

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST !

Scripture reading Matthew 24 & 25

How are we feeling today ? The Corona Virus seems to be everywhere, people across the world dying it is a pandemic and no one knows what's going to happen next!

I have heard it said by a few people, due to this virus that we are living in the last days, we are near the end!

How fortunate for me then that I was asked to talk about the 2nd coming of Jesus and end times.

The word used to talk about the study of end times is

Eschatology – Greek eschatos = last
ology =study

It doesn't mean the study of escaping restraints, that's escapology !
it means the study of the end times and this is something we can't
escape from or ignore !

When I was a child I was fascinated with the end times

I watched a series of end times movies

Thief in the night

Distant Thunder

Image of the beast

The Prodigal Planet

Then there's 'Left Behind' with Nicholas Cage in 2014 a film which
echoed the story line from the 1970s series.

The ideas of the film come from these verses

“in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed”.

1 Corinthians 15:52

&

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 ¹³Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. ¹⁴For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵According to the LORD's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the LORD, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the LORD in the air. And so we will be with the LORD forever. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

I grew up on this and I was interested in anything to do with the end times, from Armageddon to the second coming of Christ.

Someone once said to me “Don’t worry about Armageddon, it’s not the end of the world”.

I thought the end times were going to happen in a certain way and honestly thought most Christians thought the same. It was really only when I went to Moorlands College that my eyes were opened. I had not realized there were so many other interpretations and views. You will be most pleased to know that I won’t be going through all these views as I only have around 20 minutes. Maybe another time !!!!

We are going to look at Jesus coming back – I like to call it the 2nd Christmas !

Here is my 1st question to you

When did you last seriously think about Jesus coming back ? Why did you think about him coming back?

My 2nd question is: On a scale from 1 – 10 (*with 1 being extremely scared & worried to 10 incredibly excited*) How do you feel about Jesus coming back ?

It's good to recognize how we are feeling about it. I imagine that some of us are feeling scared about what's going to happen as some of us are scared about the corona virus, but I would like to say a few things first of all, before looking at Christ's return.

First, we are living in the end times **now** it's not a period of time that we are waiting for. Acts 2:17 Peter on Pentecost quotes Joel

**“In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.**

Second, We will face hardship !

2 Timothy 3:12 **In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,**

John 15 **“If they persecuted me they will persecute you”**

So keep in mind that we are in the last days and we should expect persecution if we follow Jesus. We were in the last days in the 1980s, 1990s, 2000 and we were in the last days 1000 years ago. The Corona virus did not usher in the last days – we are already in the last days.

The moment Jesus ascended to heaven the clock started to tick for when he is coming back.

Acts 1:11 Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

When we read Matthew chapters 24 & 25 they are hard hitting and challenging. Jesus says all these things 2 days before the Passover or Maundy Thursday on the Tuesday in his final week

He had just given the Pharisees a bit of a telling off (Matthew 23) and finished with a longing for Jerusalem but the people had rejected him. He goes on to mention that he will be back in, verse 39 of chapter 23.

“For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”.

Now Jesus tells his followers what’s going to happen next. The temple will be totally destroyed – AD 70 by Titus and the Romans

More wars, rumours of wars. Nation will rise up against nation, famines, earthquakes. You will be handed over, persecuted and put to death!

It can be argued that all these things are happening now and have been happening over the past 100 years. If you want to know where are brothers and sisters in Christ are killed, oppressed and persecuted then just go to the website of ‘Open Doors’ where they have produced a list of the top 50 countries in the world where you will almost certainly be persecuted for being a Christian. The sad thing is in my humble opinion they are largely being ignored by the world for various reasons.

There is list of things that Jesus says and all of this builds up to the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven to gather his people, and you can find verses throughout the New Testament about Jesus coming back and some of those I’ve mentioned.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

It won’t be baby Jesus wrapped in a manger but Jesus riding on a white horse, his eyes like blazing fire, his head crowned and written on him are the words ‘King of Kings and Lord of Lords’!

What a day it’s going to be and if you follow and love Jesus it’s a day that should excite us, a day to really look forward to. Everyone will know and it will be an event that no one will be able to miss. For those that have rejected Jesus, the bible says that they will mourn. This is serious, where do you stand? Have you accepted Jesus or have you rejected him? Jesus says that he stands at the door and knocks please, please open it. He wants to breathe in you new life. He wants a relationship with you.

What can we the Church learn from this passage of scripture

- Be ready & keep watch – Mt 24:42 Mt 25 starts with the parable of the ten virgins and talks about 5 virgins being ready and 5 missing out because they weren't ready. It ends with Jesus saying keep watch. Let me challenge you to think more about Jesus coming back. Maybe we've become too content with our lot in this present moment of time
- Be prepared - Mt 24:45 - 46 **"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.**
Jesus goes on to talk about this more in chapter 25 in the parable of the talents where 3 servants were given money and 2 were using their money to invest and increasing their money and 1 did absolutely nothing except bury it. That servant was thrown out and the other 2 shared in their master's happiness. What are we doing with our time, our gifts and our talents ?
- Let's get working - Chapter 25 finishes with the Parable of the sheep and the goats and Jesus talks about 'When the Son of Man comes' and all the nations will stand before him and he will separate the sheep and the goats

Matthew 25: 34 - 40

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' ³⁷"Then the righteous will answer him, 'LORD, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' ⁴⁰"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

The Church needs to get to work ! We can't just stand still while waiting for something to happen. We can't be like the lazy servant who didn't use his talent and just buried it. We can't just fall asleep we need to wake up and be ready ! There is a world out there that needs Jesus, a world that needs practical help and spiritual help. A world that needs feeding, clothing, visiting, inviting. At this moment you could think we are limited due to self-isolation but we can still pick up the phone, write an email, use social media to post messages of encouragement and of challenge. Offer to get someone's

shopping, talk at a safe distance to your neighbours. Don't miss this opportunity

What about you the individual are you ready? If Jesus came back now and saw how you're living your life and what you are doing with your talents, would he be happy? Are we fit or are we out of shape spiritually. Have we got the knowledge in our heads only or are we applying the word of God with our actions and in our hearts.

To conclude

Whatever the future looks like whatever is your interpretation on Biblical end times let's be ready, keep watch, be prepared and let's get to work !

JESUS IS COMING BACK !