

## Study 2. The Time/s of Christ's Return

i. This Present Time: There has been and still is the teaching that the Second Coming of Christ could happen at any time.

The early Church was not taught this: 2 Thes. 2. 1 – 3; “Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him, we ask you Brothers, (v2) not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter .... saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come, until 'the rebellion' occurs and \*'the man of lawlessness' is revealed - the man doomed to destruction (v3). He will oppose you and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”

The rebellion and the man of lawlessness (Abomination of Desolation): standing in the Holy Place – the Temple: **Mtt. 24. 15;** “So when you see \*standing in the \*Holy Place (Temple) (See below –\*Antiochus Epiph). the ‘abomination that causes desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet – let the reader understand ...” Read **Mk. 13. 14 – 26; Dan. 8. 13; 9. 27; 11. 31; 12. 11; Mtt. 24. 15;** and **Rev. 13. 11 – 15;** This has not yet happened in the context in which Jesus is speaking in the gospels. No Jewish Temple exists – at the moment. (The Temple that existed in Jesus' day was destroyed in A.D. 70.)

*(Note: Antiochus Epiphanies: In the year 167. B. C. A Greek ruler by the name of Antiochus (4<sup>th</sup>) Epiphanies placed a statue of Zeus in the Temple at Jerusalem. Sometime later he also sacrificed a pig on the Alter. That in itself was an Abomination. Antiochus was a type or rather, a forerunner of antichrist ('man of lawlessness') but there are things that are not compatible with the antichrist of the last days: Jesus' prophecy, is 200 yrs after, therefore is not the same event; two reasons:*

- i. *Antiochus made no \*treaty with the Jews which would take place during the last seven years of time. (\*Dan. 9. 27; 'He will confirm a covenant for one seven.')* And then broke it half way through.
- ii. *There is no Jewish Temple. The one at the time of the New Testament was by Herod the Great reconstruction of the second Temple 20. B.C. (originally built by Zerubbabel 536 – 516. B.C.) and destroyed in 70. A.D. by Titus the Commander of the Roman armies.)*

The Scripture does say however – “No one knows the day or hour, not even the Angels in heaven, nor the Son but only the Father. (Mtt. 24. 36;); “You must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.” (Lk. 12. 40).

No human being can fix a date for the Second Advent. So far as I can see Daniel is the only one who has any statistics of *time*, but the scriptures do clearly tell us the signs we must watch for when the time is near. However, Daniel is not allowed to know the day or hour. What he *has* been given can seem to be quite obscure.

Therefore, it is important to view the Second Advent from the stand–point of the present. (Titus 2. 12, 13;); “...live self – controlled, upright and Godly lives in this present age while we wait for that blessed hope – and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.. “

Three things we are told to do during this present Time

### **W**atch.

It is a time to be living by faith - *that faith* which looks forward to Christ's appearing, but at this present time – Mk. 13. 5; ' Watch out.. v23, Be on your guard..vv 32 - 35; Be on your guard .. Mtt. 24. vv 4 - 7; 15; **Watch** out that no one deceives you, for many will come in my name, claiming I am the Christ, and will deceive many. 6 you will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. But the end is still to come (RSV) is not yet (AV) (V7) Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.’

'There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. (8) All these are the beginning of birth pains.' (15)  
So

'**when you see** standing in the holy place the abomination that cause desolation, spoken of through Daniel the Prophet – let the reader understand.....' see Dan. 8. 13; 11. 31; 12. 11; Mark. 13. 37; ..  
'I say to everyone: **'watch!'**

Continually watching and looking for signs. Jesus notably mentions the Budding '**Fig Tree**' Mtt. 24. 32; Mk. 13. 28; Lk. 21. 29;

The budding of plants tell us of the season's change. However there is more to the budding 'Fig Tree' in the context in what Christ is saying, as we shall see.

Note: *More details on the signs of Christ's coming will be studied later.*

**QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION: WHAT MUST WE WATCH FOR? ?**

### **Work.**

But we cannot afford just to watch, we must also **work**:

I was told many years ago '*we should pray as if everything depends on God, and work as if everything depends on us.*'

Those ones God has really used to make an impact in the world and upon society have always been those who are willing to work.

Jesus had much to say about the importance of work.

Many of His parables illustrate that:

We must redeem the time Rm. 13. 11. 12; '*And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.*

*The night is nearly over; the day is almost here, so let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.'* Jesus also said Jn. 9. 4; '*I must **work** the works of Him that sent me whilst it is day, for the night comes when no man can **work**."* When asked by His Disciples when He would restore the Kingdom to Israel, just immediately before His Ascension, He replied: Acts. 1. 6 – 8; '*It is not for you to know the times or seasons, which the Father has put in His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you: You will be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.'*

*The scripture instructs us to 'redeem the time because the days are evil.'* (Eph. 5. 16;)

**QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION: WHAT MUST WE BE DOING?**

### **Wait.**

The scripture also emphasises that we should be **waiting** (hoping) *patiently for 'that day'* (Rm. 8. 25;)

1. Thes. 1. 10; '*...you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to **wait** for His blessed Son from heaven. (Titus 2. 13;) Live/*ing* Godly lives while we **wait** for the blessed hope the glorious appearing of our great Saviour, Jesus Christ.'*

Finally the day will dawn.

The return of Jesus will release all constraints Rm. 8. 18 – 21, 23; '*We shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. For we know that the whole of creation groans and travails in pain together until now ... **waiting** for the adoption ... the redemption of our bodies.'*

There will be the physical manifestation of the Kingdom of God. Rev. 21. 2,3; '*I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a Bride beautifully dressed for her husband..'*

It will mean the passage of the Church from time into eternity. 1. Thes. 4. 16 – 18; '*And so we will be forever with the Lord.'*

The believers condition will correspond to his/her position. 1. Jn. 3. 2; '*We shall be like Him'* (1 Jn. 3. 2; see also (2Pt. 1. 4;).

**QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION: WHAT WILL BE OUR ATTITUDE WHILE WE WAIT?**