



## Wednesday Night Service

### "Questions About Prophecy – Part II"

1. *Why is the restoration of Israel to the Promised Land a sign of Jesus coming again?*

God told Ezekiel that He would bring His people back into the land. (Read: Eze. 37: 11-14) The dry bones in this passage refer to Israel. That promise included both the restoration of the Jews to the land God gave them and the regeneration of the people in the land.

(Key) When Israel declared Jerusalem her capital back in the summer of 1980 another step was taken toward the ultimate fulfillment of those prophecies which was another sign that we are drawing closer to the return of Christ.

2. *What are some general signs that suggest Jesus is coming soon?*

(Read: II Tim. 3:1-5) There are some conditions in the scriptures that imply the return of the Lord is soon. This verse states some of those conditions.

(Ask) How are we seeing the things in this passage happening now?

These things have been happening for generations, but it seems like many of the things mentioned in this passage have intensified.

The "Last Days" in this passage refer to two things:

- a.) The apocalyptic catastrophes of fire, judgement, suffering and the end of the world.
- b.) The imminent return of Christ.

The "last days" began with the descension of Christ and extend into the future as we wait for his return. Even though the chaos and corruption of these final days continues with a multiplied intensity, life continues on as it always has. But for the Christian, we must "press on" as Paul says. We must be faithful and stay true to the cause of Christ.

3. *How do we know that the rapture could occur at any given time?*

(Read: I Thess. 5:1-8) Paul says here that Jesus will come like a thief in the night. (vs. 2) A thief comes quickly and without warning. That is how Jesus will come. We must be ready for his return. Christians are exhorted or encouraged to watch for his return. (vs. 6) We must not just sit around and wait but we must be busy fulfilling the Great Commission. That is sharing the gospel so others may be ready for his return.

4. *When will the physical bodies of New Testament bodies be resurrected?*

Paul told the Thessalonian Christians not to grieve for their dead relatives and friends. Christians should take hope in the fact that the saved dead will be raised. Our hope is in the resurrection. (Read: 1 Thes. 4:13-17) The certainty of the resurrection for the Christian is based upon the resurrection of Christ. (Read: 1 Cor. 15:23) This verse says that because Christ rose from the dead, one day we will rise too! WE will rise at this coming. I Thess. 4:17 says that we will be "caught up to meet him in the air." The words "Caught up" mean that we will be resurrected. At his coming or what we refer to as the rapture, the dead in Christ will rise first then those living will rise to meet him in the air.

5. *Does the soul sleep after death until the resurrection?*

There are some scriptures that seem to teach that the soul sleeps after death. (Read: John 11:11) Here, Jesus says that "Lazarus is sleeping." There is another example in Mark 5:39 when Jesus says "Jairus daughter is not dead she is sleeping." In I Thes 4:14, Paul refers to those who are dead are "those who sleep in Jesus."

These scriptures are not teaching that the soul is asleep but rather the body is in the grave and that death here is a metaphor to describe being asleep (Read: II Cor. 5:8) This is a key passage. Paul tells us here that when the believer dies, he or she goes to be with the Lord. If the soul sleeps this would not be possible. At death, the Christian instantly enters the presence of the Lord.

When Jesus was dying on the cross, he told the repentant thief in Luke 23:43 that "Today you will be with me in paradise."

In the case of the scriptures that support soul sleep when Jesus was referring to Lazarus and Jairus daughter being asleep, he was not referring to their soul sleeping but their bodies sleeping in the grave until the resurrection.