

During the present age we must press forward in our witnessing, even though we know that we shall be constantly harassed by Satan. God will enable us to accomplish much if we go forward in His strength and keep our eyes on Christ.

How soon can we expect Christ to return? Matthew 24 describes a time when the disciples asked Jesus: "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming?" Jesus replied that many things must happen before His return. He said: "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, . . . Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." Thus Jesus made it clear that before His return there would be an extended period during much of which they must witness in the midst of trouble and difficulty. The description in Matthew 24 makes it evident that this period would have to last at least a few decades, and that thereafter no one would be able to tell whether the time of waiting would continue longer or not. In the discourse recorded in Matthew 24 and 25 the Lord made several such statements as verse 36: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." In verse 42 it is recorded that He said: "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Verse 44 quotes Him as saying: "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Once a man met three Christians and said to one of them: "Do you think the Lord will come today?" He replied: "No, I do not think so." He said to the second: "Do you think the Lord is coming today?" The man answered: "I think not." He said to the third: "Do you think the Lord will come today?" He also replied: "I think not." Then the man said: "Look at verse 44 of Matthew 24: 'Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.'" Although we cannot know how long He will delay His coming, we are always to be ready. He might come at any time; we are always to maintain an air of expectancy.