

THE IMMINENT RETURN OF THE LORD

Can God Tell Time?

How many times have we heard someone proclaim that the coming of the Lord is imminent? I have personally heard it many times during the past several decades. It is said with the intention of impressing upon the hearer the nearness of Christ's coming. Notice the definition of imminent from Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition.

Imminent, likely to happen without delay; impending; threatening: said of danger, evil, misfortune.

This writing will consist primarily of quotations of Scripture, definition of words and comparison of various Bible translations.

We will now consider a number of scriptures that contain what are referred to as *time statements*. Our understanding of much of the Bible depends on how we view these *time statements*. (Emphasis mine throughout)

Both Jesus and John the Baptist began their preaching by proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven was soon to come.

THE KINGDOM IS ALMOST HERE

Matthew 3:1-2 (KJV) ¹ In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,
² And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 4:17-18 (KJV) ¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand

Both Jesus and John proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was *at hand*. Following is the definition of *at hand*, according to Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionary.

G1448, From G1451; to make *near*, that is, (reflexively) *approach*: - approach, be at hand, come (draw) near, be (come, draw) nigh.

The kingdom was indeed at hand, for the King was now personally with them in the flesh. The kingdom would be inaugurated just a few weeks after Jesus' resurrection and ascension.

Those who are in Christ are now in that same kingdom.

Colossians 1:13 (KJV) Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Romans 14:17 (KJV) For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

We find the Apostle Peter using the term *at hand* in his writing.

1 Peter 4:7 (KJV) But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

If *at hand* did not pertain to the people in that first century generation, why did Peter tell *them* to be sober, and watch unto prayer? It makes absolutely no sense otherwise.

The Greek word translated *at hand* (number 1448 in Strong's), is also translated *near* ten times in the New Testament. The following three references should be sufficient to remove all doubt as to the meaning of the word.

Matthew 21:34 (KJV) And when the time of the fruit drew *near*, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

Luke 21:8 (KJV) And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and the time draweth *near*: go ye not therefore after them.

Acts 9:3 (KJV) And as he journeyed, he came *near*

Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

It is also translated *nigh* twenty one times, as illustrated in the following references.

Acts 7:17 (KJV) But when the time of the promise drew *nigh*, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt.

James 5:8 (KJV) Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth *nigh*.

If the prophesied coming of the Lord was *at hand, nigh, near* two-thousand years ago, how can anyone still believe it has not yet happened? We must allow scripture to interpret scripture. The word of God is consistent from Genesis through Revelation.

WHERE ARE THE OLD FOLKS?

We find an interesting scripture in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew.

Matthew 16:27-28 (KJV) ²⁷ For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

²⁸ Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man

coming in his kingdom.

If Jesus did not return during the lifetime of some of those standing there when He spoke these words, would this not mean that there are some two-thousand year old people alive on the earth today? If not, why not?

THIS GENERATION

Matthew 23:34-39 (KJV) ³⁴ Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify; and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city:

³⁵ That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

³⁶ Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

³⁷ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

³⁸ Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

³⁹ For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till

ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

There can be no doubt as to the generation referred to in this portion of scripture. Jesus was foretelling the judgment that was to come upon Jerusalem in their generation. This was literally fulfilled in 70 AD, in that very generation. We find the same terminology in the following verse.

Matthew 24:34 (KJV) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Please see Mark 13:30 and Luke 21:32.

Why do so many have difficulty understanding this verse? Jesus said certain events would happen before that specific generation passed away. If I were to say to you, *this is certainly a wicked and perverse generation*, I am sure you would have no difficulty understanding that I was referring to our present generation. Why should it be so difficult to understand when we see the same terminology in the Bible?

DID HE REALLY MEAN ALL THINGS?

Let us now turn our attention to the part of this verse that says, “till *all* these things be fulfilled.” To ascertain what *things* He was referring to we need to read the previous

thirty-three verses. Rather than quote them all we will just list them.

- Verse 5 False Christs
- Verse 6 Wars and rumors of wars
- Verse 7 Famines, pestilences and earthquakes
- Verse 9 Persecution
- Verse 11 False prophets
- Verse 12 Iniquity shall abound and the love of many shall grow cold
- Verses 15-20 The abomination of desolation
- Verses 21-22 Great tribulation
- Verse 27, 30 Coming of the Son of Man
- Verse 29 Sun and moon darkened, stars fall from heaven, the powers of heaven shaken
- Verse 31 Sound of trumpet and gathering of the elect

Mark and Luke use the same terminology in their account of this prophecy.

Mark 13:30 (KJV) Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

Luke 21:32 (KJV) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

We find confirmation of the preceding in the Gospel According to Luke.

Luke 17:25 (KJV) But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

Did you notice that he also used the term *this generation*? This should convince the most skeptical of the biblical meaning of *this generation*. However, just in case some may still not be convinced, we will continue a little further with this line of reasoning.

The word *generation* in the above references is from the same Greek word. It is number 1074 in *Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionary*.

G1074 *genea ghen-eh-ah'* From (a presumed derivative of) G1085; a *generation*; by implication an *age* (the period or the persons):—age, generation, nation, time.

Following are excerpts from several Bible Dictionaries in my QuickVerse 2009 software. Notice how they translated *genea*. (Superscript added for clarification.)

In the New Testament “generation”¹⁰⁷⁴ refers to a specific contemporary audience. *Holman Bible Dictionary*

In Matt. 1:17, the word means a succession or series of persons from the same stock. Matt. 3:7, “Generation¹⁰⁸¹ of vipers” = brood of vipers. Matt. 24:34, “This generation”¹⁰⁷⁴ = the persons then living contemporary with Christ. 1 Pet. 2:9, “A chosen generation”¹⁰⁸⁵ = a

chosen people. *Parsons Bible Dictionary*

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Webster’s Dictionary is in agreement with the Bible dictionaries referenced above.

Generation, 4 the average period (about 30 years) between the birth of one generation and that of the next 5a) all the people born and living at about the same time. *Webster’s New World College Dictionary, Third Edition*

GENERA'TION, n. The act of begetting; procreation, as of animals.

1. Production; formation; as the generation of sounds or of curves or equations.

2. A single succession in natural descent, as the children of the same parents; hence, an age. Thus we say, the third, the fourth, or the tenth generation. Gen 15:16.

3. The people of the same period, or living at the same time. *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*

Here is something I found very interesting. The phrase

this generation is found fifteen times in the New Testament. In all instances it is translated from Strong's number 1074 (*genea*), discussed above. Please go back and reread that section.

Following is a listing of these fifteen verses of scripture for your consideration. If you will read them, and keep them in context, I believe you will be convinced of the biblical meaning of *this generation*.

- Matthew 11:16 (KJV) But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,
- Matthew 12:41 (KJV) The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.
- Matthew 12:42 (KJV) The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.
- Matthew 23:36 (KJV) Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.
- Matthew 24:34 (KJV) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

- Mark 8:12 (KJV) And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.
- Mark 13:30 (KJV) Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.
- Luke 7:31 (KJV) And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?
- Luke 11:30 (KJV) For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.
- Luke 11:31 (KJV) The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.
- Luke 11:32 (KJV) The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.
- Luke 11:50 (KJV) That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;
- Luke 11:51 (KJV) From the blood of Abel unto the

blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

- Luke 17:25 (KJV) But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.
- Luke 21:32 (KJV) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

AUDIENCE RELEVANCE

We need to remember that the Bible was not written to *us*. For example, which of Paul's letters were written to *the church in the United States, in the 21st century*? They were addressed to believers in specific localities in the first century. The following examples should suffice to confirm this.

Romans 1:7 (KJV) To all that be in *Rome*, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:2 (KJV) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of *Galatia*:

2 Timothy 1:2 (KJV) To *Timothy*, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Another good example would be the letters to the seven churches of Asia in the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation. John wrote to the angel of the church of Ephesus, in Smyrna, in Pergamos, etc. He did not say *to the church in the United States in 2009*. It was written to seven specific churches in the first century.

Let us now consider another example of audience relevance. To whom was Jesus speaking in the following references? (Italics added for emphasis.)

Matthew 26:63-65 (KJV) ⁶³ But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

⁶⁴ Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

⁶⁵ Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

The Lord was speaking *to the high priest* about events *he* would witness. I will give another example before leaving this aspect of our study. (Italics added for emphasis.)

1 Thessalonians 4:15 (NASB) 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 not precede those who have fallen asleep.

Who were the intended recipients of this letter? Was it not the church of the *Thessalonians*? Even though it is a part of our Bible, it was not written *to* us. The events portrayed in the New Testament epistles pertain specifically to the first century, pre 70 AD church. They are applicable to us in the sense that they contain examples for us in living a righteous life in our generation. We cannot apply the prophecies of God's judgment on the temple and Old Covenant Jerusalem to events transpiring in our time. Always keep audience relevance in mind.

1 Thessalonians 1:1 (NASB) Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the *church of the Thessalonians* in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

What gives us the authority to wrest prophecy out of its first century context and project it centuries into our time. Multitudes are sitting back in complacency expecting at any moment to be *raptured* physically out of this world. I do not mean to be unkind, but if this is you, you are in for a big disappointment. The only way we will get out of this world is when the breath leaves our body. A diligent

study of this subject, I believe, would prove very enlightening. Truth, not tradition, will make us free (John 8:32).

ALL THINGS FULFILLED

Luke 21:22 (KJV) For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Luke 24:44 (KJV) And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.

Jesus very plainly stated that *all things* written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Himself must be fulfilled. The Law of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy), the prophets and the Psalms pretty much encompass the entire Old Testament. They foretold His coming, His suffering, death and resurrection, the resurrection of the dead, and His return in judgment. *All these things* were to be fulfilled within a well-defined time frame. Their fulfillment was already accomplished, or was imminent in the first century.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN LAST DAYS?

So-called prophecy teachers telling us we are living in the last days constantly bombard us through the communication media of television, radio, the internet and print. I know of some prophecy teachers who said they were in the *last days* about two-thousand years ago. Somebody has to be mistaken. I will quote from their writings and you can decide whom you want to believe. (Italics added for emphasis)

Hebrews 1:1-2 (KJV) ¹ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

² Hath in *these last days* spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Did you notice, the writer did not say *the* last days, but *these* last days? The same writer also said the following.

Hebrews 9:26 (NKJV) He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the *end of the ages*, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

It appears to me that *end of the ages* might just be another way of saying the *last days* of the age.

Jesus came in the *last days* of the age do offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin. The age that was ending was the era of

the Law of Moses.

Galatians 4:4-5 (NKJV) ⁴ But when the *fullness of the time* had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, *born under the law*,
⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Let us now turn our attention to another *old time preacher* who believed he was living in the last days some two-thousand years ago. This preacher was quoting from the writing of the Old Testament prophet, Joel. We will first quote Joel's words, and then the words of this *preacher from long ago*. Oh, by the way, that old time preacher was the Apostle Peter.

Joel 2:28 (KJV) ²⁸ And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

Acts 2:16-17 (KJV) ¹⁶ But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

It is obvious that Peter believed he was living in the last

days. Remember, Peter was one of the *inner circle* of Jesus' disciples, and had been with Him during the entire time of His ministry. Let us now consider the teaching of another member of the *inner circle*.

1 John 2:18 (KJV) Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

The words translated *last time* in this verse are numbers 2078 and 5610 in *Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionary*.

G2078 Last, A superlative probably from G2192 (in the sense of *contiguity*); *farthest, final* (of place or time): - ends of, last, latter end, lowest, uttermost.

G5610 Time, Apparently a primary word; an "hour" (literally or figuratively): - day, hour, instant, season, X short, [even-] tide, (high) time.

Most modern translations of the Bible translate these two Greek words as *last hour*. Following are two examples

1 John 2:18 (NKJV) Little children, it is the *last hour*; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the *last hour*.

1 John 2:18 (NASB) Children, it is the *last hour*; and just

as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the *last hour*.

We have quoted three first century writers who believed and taught that they were living in the last days. I choose to believe them.

GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Revelation 1:1 (KJV) The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must *shortly* come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:

Revelation 22:6 (KJV) And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must *shortly* be done.

G5034 Shortly, From the same as G5036; a *brief* space (of time), that is, (with G1722 prefixed) in *haste*: - + quickly, + shortly, + speedily.

Revelation 1:1 (NASB) The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must *soon* take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John,

Revelation 22:6 (NASB) And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must *soon* take place.

Revelation 1:1 (ESV) The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must *soon* take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,

Revelation 22:6 (ESV) And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must *soon* take place. "

This should be sufficient to convince the most skeptical that *shortly* means exactly that, *shortly*, certainly not centuries. We will complete this little study *shortly*. In the meantime, *let* us continue in the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 1:3 (KJV) Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is at hand*.

Revelation 22:10 (KJV) And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is *at hand*.

Philippians 4:5 (KJV) Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is at hand*. John 2:13 (KJV) And

the Jews' passover was *at hand*, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

The meaning of *at hand* in the above references should be obvious from the context. Nevertheless, we will give the definition from *Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionary*.

G1451 At hand, From a primary verb *agchō* (to *squeeze* or *throttle*; akin to the base of G43); *near* (literally or figuratively, of place or time): - from, at hand, near, *nigh* (at hand, unto), ready.

It is translated *nigh* eighteen times, *near* four times, *at hand* six times.

The New American Standard Version translated this word as *near* in all four references cited above.

COMPARISON BETWEEN DANIEL AND REVELATION

Revelation 22:8 (KJV) And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things.

Revelation 22:9 (KJV) Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

Revelation 22:10 (KJV) And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is *at hand*.

The angel instructed John to; *Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book for the time is at hand* (Verse 10). The events prophesied were to be fulfilled *soon*.

Daniel, on the other hand, was instructed to *shut up, seal up, keep secret* the vision, because he was seeing events centuries into his future.

Daniel 8:26 (Amplified) The vision of the evenings and the mornings which has been told you is true. But *seal up* the vision, for it has to do with and belongs to the [now] *distant future*.

Daniel 8:26 (NASB) The vision of the evenings and mornings Which has been told is true; But keep the vision secret, For *it* pertains to many days *in the future*.

Daniel was told two other times that his visions were to be *sealed until the distant future, in the latter times*. Please notice the following references.

Daniel 10:14 (NKJV) Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision *refers to many days yet to come*."

Daniel 12:4 (NKJV) But you, Daniel, shut up the words,

and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.

This was told to Daniel approximately five hundred years before the Book of Revelation. If five hundred years is *many days in the future*, how is it possible for *shortly, at hand, near, nigh and soon*, to be two thousand years? This is *four times* as long as Daniel's *many days in the distant future*. We must be consistent in our interpretation of the Scriptures.

UNSEALING THE SEALED, REVEALING THE HIDDEN

The Book of Revelation is the *unsealing* and *revealing* of that which was *sealed* and *hidden (kept secret)* in the book of Daniel. Let us now examine the word *revelation* in the first verse of this book.

Revelation 1:1 (KJV) The *Revelation* of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:

G602 apokalupsis, From G601; *disclosure*: - appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, *revelation*.

This Greek word is translated:

- Revelation 10 times
- Revealed 2 times
- Revelations 2 times
- Appearing 1 time
- Coming 1 time
- Lighten 1 time
- Manifestation 1 time

The definition of this Greek word, and its usage in the Scriptures, seems to me to be confirmation of what we have previously stated. Please permit me to repeat myself. The Book of Revelation is the *unsealing* and *revealing* of that which was *sealed* and *hidden* (*kept secret*) in the book of Daniel.

We will digress for a moment to inform the reader that the conclusion of this study is *at hand*. We now return to our study by examining one more portion of scripture.

Revelation 22:7 (KJV) Behold, I come *quickly*; blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Revelation 22:12 (KJV) And, behold, I come *quickly*; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Revelation 22:20 (KJV) He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come *quickly*. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

G5035 Tachu, Quickly, Neuter singular of G5036 (as adverb); *shortly*, that is, *without delay, soon*, or (by surprise) *suddenly*, or (by implication of ease) *readily*: - lightly, quickly.

Quickly is translated from the same Greek word (tachu) in all three of the above references. I have several translations in my QuickVerse Bible software that translate *tachu* (Greek) differently than the King James Version. We will show verse seven from three of them.

Revelation 22:7 (English Standard Version) "And behold, I am coming *soon*. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

Revelation 22:7 (New Living Translation, Second Edition) "Look, I am coming *soon*! Blessed are those who obey the words of prophecy written in this book."

Revelation 22:7 (International Standard Version) "See! I am coming *soon*! How blessed is the person who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book!"

CAN GOD TELL TIME?

Many like to refer to a statement in 2 Peter in an effort to refute the biblical *time revelent statements*. They claim that since God is eternal, time has no meaning to Him. Let us look at this verse and see exactly what it says.

2 Peter 3:8 (KJV) But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord *as* a thousand years, and a thousand years *as* one day.

Did you notice that little two-letter word, *as*? It does not say that a day *is* a thousand years, but is *as* a thousand years. It may be true that time means nothing to God, but it means a great deal to humankind. When God speaks to man He speaks in language man understands.

Hear is another verse to consider.

Psalms 90:4 (KJV) For a thousand years in thy sight are but *as* yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.

I have a question for those who steadfastly maintain that a day *is* a thousand years, and a thousand years *is* a day. Since a watch in the night is about *three hours*, would not I have just as much justification in proclaiming that three hours *is* a thousand years, and a thousand years *is* three hours. If not, please tell me why not.

We will conclude this study *quickly*.

CONCLUSION

The nature of Christ's return, the resurrection and judgment has not been the focus of this article. Whatever

the nature of these events, the time of their fulfillment was *at hand, near, and soon*, two thousand years ago. We will never correctly understand these events without the proper understanding of the biblical *time statements*.

I have endeavored in this study to show what I believe the Scriptures teach concerning the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. All of the biblical *time statements* clearly indicate an *imminent* return of the Lord *in that first century generation*. To stretch these *time statements out* over thousands of years deprives these words of their plain and simple meaning. His return cannot be *imminent* to them and to us two thousand years later I believe the teaching set forth herein to be much more consistent with the Word of God than the various dispensational interpretations.

We do not need to consult the news media for the interpretation of biblical prophecy. When we permit scripture to interpret scripture, we find a wonderful consistency from Genesis through Revelation; many obscure passages become clear. I realize it is sometimes difficult to give up long held beliefs, but it is necessary if we are to be true to the Word of God. We need to pay careful attention to what the Scriptures actually say instead of what we assume they say. We must be consistent in our interpretation of scripture.

And yes, God can tell time.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

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