

Waiting in Hope Causes Confusion – Part 3

Introduction and Review

- Last week we saw that error in interpretation leads to error in application & causes great CONFUSION.
- First example of error was futurists (1Th. 5:1-3) – desiring to know specific timing about Christ’s return in order to be ready [Demas – 2Tim. 4:10].
- Second example of error was preterists (2Th. 2:1-4) – reaching radical conclusions about Christ’s return from difficult texts & other sources [Hymenaeus & Philetus – 2Tim. 2:14-19].
- Accurate interpretation leads to accurate application resulting in great ENCOURAGEMENT (1Th. 5:5-11; 2Th. 2:13-17).

I. When Will Christ Return

Zealous expectation leads to error in interpretation & application (Lk. 19:11-22). Jesus’ teaching about eschatology was/is often misunderstood (Jn. 21:20-23).

A. Imminent/Soon

There are texts in the Gospels & NT letters that appear to teach that Christ would return in the first century (Mt. 10:23; 16:28; 24:34). Accurate interpretation is essential.

B. Delayed a long time

There are texts in the Gospels & NT letters that appear to teach that Christ’s return would be delayed for a long time beyond the first century (Mt. 24:14; Mt. 25:5, 19; Lk. 12:41-48). Accurate interpretation is essential considering the above mentioned texts.

C. Uncertainty

There are texts in the Gospels & NT letters that appear to teach uncertainty regarding the time of Christ’s return (Mt. 24:36; Mt. 25:13; Lk. 12:35-40).

Accurate interpretation is essential considering all the above mentioned texts:

Jesus is not teaching or emphasizing WHEN He will ultimately return, but He is teaching believers in every generation to always be READY (Lk. 12:40; 2Pe. 3:3-12; Tit. 2:11-14).

II. What Are The Signs

A. Events in the first century (already)

The “signs of the times” means that past & present events reveal truth about the present & future (Mt. 16:1-3; 11:5). Many signs of Mt. 24:1-28 were fulfilled in the first century: wars, famines, earthquakes, believers persecuted & martyred, apostasy, false prophets... & destruction of the temple. Most signs have continued until today: wars, natural disasters, believers are persecuted & martyred, apostasy, false prophets, gospel preached & false christs,

B. Events still future (not yet)

Most signs will continue into the future: wars, natural disasters, believers will be persecuted & martyred, apostasy, false prophets, gospel will be preached, etc. (2Tim. 3:1-4; 2Pe. 3:11-13).

The signs do not reveal WHEN Jesus will return, but they reveal THAT Jesus must return – He is the only HOPE to permanently end the signs (Lk. 17:20; Rev. 21:4-5).