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# You Can Know the Season, The General Time of Christ's Coming


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*~ A Saturday Morning Post #362 ~*

Let me be clear from the start. We do not know the exact time of Christ's coming, but we do know the general time, the overall sequence of events leading up to His coming and the rapture of the church. This is the message of this post and what each of you need to clearly understand.

**Matthew 24:32 –** *"Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near..."* A parable is a story that communicates, that illustrates a spiritual truth. This story is about a fig tree whose branches are becoming tender and are growing new leaves. When this happens, we know for certain that summer is near, that it's coming soon.

**Matthew 24:33** – "*... so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the doo*r." When we see the things happening that Jesus spoke about in vss. 4-30, we know His coming is

near, that He is right at the door, that He will soon rapture the church. It's not saying Israel is the fig tree and that becoming a nation in 1948 is the sign that Jesus' coming is near, but it's a lesson about how we can know the general time, the season of His return.

Likewise, Luke 21:28-33 tells us the parable of the fig tree, but its lessons are more specific. First, we learn that our redemption is near, for it is at Christ's coming that we are redeemed, that we are delivered from our fleshly body and are glorified. Second, we learn that the kingdom is near, for Christ is the King, and it is at His coming that He begins His kingdom on earth. Rev. 11:15

Here is a list of the things from Matt. 24:4-30 that must occur before Jesus' coming. There's deception, false Christs, wars, rumors of war, famines, earthquakes, great tribulation, martyrdom, hate, apostasy, betrayal, lawlessness, an unloving world, Christians persevering, preaching the gospel, the abomination of desolation (Antichrist is revealed), Jews fleeing from Judea, false prophets, signs and wonders, great tribulation shortened, the sign of the end of the age, and the sign of Christ's coming.

These 22 things must take place before Christ returns to rapture the church. Christians need to know that there's this sequence of end-times' events – that this one thing happens, and then this next thing happens, and so on. And Christians should expect them to happen, look for them to happen, see them happen, and be encouraged when they do happen, for each of them is a signpost pointing to Christ's coming.

I need to remind you of Daniel's 70$^{th}$ week, a 7-year timetable of prophetic events (Dan. 9:24-27). It starts with the confirming of a treaty between the Antichrist and Israel; at its midpoint, the 3½ year mark, the abomination of desolation occurs and the Antichrist is revealed; at its endpoint, a large remnant of Jews is saved. The 22 things listed in Matt. 24 take place during this week. I believe that wars, famines, etc.

begin sometime before Dan. 70th week and continue into the first half of that week (Matt. 24:4-8). I also believe that the building of the Jewish temple occurs during the first half of this week. Most importantly, Christ returns to rapture the church sometime during the last half, the last 3 1/2 years of this week, a time known only to God the Father. Matt. 24:36

**Matthew 24:34** – *"Truly I say to <u>you</u>, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place."* We read about all these things taking place, and now we learn that there will be a select, special group of people living during a certain period of time who will not pass away until they see all these things happen. When they see them happen, they know they won't have to wait long to be with Jesus, for they see *"the day drawing near"* (Heb. 10:25), that *"their redemption is drawing near"* (Lk. 21:28), that *"the kingdom of God is near"* (Lk. 21:31), and that *"He* (Christ) *is near"* (Matt. 24:33).

When Jesus said these things, He was speaking like a prophet. He was talking to the apostles, to His disciples, but He was also speaking to a future generation of disciples who needed to be alerted, who needed to know these things would be taking place, and who were to be watchman (1 Chr. 12:32, Ex. 3:17). So Jesus is talking to a future *<u>"you"</u>*, and this is us, and our children, grandchildren, and great-children. As I look at God's eschatological word and observe the world around us, I believe it is in the coming decades that Christ will return to rapture His church. This is an amazing and astounding truth, a sobering but exciting reality that a future generation of Christians will, not long from now, see, not just a few of these things take place, but *"all these things take place."* Matt. 24:34

This is what Jesus tells you in Matt. 24: *"See to it that no one misleads <u>you</u>"* (vs. 4); *"<u>You</u> will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that <u>you</u> are not frightened"* (vs. 6). *"Then they will deliver <u>you</u> to tribulation, and will kill <u>you</u>, and <u>you</u> will be hated by all nations"* (vs. 9); *"When <u>you</u> see the abomination of desolation…* "(vs. 15*); "If anyone*

*says to <u>you</u>, 'Behold, here is the Christ'… do not believe him"* (vs. 23); *"Behold, I have told <u>you</u> in advance"* (vs. 25); *"when <u>you</u> see all these things, recognize that He is near"* (vs. 33); *"be on the alert, for <u>you</u> do not know which day your Lord is coming"* (vs. 42).

**Matthew 24:35 – *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."*** That heaven and earth, as we now know it, will pass away, will not exist forever, is a momentous, unfathomable event. This is contrasted with the ultimate truth, that God's holy, eternal, perfect, personal, prophetic word will never pass away. God is emphasizing the power, the supremacy, the certainty, the necessity of His word, specifically, in this area of eschatological truth.

Matt. 24:35b, in its immediate context, is reinforcing the truths of vss. 33-35a, that all these things are going to take place because God's word said they would (vss. 4-30), including the fact that heaven and earth will pass away (Ps. 102:25-26, Rev. 21:1). God also said they would occur before Christ's return to rapture the church, and that there's a generation of believers who will see them happen. Not only that, but all these things will happen because God will cause them to happen. Is. 46:9-11, Eph. 1:9-11

We must also see Matt. 24:35 in its larger context, for God placed it right in the middle of this critical end-times' chapter. But why did God do it? To convince you that His eschatological word is true, absolutely, 1000% true; to stress the extreme importance of end-times' truth at this time in history; to help you see that the prophetic truth in Dan. 9; Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 17, 21; Rom. 8, 11, 15; Eph. 1; Phil. 3; 1 Th. 4-5; 2 Th. 1-2; Tit. 2; James 5; 1 Pet. 1; 2 Pet. 3; 1 Jn. 2-3; and Rev 1-22 is no small thing, no minor doctrine, but a major doctrine, and must be seen and taught as such, especially for those living in these last years before Christ's coming, and specifically for that generation who will be watching all these end-times' events. 2 Tim. 4:1-2

I hope you are realizing that Christ's coming is not imminent, that it can't happen at any moment, that it can't happen today, tomorrow, or next year. Nothing in God's word says that no signs or prophesied events need to occur before the rapture. In fact, it says just the opposite. It's telling you that all these things listed in Matt. 24 must take place before Christ's coming and the rapture. And I hope you understand that the rapture is the 1st event at His coming. All these things spoken of in vss. 4-30a take place before Christ's coming and the rapture of the church which do not happen until vss. 30b-31. This truth is also taught in 1 Cor. 15:22-23; 1 Thess. 4:15, 17; 2 Thess. 2:1-9; 2; and Rev. 6:1 – Rev. 7:14.

As I just said, Matt. 24 explicitly says that *"all these things"* will occur before Christ's coming and the rapture, and that we will see them happen. Heb. 10:25 tells us that we will *"see the day drawing near"*, which means we will be literally seeing these events happening in the world that Matt. 24 says are leading to Christ's returns to rapture the church. 2 Thess. 2:1-10 says that Christ's coming and the rapture of the church take place after Antichrist's coming. Christians living on earth at this time will see the Antichrist before they see Jesus and before they are raptured.

Many Christians believe that the rapture of the church is imminent. But that is not true, for nothing in God's word says it is true, and many verses tell us that it is false. The imminency of Christ's coming must be recognized as error. And it is not without harm, for it causes Christians to think they won't be here when the Antichrist is revealed, and that they won't experience great persecution. Our loving Father wants us to know what will be happening and not be surprised.

**Matthew 24:36** – *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."* I am amazed that some people set a specific date for Christ's return when Matt. 24:36 makes it clear that no one but the Father knows the exact time. No date is given to us in Matt. 24 or any other place in the Bible. What

we do understand, what is clearly explained in vss. 32-34, is that we can know the season, the general time period of Christ's return. Again, that's because Christians living on earth in the very last years of this age will witness all these Biblically identified events leading up to Christ's coming.

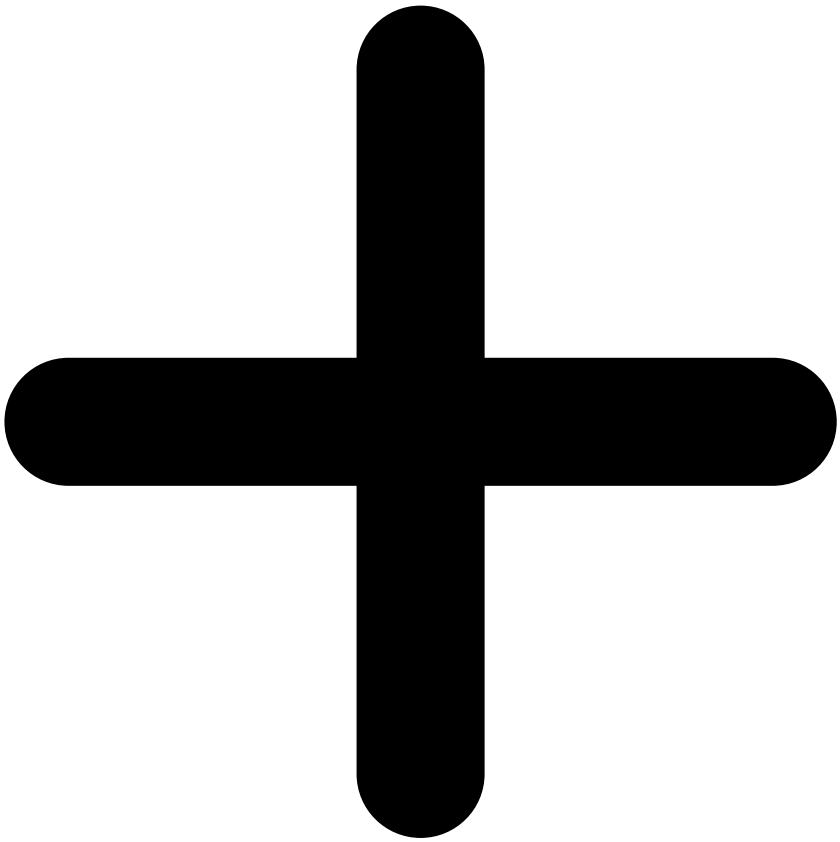
We have spent a lot of time in this and recent posts talking about different events that are happening before Christ's coming. Some of these events, like more wars, increasing lawlessness, and great tribulation, are general in nature. But some are specific, like the abomination of desolation by the Antichrist, for this is a singular event occurring at a precise time, the 3½ year mark of Dan. 70$^{th}$ week. Those who are here when this happens know that Christ's coming is less than 37 months away (Rev. 9:5 — 42 months – 5 months = 37 months) – but we don't know the exact time.

2 Thess. 2:4 refers to a Jewish temple in Jerusalem, but there's no temple at this time. When we see this temple being built, we can say that Christ is coming very soon. But we can never say we know the day or the hour of His coming. As time goes on, we will be getting closer to Christ's return and more Matt. 24-described events will be happening, giving us more and more certainty and confidence that *"He is near."* Finally, we will see the sign of the end of the age and the sign of Christ's coming, and we will say that He is *"right at the door."* Matt. 24:33

What an exciting time to be alive, for Christ is returning soon to rapture the church. God gives us a needed and sufficient outline of what will be taking place before that happens. That's because He loves you and really wants you to know the general time and sequence of end-times' events. He doesn't want you to be ignorant, worldly, afraid, confused, in error, or sleeping, but to be knowledgable, holy, courageous, discerning, wise, and wide awake when Christ comes back. And God wants there to be watchman in every family and church, ones who know His prophetic word and how it relates to events in the world. Might

you be one!!! ***“Consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds… encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”*** **Heb. 10:24-25**

P.S. Here are some important posts about the timing of Christ’s coming and the rapture of the church: *“When Does the Rapture Take Place?”*, *“Antichrist Revealed, and Then the Rapture – 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4”*, *“When is Christ Returning to Rapture the Church?”*



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