

V. The Time of Christ's Second Coming

Again, we must distinguish between Christ's coming **for** His saints – called the rapture or Parousia – and His coming **with** His saints – the revelation or epiphany.

As to the “signs,” we also must distinguish between those events Christ foretold would be the beginning of sorrows and those signs that are going to happen specifically near the approach of the coming of Christ **with** His saints.

- Luke 21:29-33 Then He spoke to them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. ³⁰When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. ³¹So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. ³²Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. ³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ²For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. ³For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. ⁴**But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.** ⁵You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸But let us who are of

the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

A. No one knows the day or the hour:

- Matthew 24:36-42 But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. ³⁷ But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two *women* will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.
- Mark 13:32 But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
- Acts 1:7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.”
- The day of the Lord’s return is hidden in the counsels of God Himself.

B. We must not forget that while we may not know the exact day or hour of Christ’s coming, we may know when it is near at hand:

There are certain signs which indicate its nearness:

1. General apostasy & departure from the faith:

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

2 Timothy 3:1-5 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

Luke 18:8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

2. A time of heaping up of wealth:

James 5:1-9 Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your misery that are coming upon *you!* ²Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. ³Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. ⁴Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you

kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. ⁵You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned; you have murdered the just; he does not resist you. ⁷Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord's at hand. ⁹Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

C. It seems clear from the teaching of Scriptures that there is nothing to prevent the coming of Christ **for** His saints (The Rapture) at any moment. But there are objections to this view. Some Say:

1. The Gospel has not been preached in all the world; therefore, Christ's coming can't happen until that is accomplished:

Matthew 24:14 – And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Response: Understand the context of the phrase “end of the age.” The Rapture is not the end of the age; it is Christ's coming For His saints.

The word for “world” means the inhabited earth; the gospel is the good news, by witness, not conversion. We can only witness, we can't force people's acceptance of Christ as Savior.

All of this evidence has been fulfilled.

2. Peter, James and John were told they should not taste of death until they had seen the coming of Christ's kingdom – Matthew 16:28, Mark 9:1, Luke 9:27

Response: True, but this could be considered to be fulfilled as they saw Christ Transfigured on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Peter said as much: 2 Peter 1:16-18 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

3. The disciples were told they would not go over all the cities of Israel until the Son of Man would come:

Matthew 10:23 When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

Response: Mark 6:30, Luke 9:10 show they did not finish all the cities, or evidence they ever did because of the Jews' rejection of the Gospel message. Could it be that under the 144,000 Jewish witnesses (Revelation 11) the preaching of the Gospel will be fulfilled?

4. Christ said, this generation will not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled.

Matthew 23:34, Luke 21:32, Mark 13:30

Response: A "generation" could be 40 years, or it could be referring to the Jewish race.

It is the same word used in Matthew 11:16; Mark 8:38; Luke 7:31, 16:8, 17:25; Phillipians 2:15; Psalms 22:30 and 24:6

Matthew 11:16 But to what shall I liken this **generation**? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions,

Mark 8:38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful **generation**, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Luke 7:31 And the Lord said, "To what then shall I liken the men of this **generation**, and what are they like?

Phillippians 2:15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse **generation**, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

If that is the meaning of "**generation**," then consider the Jewish generation has been preserved and will be preserved until the Kingdom comes into fulfillment.

Jesus concludes with the admonition to:

"Watch and pray for you know not what hour your Lord comes!"