

## Monday Morning Rewind – February 16, 2009

*Are we there yet?* If you mean, have we reached the conclusion of our seven-week “Community Conversations Live” meetings, the answer is *almost*. This Wednesday night will mark the official end of what has been a blessed series.

As relates to the second coming of Christ, however, the question, *Are we there yet?* formed the basis of our final “conversation” last Sabbath. From the beginning we affirmed that as surely as Jesus Christ came to earth the first time, He will come again the second time just as He promised. (See John 14:1-3.) The angels affirmed Christ’s promise on the day He returned to Heaven, testifying to the watching disciples, “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, **will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven**” (Acts 1:9-11).

A combination of testimonies from Jesus Himself, the apostles, and the Old Testament writers give us the following facts about Christ’s second coming:

1. Christ’s return will be a **visible** event. (*Matt. 24:27; Rev. 1:7*)
2. Christ’s return will be an **audible** event. (*Psalm 50:3, 4; 1 Thess. 4:16*)
3. When Christ returns, He won’t come **alone**. (*Matt. 25:31; Matt. 24:30, 31*)

The coming of our Lord will not be a secret event but rather the most incredible event that the world has ever seen. For some it will be a most wonderful event and for others it will be terrifying.

But perhaps the most beguiling aspect of Christ’s return is *when* it will happen. It’s the biggest “Are We There Yet?” question in history, and the disciples themselves were the first to ask it. “‘Tell us,’ they said, ‘when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?’” (Matt. 24:3)

Bible students who don’t want to be deceived must understand this next foundational truth:

4. Only the Father knows when Jesus will come again. (*Matt. 24:36*) As soon as you hear somebody set a date for Christ’s coming, plug your ears. Walk away. That is privileged information kept at the highest level of security. Even Jesus, the One who is coming, awaits the Father’s timing and command.

Nevertheless, Jesus loves us and gave us several types of “markers” or signs to look for that would let us know His coming is near.

- Signs in the natural world. (*Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:11, 25*)
- Signs in the social world. (*Matt. 24:12; 2 Tim. 3:1-5*)
- Signs in the economic world. (*James 5:1-5*)
- Signs in the political world. (*Luke 21:9-10*)
- Signs in the spiritual world. (*Matt. 24:23-26*)
- Signs in the religious world. (*Matt. 24:14*)

So, the question still persists, *Are we there yet?* Jesus has this warning for us: “Watch out that no one deceives you” (Matt. 24:4). Enjoy the journey, but make certain you’re headed in the right direction. All roads do not lead to heaven.

As with everything else we’ve been discussing these past seven weeks, Satan’s strategy in these last days is to distort the truth, ridicule the truth, obscure the truth, and ultimately deceive people into believing a lie. Rewind over the last seven weeks and here’s a good look at the enemy’s master plan:

- Get rid of Christ by removing Him as the Source of life. Substitute natural selection for creation.
- Vilify Christ by making Him responsible for suffering, or too weak to stop it.
- Diminish Christ by making the cross an object of sympathy but not the means of our salvation.
- Embarrass Christ by the actions of his followers.
- Replace Christ as the Resurrection and the Life with the doctrine of the immortal soul.
- Hijack Christ’s trademark on creation (The seventh-day Sabbath) and substitute the tradition of man for the commandment of God.
- Confuse Christians over the manner and timing of Christ’s coming so that they focus on things that don’t matter while overlooking the things that do.

In order not to fall into the devil's trap, we need to be concerned about the same things Jesus is concerned about. We may not be there yet, but Jesus better be *here* (in our hearts) now or it won't matter. You see, Jesus is not as concerned about *when* He's coming, as He is about *how ready* we are to meet Him. "Are we there yet?" becomes "Are we where God wants us to be as far as His righteousness and His character formed in us is concerned?"

This week, spend some time thinking about this question: Am I ready for Jesus to come? And determine not to settle for anything but a faith that truly matters. Faith that matters is a faith that makes us ready for the coming of Christ.—Pastor Randy

p.s. Remember our new worship times beginning this Sabbath: 10:00 AM Worship service; 11:45 AM Sabbath School; Time of Fellowship 12:45.