

- (1) It must square with Christ's own teaching about His Coming in power and glory immediately following the Great Tribulation
- (2) It must square with Christ's teaching about the necessity of constant alertness and readiness in view of His imminent coming.

Any view that cannot incorporate these two vital elements of Christ's teaching must be suspect.

The concept of imminency that appears to best incorporate these two elements is delayed imminency.

Delayed imminency allows for a relatively brief period of delay during the first century in which certain predictions could be fulfilled.

Delayed imminency allows for absolute imminency following the brief period of delay, and throughout all of the centuries from the first to the present.

Delayed imminency allows us to say, "I don't know when Christ will come again, but I do know that He may come at any time; therefore I must always be alert and watchful and circumspect, so that when He comes I will be ready to meet and welcome Him."

This concept of imminency best fits the spirit and thrust of the parables and analogy of the fourth section of the Discourse.

4. Imminency and the Rapture

We have asked how the concept of imminency can be reconciled with a posttribulational Coming of Christ in power and glory. Now we must ask concerning the time relationship of the Rapture to the Tribulation period.

If the Return of Christ in power and glory is to occur after the Tribulation period, and is thus non-imminent (in the sense of absolute imminency), to what can Christ's emphasis on imminency refer? Is imminency a characteristic of the Rapture? If the Rapture aspect or phase of Christ's Second Coming is distinguished in time from the Return or Revelation aspect or phase, can imminency be attached to the Rapture? If so, then in the passages at which we have looked, can the Rapture be shown to be imminent? And how?

In Daniel 9:24-27, it would appear that if the Rapture is to be absolutely imminent, it must occur before the first recognizable event of the seventieth seven, which is the making, by a "coming prince", of a firm treaty with Israel for seven years, by virtue of which sacrifice is reinstated in the Third Temple.

In the Olivet Discourse, it would appear that if the Rapture is to be absolutely imminent, it must occur some time before the abominable, desolating idol is set up in the temple in Jerusalem.