

The Second Coming: Fact or Fiction?

Matthew 24:36-44

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“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”
 —Matthew 24:36

Where were you when JFK was assassinated? _____

Y 2 K? _____

9-1-01? _____

Background: Mathew 24:1-3, Questions

4-8, wars, rumors of war, famine, earthquakes

9-13, persecutions, spiritual decline, false prophets

14, gospel preached to ends of earth

15-22, abomination of desolation, great tribulation days

Fact or Fiction?

1. Agreements and Disagreements

Agreement about fact of second coming. John 14:3, Acts 1:7

Disagreement about the timing of the rapture and second coming.

Approximate Timeline

Pre-history (Pre-ternity)

4000 BC Creation week.

Birth of Noah, 2950

Flood, 2450 BC

Call of Abraham 1920

Exodus from Egypt, 1500 BC

Monarchy in Israel, 1095

Babylonian Captivity, 587 BC

Birth of Christ, 4 BC

Last Roman Emperor, September 4, 476 AD

Protestant reformation, 1517 AD

Church age, Last Days, 29 AD until now? ?

Return of Christ? ?

Eternity.....(Post-history)

Disagreements concerning Rapture timeline.

Pre- Mid- Post-tribulation

Rapture Scriptures:

Matthew 24:40-41

1 Corinthians 15:50-53

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

2 Thessalonians 2:1-7

Fact or Fiction

2. Uncertainty

4 different ways people interpret apocalyptic passages

1. Preterist – Most, if not all, of the book was fulfilled in the past.
2. Futurist - The things in the book are to be fulfilled sometime in the future.
3. Historical - The things in the book have been fulfilled in the life of the church in great events throughout history.
4. Spiritual - The things found are not literal but symbolize the struggle between the forces of good and evil throughout the centuries.

Challenges of Historical interpretation.

- Little comfort to those it was written to encourage
- Interpreters continually update/change dates/meaning (Israel, 1948, Y2K)

Public viewing vs. Surprise visit

Matthew 24:30-31 all peoples of the earth will mourn when they see

Matthew 24:36, 39, 42, But about that day or hour no one knows

Fact or Fiction

3. Urgency

Warnings to flee, Matthew 24:17-21

Abomination of desolation, Matthew 24:15, 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12, Daniel 9:2, 18, 26

Date setters, doomsday preachers remind us all of the urgency of the Gospel message.

“I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.”

—2 Corinthians 6:2b

Conclusion: Fact or fiction?

Scientific, provable, repeatable fact?---NO!

Future fact based on the promise of Jesus Christ?—Yes!

Example of Hebrew translation of prophetic perfect (past)

Literal reading,

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.” —Isaiah 9:2

Meaning

“The people walking in darkness will see a great light.” —Isaiah 9:2

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

—Hebrews 11:1

How does one see God’s future for his/her life?

World says, seeing is believing, but Christians say the we can only see by believing.