

scoffers will come, scoffing and ~~falling~~ following their own evil desires and they will say Where has his coming been promised? Ever since our fathers died everything goes on as it has since it was since the beginning of creation.

Can you believe that this sudden, catastrophic event is going to occur? You can if you believe the Bible. Jesus wants us to be ready whenever He comes. You think of the Apostle Paul as he went up and preached at places and he thought that Jesus might come very soon. Days went by and the months and years. And He had not come. Do you think Paul began to think, No, that's not going to happen. He'll not be coming back suddenly.

We find in 2 Tim. 4:8 very ~~xx~~ near the end of his life, he wrote: Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge will award to me on that day, and not only to me but unto all those also who have longed for His appearing." This word translated "appearing" is a word that is used a good many times in the NT and 2/3 of the times-- all the times where it is used, it refers to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. All through his life Paul had this longing for the return of Christ. May God enable us to live, so to work that if He comes tomorrow, if He comes next month, if He comes next year, He will not find us sleeping but will find us faithfully serving Him.

It is possible to go to the point where we say He must come next month. The way world conditions are He must come next year. We're sure it must be within the next 10 years. Many have fallen into that error. I heard a great Bible teacher say over 50 years ago that the year before he and another Bible teacher had ~~a~~ spoken at a conference. He said, the other man was to speak ~~a~~ in the evening and he was to speak in the late afternoon. He said the man said to me, You will be able to give your message, but I won't have to give mine because the time the Lord comes is today and it will be right between when you give yours and I give mine!

It is easy to fall into that error of thinking we know when he's coming because Jesus said, At an hour when you expect not the Son of Man will come. If we all agree it will be next year that will be pretty good proof that it won't be then.

After 400 years of Christian history, St. Augustine lay on his death-bed. As he lay there in Hippo in N. Africa behind those strong walls that were protecting that city, he could hear the cries of the dying, and the cries of those who were fleeing before the Vandals who had taken over all of N. Africa except for those three walled cities. He could hear those cries. He did not know when they might succeed in breaking through the walls. Nearly 400 years had gone by since Jesus died. Suppose somebody had said to Augustine: Jesus won't come back this year or next. 1600 years at least will pass before he comes back! I imagine Augustine would say, What's the matter with you? Don't you have any faith in God's promises? What a silly idea that it will be another 400 years! Or another 1600 years before the Lord comes back! We don't know He will come back this year. We don't know whether it will be another 1600 years. We know He wants us to be ready whenever He comes.