

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

October 16, 2016

Jesus Is Coming: When?

by Frank Himmel

Jesus is coming! Whenever He does, He will raise the dead (John 5:28-29), judge the world (Acts 17:30-31), receive His disciples to Himself (John 14:3), and punish the wicked (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10). Given the enormity of these events, people want to know when — when is Jesus coming? The simple answer is, we don't know. Here is what the Bible says about it.

A Fixed Day

Paul told the Athenians that God "has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Some of God's interim judgment days, i.e. judgments on nations, are conditioned on people's responses to His word (Jeremiah 18:7-10). Whether God's choice of the final judgment day is conditional or unconditional is not revealed (cf. 2 Peter 3:9). The point is, it is certain.

An Unknown Day

Jesus said, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" (Matthew 24:36). He then added, "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming" (v. 42; cf. 25:13). If we do

not know when the Lord is coming but we want to be ready, the only reasonable thing to do is get ready and stay ready. That is the emphasis of the parables that follow: the Watchful Servant (24:45-51), the Ten Virgins (25:1-13), the Talents (25:14-30), and the Sheep and the Goats (25:31-46).

An Unexpected Day

In this same discourse Jesus said, "For this reason you must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will" (Matthew

25:44). Paul likened it in that regard to the coming of a thief (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

It will catch many off guard, especially those who have consoled themselves that they are safe from divine judgment (v. 3). Instead, the Apostle urges us to be alert, sober, and ready (vv. 4-11).



For centuries, there have been speculators who think they can deduce the time of Jesus' coming by parsing Old Testament prophecies. Time and again they have set dates, and time and again they have failed. Of course they have! If ancient documents revealed the time of Jesus' coming, it would be neither unknown nor unexpected. (Note: Ironically, someone just last week dropped off a package of material for us which says it will be this month. We'll see!)

We do not need to know when Jesus is coming. It is enough to know that He is coming. The Bible puts the focus on being prepared. Are you? ■

The Old Paths

by Frank Himmel

“Thus says the Lord, ‘Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and you will find rest for your souls. But they say, “We will not walk in it”” (Jeremiah 6:16).



The nation of Judah was like a traveler at a crossroads. Though many did not realize it, they faced a critical decision. Their choice would decide the fate of the nation.

You and I are in a similar situation. The direction we take will determine the outcome of our lives – not only our eternal destinies, but our quality of life here as well. In this text, God used four verbs to tell us what to do.

- ▶ **Stand.** It is not a great idea to stop on an interstate highway while you decide which route to take! But life’s highway is another matter. On this road it is good to pause and reflect. Too few people do that.
- ▶ **See.** This word means to consider. Where am I? How did I get here? Where am I going? Am I in the right way? Am I confident about that? On what basis?
- ▶ **Ask.** Now, consideration turns to investigation. God tells them to ask for the old paths. Judah was once a prosperous, blessed nation. What path did their

ancestors choose that made it so? It was not the road of idolatry, immorality, and greed that characterized Jeremiah’s day. No, the old path was one of godliness. Long ago Moses had told them,

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. (Deuteronomy 30:15-16).

The “old paths” were and are those where God has marked the way. Jesus said, “I am the way...” (John 14:6).

▶ **Walk.** Now, consideration turns to action. It is not enough to know which path to take. You must walk the road. The Lord promised that if Judah would, they would find rest for their souls. Is that language familiar? Jesus, quoting this verse, said, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29).

The folks in Judah gave no heed. They were not about to submit to the old paths’ restrictions. Instead they consoled themselves with messages of “Peace, peace” spoken by other prophets and priests (v. 14). And they marched straight into the destruction that Jeremiah forewarned. Do not make the same mistake. ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	David Gray	John Baucom	Josh Baucom
SONG LEADER	Gary Hagler	J B Williams	Albert Harrison Sr
OPENING PRAYER	Adam Gibson	David Gray	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Howard Moore	Howard Moore	
CUP	Bruce Williams	Bruce Williams	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Josh Baucom		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel
CLOSING PRAYER	Chris Brooks	Josh Baucom	Hunter Lee