

ESCHATOLOGY

Introduction

We believe Jesus Christ will return to earth personally and visibly according to the promises in Scripture. His return will be for the purpose of establishing His absolute governmental rule and authority on the earth. Christians are exhorted to be watchful and obedient until His return. While there are many viewpoints concerning His second coming, we believe Christians should look for His return with great anticipation while obediently pursuing the mandate of the Great Commission. At His second coming, the righteous who have died and are now with Him will be resurrected and rule with Him.

Issues of Concern and Practice

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”

Matthew 24:36

“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.”

Matthew 24:42

“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”

Matthew 25:13

There is much diversity of perspective concerning the specifics of Jesus’ second coming and the rapture of the church. We embrace a variety of perspectives and do not believe any one opinion can or should be used as a test of orthodoxy within a local body of believers. Preoccupation with this subject has produced stagnant and sterile churches that are spiritually lethargic, evangelistically passive and weak in their social and cultural impact. A church that embraces her identity as an “overcomer” is generally more concerned with her obedience to God’s command of occupying the earth until Jesus returns rather than with speculation on when He will return. Scripture clearly states that we won’t know when He will return.

How Should We Anticipate His Return?

- We are to continue doing the important work that needs to be completed before Jesus returns—preach the gospel throughout the world!
- We keep working on building His kingdom realizing that we don’t know exactly when Jesus will return.
- We are to keep busy because neither Jesus’ delay nor His imminent arrival should be an excuse for idleness.
- We remain prepared, realizing that each day is the possible day of Jesus’ return (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18).

Major Points

Jesus’ return will be universally unmistakable. It will be obvious to everyone (Mark 13:26). We should be aware of the signs of Jesus’ second coming, but also realize these signs are easily misread.

Paul wrote, “So that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure” (2 Thessalonians 1:4). This group of believers to whom Paul was writing was considered great in the kingdom of God because of their endurance and steadfast continuation of the work of Christ while in the midst of persecution and attack. The point of Paul’s eschatological message to the church was to encourage each one to “stay the course” in their Christ-honoring, relevant lifestyle.

Conclusion

With this in mind, we affirm that Jesus Christ will be returning for a mature bride who has reached “the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13, NASB). He is coming for her as she makes her garments of holiness and righteousness.