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# Sermon Notes

October 29, 2023

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## The Rest of the Story 2 Timothy 4:1, Matthew 24:27-39

### Be Prepared!

- ❖ “A readiness of mind and body to do your duty”
  - expect the unexpected
  - be prepared to handle unusual circumstances
- ❖ Christ followers are meant to live in a perpetual state of readiness for His return as judge of all the earth
  - Apostles’ Creed: “From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.”
  - there are over 300 references to Christ’s return in the NT
    - what implications do these truths have for us as we go about Christ’s business for us on a daily basis?
    - the last verse of the NT, Rev 22:20, ***Come, Lord Jesus!*** should be the heart cry of every believer

### When?

- ❖ Jesus’ disciples ask 2 things about His return (Matt 24:3)
  - when will it happen?
  - how will we know it is near?

- ❖ Jesus responds with a series of warnings and goes on to speak about what the nature of His return will be like when it happens
- ❖ Jesus’ return will be
  - **sudden**
    - many self-deluded people have misled others by claiming to know the date of Christ’s return
    - Jesus tells us that His return will be sudden, like lightning (Matthew 24:27)
      - ♦ as was the case at His first coming (Gal 4:4), whenever Christ does return, it will be at the **right** time (neither early nor late)!
      - ♦ Eph 1:10, when the times reach their fulfillment, God will gather together all things in Christ, ***things in heaven and things on earth***
    - Jesus is emphatic that NO ONE knows the time of His return (Matthew 24:36)
  - **literal, visible, physical**
    - skeptics and liberal Christian theologians have worked to undercut belief in a literal, physical return of Christ to the earth (“Jesus comes to you”)
    - in Matthew 24, Jesus speaks of
      - ♦ very obvious, visible, unmistakable signs that point to His return
      - ♦ a real, visceral response on the part of people from every people group on earth who have rejected Him (Matthew 24:30)
    - Jesus will come with power and in glory

### ■ unexpected

- in the same way that His return will be sudden, it will also be completely unexpected
- similar to what life was like prior to the worldwide flood at the time of Noah (Genesis 7)
- people will be doing their normal, everyday thing when the trumpet sounds and Christ comes back

### ■ cataclysmic

- Jesus' return will be global in scope as the powers of the heavens are shaken and life on earth as we know it comes to an end
- the angels of God will gather God's elect from every corner of the globe while the unredeemed run for cover (Rev 6:16-17)

## Here Comes the Judge

- ❖ Jesus comes to judge both the living and the dead
  - Jesus as judge is not a picture with which most people are familiar
  - when Jesus came to the earth the first time, He came as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
  - when Jesus comes again, He will not come as a lion from the tribe of Judah
- ❖ Jesus will come in power with glory as conquering king to dispense judgment and to establish His kingdom in which He will rule over all with perfect justice and righteousness
  - 2 Timothy 4:1
  - John 5:22-23, 27
  - Daniel 7:14

- ❖ For those who love Christ and long for His appearing, the judgment for sin along with its sentence of eternal death has already fallen on and been settled by Jesus at Calvary
  - for believers, Jesus' judgment will be an evaluation of the quality of how they lived their lives for Him and the motives with which they have served Him
  - Jesus will examine the nature of whatever fruit believers have produced through/for Him (1 Cor 4:2-5)
- ❖ For those who do not love Christ, Jesus' judgment will be solemn indeed
  - the sentence of God's condemnation (John 3:18)
  - eternal destruction (2 Thess 1:8-9)
- ❖ Jesus tells His followers in Matthew 27:44 to "Be Ready"
  - be prepared
  - keep short accounts with God and others
  - live each day as if it were your last
- ❖ When Christ comes, He should find His people
  - praying for revival
  - planning world evangelism
  - packed up and ready to leave!

## Personal Reflection

1. What are you doing to protect yourself against deception?
2. Does the prospect of Jesus' return fill you with joy or with fear? Why is that the case?
3. What are you doing to make yourself ready for Christ's return?