

KEN GENTRY'S QUESTIONS -and-ED STEVENS' ANSWERS

Ken Gentry's Questions:

Ed, do you believe in a future bodily, glorious return of Christ, a future physical, general resurrection of the dead, or an end of history with the Final Judgment of all men?

Ed Stevens' Answers:

Below is an explanation of my views on the BIG THREE eschatological events: the Second Coming of Christ, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Final Judgment at the End of the Age.

- **THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST** (Heb 9:28) is the same eschatological “coming” (Gk. *erchomai*) or “parousia” (Gk. *parousia*) that is mentioned repeatedly throughout the NT. For example, the word “parousia” is used four times in Matthew 24 –

- Mat 24:3 ...what will be the sign of Your [parousia], and of the End of the Age?
- Mat 24:27 ...so will the [parousia] of the Son of Man be
- Mat 24:37 ...For the [parousia] of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah
- Mat 24:39 ...so will the [parousia] of the Son of Man be

Since some partial preterists (e.g. Ken Gentry, et al) assert that Jesus here in Matthew 24 was referring to two different parousia's separated by thousands of years, it needs to be duly noted that all four uses of parousia in Matthew 24 are referring to the one-and-only eschatological coming of Christ at the End of the Jewish Age in AD 70. And Mat 24:3 clinches this point when it connects the Parousia to the End of the Age (i.e. not to the end of the world). Thus, Jesus is NOT referring to two different parousia's separated by thousands of years, but rather to the one-and-only Parousia that occurred in connection with the Destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Furthermore, Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, and Eusebius refer to a very VISIBLE and EXPERIENTIAL appearance of a superhuman face/form above the temple, along with the angelic armies in the sky, right around the time of Passover in AD 66 when the Zealot rebellion was just beginning. That was indeed a very visible, bodily, and glorious event which easily meets all the terms of the NT predictions of His Second Coming.

- **RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD** (1Cor. 15:12-13, 21, 42) -or- **RESURRECTION FROM** (out of) **THE DEAD** (Luke 20:35) – Notice that the eschatological resurrection was supposed to be a resurrection OF the dead ones (plural), or a resurrection OUT OF the dead ones (plural). Where were the disembodied souls of the dead ones? They were in Hades (Rev 20:13). When were those souls raised out of Hades? At the end of the millennium (Rev 20:13-15). The dead were raised, and then judged (Rev 20:13). Hades was emptied and then thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:14). This means that the eschatological resurrection was a raising of “souls out of Hades”(SoH) – NOT “bodies out of the ground” (BoG). Murray Harris and several others have shown very convincingly that SoH was the original concept for the eschatological resurrection. If you would like to see the documentation for that, simply private message me for the Murray Harris PDFs.

- **THE JUDGMENT OF THE LIVING AND DEAD** (Acts 10:42; 2Tim 4:1; 1Pet 4:5) – The eschatological Judgment was supposed to occur “at the Last Day” (Jn 12:48) after the dead were raised out of Hades (Rev 20:13-15). That judgement occurred in the unseen realm – NOT on earth in the visible realm.

And according to Paul in Acts 17:31, that appointed “day” of judgment was “about to arrive” (Gk. *MELLO*). When Paul was on trial before Felix, he mentioned the judgment that was “about to come” (Gk. *MELLO*), and it frightened Felix (Acts 24:25). In Paul's last epistle just before he was beheaded in Rome (AD 63), he stated that Christ Jesus was “about to judge” (Gk. *MELLO*) the living and the dead at His appearing (epiphany).

James the brother of Jesus, who wrote his epistle before he was killed by the Jews in AD 62, said that “the Judge is standing right at the door” (Jas 5:9). Has He been standing at the door for two thousand years now? Of course not! This first century imminency of the Judgment becomes even more conclusive when we remember that Jesus told his disciples to watch for the signs of his coming, and that when they saw those signs, they would know that He was “at the door” (Mat 24:33). Did some of them remain alive to see those signs occur in that generation?

Peter further confirmed the first century imminency of the Judgment when he said that the wicked “will give account to Him who is READY TO JUDGE the living and the dead” (1Pet 4:5). Then, two verses later Peter re-confirmed the radical nearness of that judgment when he said “the End of all things is near” (1Pet 4:7). As R.C. Sproul Sr. would say, “How near is near?” Did “near” mean “near” to them? I suspect so!

Jude inseparably links the eschatological Judgment of the wicked of his generation with the coming of the Lord with many thousands of His holy ones (Jude 14-15).

John in Revelation associates the avenging of the martyrs with the judgment of the living and the dead, when the saints would be rewarded and the wicked who desolated the land would be destroyed (Rev 6:10; 11:18; 14:7; cf. Rev 17-19). That appointed time of judgment was one of the things predicted in the Apocalypse which “must take place soon” and the time of its fulfillment “is at hand” (Rev 1:1, 3; 22:6, 7, 10, 12, 20). That is the same appointed time of Judgment that was supposed to occur after Hades was emptied (Rev 20:12-15).

Here is a summary of the BIG THREE eschatological events (Parousia, Resurrection, Judgment) that occurred in connection with the Destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70:

Scripture (1Thess 4:13-18; 1Cor 15:51-52) teaches that at the PAROUSIA the dead (plural) in Christ were RAISED out of Hades in the UNSEEN realm (Rev 20:12-15) to receive their new immortal bodies that were reserved in heaven for them (1Cor 15:37-38; 2Cor 5:1). Then the living saints had their mortal bodies CHANGED into immortal bodies (1Cor 15:51-52; 2Cor 5:2-4; Php 3:21), which put them into the UNSEEN realm with the resurrected saints. Then both groups of saints now together in the unseen realm were “CAUGHT UP TOGETHER” to meet Christ in the UNSEEN realm above, and remain with him forever afterwards (1Thess 4:17; Matt 24:31; John 14:3). Thus, the eschatological JUDGMENT took place in the UNSEEN realm right after the dead were raised out of Hades (Rev 20:12-15).