

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Church and Last Things, Session 14, Christ's Second Coming, Its Timing, Imminence, Interval, and Ignorance

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson and his teaching on Doctrines of the Church and Last Things. This is session 14, Christ's Second Coming, Its Timing, Imminence, Interval, and Ignorance.

We continue our studies in last things, specifically with Christ's second coming.

We have described its manner as personal, visible, and glorious. Now, we come to its timing. This is a matter that has occasioned not only controversy but frustration, even unbelief in the history of the church, as people have, time and again, foolishly set dates for Christ's second coming when we're specifically told nobody knows.

The key, it seems to me, is that we become theologians, pastors, and Christians who want to get a handle on it; we have to become jugglers. There are three different strains of teaching; I'll make them into balls; we have to keep three balls in the area at once. Each ball has a start with the letter I, imminence passages, interval passages, and, most importantly, ignorance passages.

Imminence, interval, imminence. That is, we are told to live in the light of Christ's second coming and any eschatology that buries that hope; this is a criticism historically of post-millennialism, unfortunately. Historically, it has dimmed the hope of Christ's second coming.

That's a mistake. We're to live in the light of his second coming. On the other hand, there are interval passages.

Of course, I'm going to go through this in detail from the texts. There are interval passages where we're told certain things have to happen before Jesus can come again. Most importantly, repeatedly and clearly, we're told we do not know the time of Jesus' return.

Imminence passages. These are tough passages. You know, intelligence is not protection against unbelief or even apostasy.

One of the smartest human beings ever, Albert Schweitzer, with degrees in music, theology, and science, was it? He ended up worshipping nature. In these passages, he did the amazing thing. He wrote and just shattered the old liberal view of Christ.

The old liberals were people looking down a well when they wrote about the lives of Jesus, seeing their own reflection in the water. No, he said, Jesus was an eschatological prophet. He just wasn't an ethical teacher.

He came talking about the last days and his coming and so forth, as well as the signs of the times and future events. Unfortunately, Albert Schweitzer concluded that Jesus was wrong. Based on these passages.

Well, I don't conclude that Jesus is wrong, but they are hard ones. Matthew 9:1, truly I say to you, Jesus is speaking, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power. Immediately following is the Transfiguration account.

I should have given credit to Tony Hoekema, Anthony Hoekema. As a matter of fact, his three big books influenced my writing tremendously, my teaching and writing, too, although I didn't always write in the areas in which he taught. But his book on humanity and sin was created in God's image.

It's just a wonderful book. His writings are clear and orthodox. He treats others fairly.

He works well with the Bible. His use of Greek grammar and syntax and the significance thereof is somewhat dated. He talks about the pinpoint errors, for example, but overall, it's good.

It's solid. It's really. And my own bias comes out.

He writes about the reform tradition. His book on the application of salvation, which deals with things like regeneration, calling, justification, sanctification, and so forth, is saved by grace. And that is the best book.

There's a lack of books in that area. That is the best book in that area by far. But his magnum opus was the Bible and the future.

This book was a needed book because the books that had carried the day and influenced evangelicals were only dispensational books. I respect my dispensational brothers and sisters, and I give them credit for writing at a level that people can understand. But the books of Dwight Pentecost, Charles Ryrie, and John Walvoord were very influential.

The New Scofield Reference Bible, so that perhaps the majority of Americans not only believed in the second coming of Christ, which is good, they were premillennialists of a dispensational stripe. Hoekema has a chapter respectfully critiquing dispensationalism. That's just his style.

He's so respectful. But his book presents an amillennial viewpoint. More importantly, it is biblical throughout, and there's so much to agree, no matter what your perspective is with it, that I really appreciate.

Anyway, I'm going to give his view of these three passages and then what I have found to be a better view from D. A. Carson's commentary on Matthew. Hoekema says this is an example of prophetic foreshortening, linking the resurrection and the second coming together. He thinks that Jesus is here, and they'll see the kingdom of God.

Some who are standing here will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it's come with power, is a reference to Jesus' death, and especially his resurrection, which is a foretaste of the second coming of Christ. His prophetic foreshortening, he likens to traveling out west, and when you first see the Rockies, they're like little dots on the horizon. They look so close together. As you get closer to them, there are miles and miles in between individual mountains, and that's what prophetic foreshortening is.

It's seeing the bird's eye big picture, and in this case, from that big picture, Jesus puts, in Hoekema's estimation, resurrection and second coming right together because they both have the same topic of glory, but in fact, 2,000 years have intervened between them, and his second coming is still not yet. That is helpful, and yet, I don't think it's talking about resurrection. The idea is basically right.

I think he's talking about the transfiguration of Christ being a manifestation of glory and a picture, a foreshadowing of the second coming. The Transfiguration is momentary; it didn't last, a short manifestation of the power of the kingdom and the glory. The parousia, the second coming of Christ, his appearing will be the full manifestation of it.

Compare the very preceding verse to Mark 9:1, whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, 838 of Mark, of him the son of man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his father with his holy angels. Then he says, truly, I say to you, there's some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come after it, the kingdom of God after it's come with power. So after speaking of the second coming, he says, they'll see a taste of this, and then immediately after six days, Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John, led them up to a high mountain, and he was transfigured before them.

So those three verses go together: 8:31, 9:1, and 2. Is it a problem passage? Sure it is. And if it was a strict prediction of the second coming, we understand Schweitzer saying it's an eschatological prediction; Jesus was wrong. Well, Schweitzer was wrong not to pay better heed to the context of the gospel of Mark.

Carson, D.A. Carson, expositors, commentary, and Matthew, this is a general reference, not simply to the resurrection, or Pentecost, or the like, but to the manifestation of Christ's kingly reign, exhibited after the resurrection in a host of ways, including the rapid multiplication of disciples and the mission to follow. More specifically, it is speaking of the transfiguration, which is indeed a manifestation of Jesus' glory, spoken of in 831, and in anticipation of the power he will show when he returns. The three evangelists stretch to find ways to communicate the brightness of Jesus' glory, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.

The other gospels say, as bright as the sun, or blazing with blazing light, blazing brightness, those kinds of things. Another eminence passage, Matthew 10:23. So, I'm admitting these are problem passages.

I'm giving possible explanations to them. Am I thereby trying to do away with eminence? Oh, no. No, no, no, no.

I'm convinced Jesus wants us to live in the light of his second coming. And I'll give passages to that effect when I'm done handling these. I don't want to duck the hard ones.

Matthew 10, 23. In the prediction of persecution, he says in 22, you'll be hated by all for my name's sake, but the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next.

For truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. Hoekema, again, appeals to this prophetic foreshortening, the seeing of the mountains from afar and then up close. Israel will continue to exist until the parousia.

Rather, I think the view is right that we make a mistake if we automatically see the words, the Son of Man comes to always and only speak of his second coming. Carson, Jesus coming is a coming in judgment against the Jews, culminating in the sack of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. I admit it's a problem.

I admit it's a problem. But in this context, that's a possible solution. I like that better than Hoekema's prophetic foreshortening idea here.

The last one is Matthew 24:34. I don't claim to have all the answers. I'm admitting the problems.

I'm giving a couple of possible solutions to each one. And then I'm going to affirm from clear passages that we are to live, looking for the Lord to come. And that has to be part of our theology and our life.

Matthew 24:34, 32. From the fig tree, learn its lesson. As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near.

So also when you see all these things, you know that he is near at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Hoekema works. And I love Tony Hoekema. I'm picking on him.

I disagree with his proposal, and I give his proposed solutions. They're not terrible, but I think I found better ones. I'm giving him out of respect for him, but I don't mean to have to give the impression I don't appreciate him.

I most appreciate his book. It's my favorite book. I've discovered some other ones that are good, too, but it's my favorite book on last things.

He says, Genea, generation, this generation means rebellious Jewish people. They will continue to the time when Jesus does come again. It is true, Genea, according to the dictionary, can mean clan, race, kind, generation, contemporaries, or age, the time of a generation.

So Hoekema, there's some linguistic basis, but again, I think Carson is better. Genea means generation. It means the distress of verses four to 28, including Jerusalem's fall happens within the lifetime of the generation then living.

Therefore, verse 34 sets a terminus a quo. We distinguish a beginning terminus, a terminus from which a quo from an ending terminus, and a terminus ad quem. Therefore, it sets a terminus a quo, a beginning terminus, and for the parousia.

It cannot happen until the events in verses four to 28 take place, all within a generation of AD 30. But there's no terminus ad quem, no final end to the distress other than the parousia itself. Of course, in expositor's commentary on Matthew, Mark, and Luke, page 507, Titus 2:13 is a better imminence passage.

I've dealt with the tricky ones. I hope more rather than less to your satisfaction. I don't personally have total confidence in new solutions.

And again, I admit the problems. If you think you have a doctrine with no problems, you haven't studied deeply enough. Believe it or not, the Bible is not, first of all, a systematic theology book.

It's a storybook giving God's true story. All scriptures are inspired and profitable for teaching. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, but we do the best we can.

But I don't like easy solutions to hard problems. In this case, I think I have reasonable ones, maybe not great ones, but reasonable ones for hard problems. But mark it down.

The Bible does teach imminence. Second, I mean, Titus, not second Titus. Titus 2:13, 2:11, for the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people.

Training us, grace not only saves, but grace also teaches; it is didactic. Training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age. Waiting for our blessed hope and appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession, who are zealous for good works.

Or how about 1 John 3? I'm showing that there are passages that teach God wants the church to live, expecting Jesus to come back. See what kind of love 1 John 3:1, the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. We are to take, to believe the imminence passages and to live looking for the return of Christ.

At the same time, so that's, I can juggle one ball, no problem. I got it. It's easy, I catch it.

Two balls, harder, but still possible. It's possible. Integral passages.

Scripture teaches certain things have to happen before Jesus comes again. How do we coordinate those with the imminence passages? That is a function of systematic theology. I got to get three balls in the air, and then we'll talk about that business.

We're not going to do it perfectly, but the point seems to be God wants each of the three types of passages, the three balls if you will, to impact us in certain ways, and he's after some kind of a balance. So, we look for Jesus to come again. Does that mean we don't plan? I knew a man, honestly.

Will you come and speak for us? I said, sure. Can you make it this date? No, I can't. I can make it this other month.

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I believe Jesus is coming back, so I can't plan. I forget what it was, three months in advance.

He was older than I was. I wanted to show respect to him, and I thought, man, is that goofy. His long-term plan is two months because he believes Jesus is coming back.

I believe Jesus is coming back, too, and we're to look for his coming, but it may not be within three months. As a matter of fact, that was more than, that was many years ago now. Oh boy, second, I mean Matthew 24:14.

I got second on the brain. I don't know why. Matthew 24:14.

I'll anticipate where I'm going with this. At the end of the day, I'm going to show from Matthew 24, from the same chapter, the same discourse, all three types of passages. That really shows me we're to have all three at once.

Matthew 24:14. We're going to talk later about the signs of the times, but Hoekema calls us the most outstanding and characteristic sign of the times. Matthew 24:14, and this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Implication: the gospel going to the world precedes the end. It looks like something has to happen in the end. Aha, how do we measure that? Well, that is a problem.

Wycliffe Bible translators still have a list of languages to go. Do they have to go to the, is that what it means? I don't, the Bible doesn't define it, but actually, it's rather exciting, as Hoekema says. The most outstanding sign of the times, the most characteristic one of the times between the times of Christ's coming, is the command to preach the gospel.

Boy, how God is on a mission. The Bible is missional in that way, and we rejoice in that. Luke 24:21 talks about a similar idea.

I'm sorry, a little dyslexia. Luke 21:24. Jesus foretells the destruction of Jerusalem is the context.

You'll see Jerusalem surrounded by armies. Then, know that its desolation has come near. Let those who are in Judea, Matt Luke 21:20, let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains and let those who were inside the city depart.

Let not those who are out in the country enter it, for these are the days of vengeance to fulfill all that is written alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days, for there'll be great distress upon the earth and wrath against his people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles.

Watch this until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Looks like a time of Gentile domination will come. Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD, and only its termination will be a precursor to the second coming.

Looks like an interval is implied. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 says something must happen first. Now concerning second Thessalonians 2:1. Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed either by a spirit or a spoken word or a letter seeming to be from us, seeming to be from us to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

Let no one deceive you in any way, for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, and so forth, who is usually taken to be the antichrist figure. Now, some have said we're to look for Jesus appearing, not the antichrist. I agree. I put imminence passages first, but it looks like there must be an antichrist figure revealed before the second coming of Christ.

There are integral passages along with imminence passages, but guess what? God wants us to look for Jesus' return, imminence. Certain things have to happen first, and I'm not totally confident of our ability to interpret those things in light of the imminence of passages, but certain things have to happen. So, if Jesus doesn't come back in the next three months or three years or 30 years or 300 years, we don't throw up our hands and say the bible's not true because there's an indication that there may be, let's say we're not so good at interpreting the intervals, let's say antichrist is already a not yet for example.

So, could one of those already antichrists turn out to be the not-yet antichrist? Yes. Is that going to be evident to us at the time? I'm not sure. In any case, the most important is the ignorance passages.

Most important of all are the passages telling us we do not know. How sad. Ah, William Miller, in the mid-1800s, called The Great Disappointment, predicted the coming of Jesus.

People went up in the mountains with the right white robes on, sometimes selling their homes and their possessions, and it was a great disappointment indeed. Miller recalculated and said Jesus was coming the next year, based upon his mathematical computations from Daniel and Revelation and so forth, and there were fewer people who went for the ride at that time. Still, some did.

And this is called Adventist teaching, seven-day Adventism. There was another revision of the supposed prophet's work and ideas. It's not an earthly coming at all.

It's a heavenly coming. Jesus goes from one part of the heavenly tabernacle mentioned in Hebrews to another part, to the most holy places. Well, that's kind of convenient because it's not verifiable.

It's not falsifiable, so you can say that and be all excited about it happening because you can't show that it did or it didn't, right? Seven-day Adventist teaching of the investigative judgment says that's what he's doing. He's kind of checking us out and seeing if we measure up, which seems to me to be a devastating idea and not biblical whatsoever, certainly not taught in the book of Hebrews, my goodness, which teaches the utter, utter finality of Christ's saving work. It's utter acceptance by the Father.

Jesus sits at God's right hand. From that, it's utter efficacy to save us completely from all of our sins. Good grief, Hebrews 9:15, Jesus' work is so magnificent, so final and accepted and efficacious that it is the basis of salvation for the Old Testament saints.

Oh, my goodness. Oh, and Jesus accomplished an eternal redemption, Hebrews says. Oh, I lament.

And Harold Camping is the most recent example. I'm so glad he repented, and then he went to be with the Lord. As a brand new Christian growing up in Pensacola, New Jersey, a 21-year-old, I listened to family radio, and its President, Harold Camping, had a show.

And either the man knew the Bible well, I suspected he had a Westminster Seminary students on his left and his right hand. If he didn't, boy, he knew the Bible. Well, I was a new convert.

So maybe it's like the little child who says, who's an adult now and says, man, when I was a kid, the snow was so high. Yeah, because you were two feet tall. Now you're six feet tall.

It doesn't, that's not nearly as high. And is that what it was like? I don't know. I was a quick study, but anyway, he knew what he was doing, and he edified and encouraged me.

He was so patient with cultists, for example. But even then, he was overconfident. Oh, and he had no time for charismatic or Pentecostal Christians.

He treated them as heretics. It was terrible that way. Overall, he helped disciple me.

I learned a lot. I didn't like the way he treated what I consider certain Christians already. But, and there was no this none of this prediction business, but there was a little injection, the beginning of this.

You can't, really; I have a better word than your pastor does. Well, that grew more and more to the end of his ministry. You know, 40 years later, he was saying, don't go to church, listen to me.

And unfortunately, he set dates for Christ's second coming. No one knows the day of the hour, Jesus said. That's right.

But he didn't say the month of the year, the year of the month. It is as if Jesus meant for us to, oh my word. I once spoke somewhere in Pennsylvania at a good PCA church.

And the elders picked me up at the airport, an elder did, and drove me. And Camping's book, was it called 1981 or whatever, a book. Oh, he wasn't predicting the second coming.

He was predicting events that happened right before the second coming. He was predicting the second coming. He wasn't being frank with us.

This guy said, what do you think of Harold Camping's book? And after saying some of the things I said to you about how he had helped me and so forth, I said, any prediction of the second coming is wrong. Oh, he's not predicting, you know. So this guy was into it.

Many people are disappointed when, again, his predictions were wrong. And again, I rejoice that Camping finally repented of having done so. That speaks well for him.

That speaks well for him indeed. There was a book and a certain TV show, TV station emphasized 71 reasons the rapture is going to happen in 1971. I forget the date.

What was it? *Eighty-eight reasons the rapture is going to happen in 1988*. And this TV show sent these books to every pastor in the United States. Listen, the most important truth about the timing of the second coming is that we do not know.

By God's design, even Jesus, when he was on earth, didn't know. Now, I don't know why the father didn't want him to know then, but I am positive in his state of exaltation Jesus knows now when he's coming back. Oh, my word.

Matthew 24:36 to 51. That's a big passage, you say? Yeah. And Jesus is rather emphatic and repetitive.

No one knows the time. No one knows the time. Yikes.

Why do people do this? Listen, the Bible is a big book. You can work with a lot of Bible and teach some ridiculous stuff. Matthew 24:36.

No one knows what day and hour it was. That should be enough for us right there. Not even the angels of heaven, nor the son.

I'll say it again. The son of God had all of his divine attributes on earth in the incarnation. He is God.

He did not give them up, but he gave up the independent exercise of those attributes so that he only exercised them when it was the father's will. Did he sometimes use divine attributes? Yes, he did. Yes, he did.

He spoke a word and stilled a storm. He read his opponent's minds. He said, I am and knocked down the people coming to arrest him.

And so forth and so on. He did use divine power, but only in the Father's will. Never on a whim, not at the devil's invitation, for example, in the temptation.

To him, he gave not miracles but Deuteronomy. For as it was in the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the son of man. As in those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage.

I've heard people say they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. It talks about terrible, terrible sins in the last few days. No, it isn't.

Have you eaten or drunk today? Are you married, or would you give your child? No, it means that as life went on as it ordinarily did in Noah's time, it's going to be the same. In other words, people aren't going to look for Jesus' return. And they were unaware until the flood came and swept them away.

So will be the coming of the son of man. Verse 42, therefore, stay awake. We're going to see at the end of this the main function of the timing of the second coming is in light of the imminence, interval, and especially ignorance passages is that we are spiritually alert.

That's the main function of Jesus' mouth. Stay awake. You do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

Therefore, 44, you must be ready for the son of man, which is coming at an hour, second hour, day, month, year, or decade. He means at a time. He's not distinguishing one measure of time from another one.

You do not expect. Oh, goodness. I'm not even going to keep reading.

It's over and over and over. Mark 13:32 to 37. The message is clear.

The message is repeated. Why do people then set dates? I don't have a good answer, but they're wrong to do it. And don't you believe them? It's going to happen again.

And people are going to get revved up by it. As a matter of fact, this sometimes has been a fatal mistake. I heard of Korean believers who love the Lord, who live in a shame and honor culture.

He was influenced by a false prophet who was so convinced he was a man of God and that what came out of his mouth was a word of God that they did sell their possessions. They sold their homes, and they waited for Jesus to come, and he did not come. And some of them committed suicide.

They were so ashamed. They could not face their neighbors again. That is horrible, false teaching.

And the Lord Jesus tries to protect it from us by showing, saying over and over. Mark 13:32. Considering the day or hour, no one knows.

Only the Father. Here's the emphasis. Be on guard.

Keep awake, for you do not know when the time will come. You do not know.

Acts 1:6 and 7. Are you going to bring the kingdom now, Jesus? He gives the same message he gave in the Olivet Discourse. Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? He said to them, it is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you'll receive power when the Holy Spirit comes, and you'll be my witnesses.

That's your concern. Evangelism, church planning, missions. 1 Thessalonians 5:2 to 4. God only has to say something clearly once, and we believe it.

Jesus really stressed the point in that eschatological discourse, and his apostles agreed. Now, concerning the times and the seasons, brothers. Huh.

That sounds just like what we just read from Mark. You have no need to have anything written to you for yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying there's peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pain comes upon a pregnant woman and they will not escape.

But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

So then watch the application. Let us not sleep as others do, but let us stay awake and sober. You don't know the time.

Yes, the context here is unbelievers being judged, but you're not unbelievers. You're not darkness. You're light.

You know he's coming again, but you're not. You don't set dates either. He doesn't say it here, but it is implied here that we know he's coming, and that should influence the way we live.

We're supposed to be ready, awake, and sober, not drunk, as it says in the context. I'm laboring the point. Maybe you'll need the point to be labored.

Maybe you need it for you. Or maybe you'll need it for a friend. I am laboring the point.

One more time. Matthew 25:13. Truly I say to you, to the nine virgins, I do not know you.

I'm sorry. Five foolish, five wise. Here's the thrust of the parable of the 10 virgins.

Watch, therefore. There's the application again. Watch for because you know neither the day nor the hour.

I'm sorry. I'm having transmission trouble here. I need some transmission fluid and some water.

So, the sum of the matter is we need to be good jugglers of three balls. The eminence ball, the interval ball, and get that ignorance ball up there because it's the most important one. Listen to this.

The same passage. Oh, have I done enough with eminence? Hebrews 10, 33. We are to live looking for Jesus to return.

If your eschatology leads you not to look for Jesus to return, if that has no part in your teaching or your life, you're wrong. As my dear professor of theology taught us, Robert J. Dunzweiler, to get the teaching of the Bible, you must use the whole Bible. Ah, Hebrews 10:37.

You have a need for endurance. Hebrews is written to profess Jewish Christians who need to persevere amidst persecution and not turn away from the gospel Christ and the church. You have a need for endurance so that when you've done the will of God, you may receive what is promised.

Four, yet a little while and the coming one will come and will not delay. That's an eminence passage. He said, yet a little while.

There are no intervals. There are interval passages. Yet, in a little while, we can figure it out, right? No, no, there are ignorant passages, and they're most pronounced.

One more, Revelation 22:20. The Bible ends with a word of eminence. So, he who testifies to these things says, surely I am coming soon.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. Matthew 24, amazingly and helpfully, has eminence interval and passages of ignorance.

The same discourse. That's why I know we're to be jugglers. Can I really juggle? No.

That's beside the point. Eminence 24:44. You also must be ready because the son of man will come in an hour when you don't expect him.

I understand it's an ignorant passage, but you must be ready for its coming. That's eminence interval. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.

Luke 21, 9. These things must happen first. The end will not come right away. You say, well, those things, the destruction of Jerusalem, have happened.

That's true. But has the gospel gone out into all the nations? Well, maybe. It's hard to measure those things.

Ignorance passages. Therefore, keep watch. You do not know the day or the hour.

All three types of passages. I'm going to turn to Matthew 24 and do it again. It's that important.

Before we end this lecture. In order, interval 24:14. The gospel of the kingdom must be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations.

And then the end will come. So, eminence 42. Therefore, stay awake.

For you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. You say, oh, come on, it's ignorant. It is an ignorant passage.

But stay awake is an eminence passage in the context of an ignorant. I've said from the beginning that the most important of the three is ignorance. So, the eminence is in the context of the ignorance.

No question. 36 and following. Again, and again and again.

I won't read it again. We are to keep all three in the air at the same time. We're to believe all three things.

So, a healthy view of the Christian life and a healthy view of the Christian ministry says Jesus is coming again. We need to love his appearing. We need to live in light of his appearing.

As a matter of fact, well, I'll deal with the function. There are different functions. The main one is spiritual readiness.

But there are different ones in different New Testament passages, which we'll take up in our next lecture. But for now, let me try to put all three together. We live in the light of Jesus coming.

We look for his appearing. It gives us joy. It purifies us.

It comforts us. It encourages us. I'll work with passages next time that say that under the functions, the function of this teaching.

But in the meantime, we do plan because we don't know the time. So, that ignorance business really does influence both the other two, doesn't it? We don't know, so we do plan because things have to happen, and maybe they haven't happened to our ability to understand fully. But most importantly, we do not set dates, and we do not believe those who do set dates, and we help our friends not do the same.

The second coming is a wonderful doctrine. We will take time at the beginning of the next lecture and talk about its functions. But that is enough for now.

We affirm all three together: imminence, intervals, and mostly our ignorance of when our Lord will return.

This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson and his teaching on Doctrines of the Church and Last Things. This is session 14, Christ's Second Coming, Its Timing, Imminence, Interval, and Ignorance.