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**John 21:22 - If I Want Him To Remain Until I Come, What Is That To You**



By Dan Maines

**If I Want Him To Remain Until I Come, What Is That To You**

## Introduction

† Jesus didn't leave Peter guessing here, He corrected him directly and shut down speculation about someone else's path, while pointing him right back to timing and obedience (John 21:20-22)

† This moment isn't random, it's connected to everything Jesus already said about His coming, and it fits perfectly within the first-century fulfillment He had already promised (Matthew

16:27-28; Matthew 24:34)

† What Peter heard, and what others misunderstood, reveals how easily people miss timing when they shift focus away from Christ's own words (2 Peter 3:3-4)

### **John 21:22**

Jesus \*said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!"

† Jesus places His coming within the lifetime of the disciples' generation, because the statement only makes sense if His coming was within that generation, not thousands of years later (Matthew 16:27-28)

† The focus isn't on John living forever, it's on Peter minding his own calling, while Christ affirms that His coming was something within that generation (John 14:18; Matthew 24:34)

† This does not allow for a distant fulfillment, because if Jesus knew His coming was thousands of years away, this statement would be misleading instead of corrective (Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:32)

### **John 21:23**

Therefore this account went out among the brothers, that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?"

† The text itself corrects the misunderstanding, Jesus never said John wouldn't die, people assumed it (John 21:22)

† This proves the issue was misinterpretation even in the first century, not a failed prophecy (2 Peter 3:3-4)

† It also shows the focus was never about immortality, but about the nearness of His coming (Matthew 16:27-28)

† Someone says this was only a hypothetical statement and removes any timing from it, but the text never does that, it corrects the misunderstanding about John's death, not the

timing of the coming (John 21:23; Matthew 24:34)

† If you remove the time element, the statement loses its meaning, because Jesus answers Peter by pointing to His coming, which only makes sense if it was relevant to their lifetime (Matthew 16:27-28; Luke 21:32)

† The phrase if I will that he tarry till I come only has meaning if the coming was within a timeframe John could remain alive, otherwise it becomes meaningless (Matthew 24:34; James 5:8-9)

### **Matthew 20:22-23**

But Jesus replied, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They \*said to Him, "We are able." He \*said to them, "My cup you shall drink; but to sit at My right and at My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father."

† Jesus tells both James and John they will drink His cup, meaning they will share in His suffering and death (Mark 10:38-39)

† This proves ahead of time that John was not being promised escape from death in John 21:22 (John 21:23)

† The statement about tarrying cannot mean John would live indefinitely, because Jesus already declared he would suffer as well (Acts 12:2)

### **Mark 10:38-39**

But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" They said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized."

† Jesus confirms again that both brothers would share in His suffering, reinforcing that John was not exempt from death (Matthew 20:23)

† James was killed early, and John also suffered persecution, showing the fulfillment of Jesus' words (Acts 12:2; Revelation 1:9)

† This completely removes any idea that John 21:22 was about physical survival, it was about timing of Christ's coming (Matthew 24:34)

† Some say John lived long enough to reach the coming, others say he died earlier, possibly during Nero's persecution around AD 64, but either way the point remains, Jesus never promised he would not die, only that the coming was within that generation (John 21:23; Matthew 24:34)

† Whether John died before AD 70 or lived through it doesn't change the meaning, because the focus of the passage is the nearness of Christ's coming, not the length of John's life (Matthew 16:27-28; James 5:8-9)

### **Matthew 16:27-28**

For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.

"Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

† Jesus already told them some standing there wouldn't die before seeing His coming, which aligns perfectly with what He tells Peter about John (Mark 9:1)

† This wasn't symbolic language stretched across thousands of years, it was a direct time statement tied to real people standing there (Luke 21:32)

† That means John 21:22 isn't introducing a new idea, it's reinforcing the same timeframe Jesus had already declared (Matthew 24:34)

## **Matthew 24:34**

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

† Jesus defines the timeframe clearly, His coming and all related events would happen within that generation, not a future distant age (Luke 21:20-22)

† When we read John 21:22 through this lens, it becomes consistent instead of confusing (John 21:22)

† The problem isn't the text, it's later traditions that tried to extend the timing beyond what Jesus actually said (Mark 13:30)

## **John 14:18**

"I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you.

† Jesus repeatedly told them He was coming to them, not to a distant future group thousands of years later (John 14:3)

† This coming is tied to covenant fulfillment, not a physical descent to remain on earth (Matthew 24:30)

† It connects directly to judgment, resurrection, and the establishment of the fulfilled kingdom in their time (Luke 21:27-28)

## **Revelation 1:7**

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

† This coming is directed at those who pierced Him, the first-century generation, not a distant future world (Matthew 23:35-36)

† It matches the same judgment language Jesus used in Matthew 24 (Matthew 24:30)

† This confirms that till I come is tied to that same covenant judgment event (Luke 21:20-22)

## **Hebrews 10:37**

FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE,  
HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

† The writer of Hebrews says the coming would not delay, reinforcing imminence (Hebrews 10:25)

† This lines up perfectly with John 21:22 and removes any room for a delayed fulfillment beyond what was stated (James 5:8-9)

† The early church lived in expectation because it was actually near (1 Peter 4:7)

## **James 5:8-9**

You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brothers and sisters, against one another, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

† At hand and before the doors means imminent, not distant (Matthew 24:33)

† This is the same coming Jesus referred to in John 21:22 (Matthew 16:27-28)

† It proves the apostles all taught the same timeframe Jesus gave (Luke 21:32)

## **2 Peter 3:3-4**

Knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

† Even in the first century, people were already questioning the timing, which shows they were expecting it soon, not thousands of years later (1 Peter 4:7)

† Peter doesn't extend it into the distant future, he reinforces that it was near and already unfolding (2 Peter 3:10)

† This matches the tension seen in John 21:22, people trying to

figure out timing instead of trusting Christ's words (John 21:23)

† If John died before AD 70, as some accounts suggest during Nero's persecution, then the claim that he wrote Revelation in the 90s collapses, because a man cannot write decades after his death, which means the late-date assumption fails and the book belongs in the first-century context it describes (John 21:23; Matthew 24:34; Revelation 1:1)

## **Historical References**

† Eusebius records that the early church connected Christ's coming with the destruction of Jerusalem, recognizing it as a fulfillment of His words in that generation (Matthew 24:34)

† Josephus documents the events of AD 70 in detail, showing the judgment that aligns with Jesus' predictions of His coming in power and judgment (Luke 21:20-22)

† Tacitus confirms the devastation of Judea and Jerusalem, supporting the historical reality of what Jesus said would happen within that generation (Matthew 24:2)

## **How it applies to us today**

† We don't compare our path to others, Jesus already made it clear, follow Him and trust His timing (John 21:22)

† We don't delay the fulfillment beyond what was stated, we stand on what He said and what was fulfilled (Matthew 24:34)

† We stay grounded in Scripture instead of tradition, because once you see the timing clearly, everything else falls into place (Colossians 2:8)

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q** Does John 21:22 teach that John would never die?

**A** No, Jesus wasn't promising immortality, He was correcting Peter and reinforcing that His coming was near, within that

generation (Matthew 16:27-28)

**Q** What does till I come refer to?

**A** It refers to Christ's coming in judgment and kingdom fulfillment in the first century, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:20-22)

**Q** Why did people misunderstand this statement?

**A** Because they focused on John instead of Christ's timing, just like many do today by ignoring the clear time statements Jesus gave (2 Peter 3:3-4)

**Q** Does John 21:22 mean John had to stay alive until the coming of Christ?

**A** No, Jesus did not say John would remain alive, He corrected that misunderstanding in John 21:23, but the statement still assumes the coming was within that generation (John 21:23; Matthew 24:34)

**Q** Why would Jesus even mention His coming in response to Peter?

**A** Because His coming was relevant to their lifetime, otherwise it would not answer Peter's question, Jesus always answered with purpose and clarity (Matthew 16:27-28; Luke 21:32)

**Q** Does this passage teach that the coming of Christ is still future?

**A** No, it places the coming within the lifetime of the disciples, which aligns with every other time statement Jesus gave (Matthew 24:34; Mark 9:1)

**Q** Could John have lived until AD 70?

**A** Possibly, but it is not required, because Jesus never promised he would not die, only that His coming was within that generation (John 21:23; Matthew 24:34)

**Q** What if John died earlier, around AD 64?

**A** That does not change the meaning of the passage, because the focus is on the nearness of Christ's coming, not the length of John's life (Matthew 16:27-28; James 5:8-9)

**Q** Does this verse support a late date for the book of Revelation?

**A** No, if John died before AD 70, then a late date becomes impossible, and even if he lived longer, the internal time statements of Revelation still place it near (Revelation 1:1; Revelation 22:6-7)

**Q** What does till I come actually refer to?

**A** It refers to Christ's coming in judgment and kingdom fulfillment in the first century, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:30; Luke 21:20-22)

**Q** Why did early believers misunderstand Jesus' words?

**A** Because they assumed physical outcomes instead of listening carefully to what Jesus actually said, just like many do today (John 21:23; 2 Peter 3:3-4)

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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## **Source Index**

† John 21:22-23; Matthew 20:22-23; Mark 10:38-39; Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:34; John 14:18; Revelation 1:7; Hebrews 10:37; James 5:8-9; 2 Peter 3:3-4; Luke 21:20-22; Mark 9:1; Luke 21:32; John 14:3; 1 Peter 4:7; Mark 13:30; Matthew 24:30; Luke 21:27-28; Matthew 23:35-36; Hebrews 10:25; 2 Peter 3:10; Matthew 24:2; Colossians 2:8

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History; Josephus, Wars of the Jews; Tacitus, Histories

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