

## Lesson 2: Return Imminent

Objective:

👉 **To show you that Jesus' return was imminent almost 2,000 years ago.**

1. In *Christianity's Great Dilemma* Glen Hill lists 34 verses showing that the New Testament writers expected Jesus to return soon and he shows that the intensity of the imminence language grows much stronger in those books that were written closest to 70 AD. I will direct you to only a few of those verses.
2. Please read James 5:1-9. Writing in 61 AD James says that he was living in the **last days**. He says that great miseries are about to befall those who had **“murdered the righteous person”**. He says that **“the coming of the Lord is at hand”**. He says that **“The judge is standing at the door”**. This gives rise to several questions: Has the judge been **standing at the door** for 2,000 years? Has his coming been **at hand** for 2,000 years? Have we been in the **last days** for 2,000 years? Did great miseries befall those who had **murdered the righteous person**? Do the events of the Jewish war with Rome (70 AD) have significance?
3. Please read Hebrews 10:24-39. This passage is similar to the passage in James' epistle that we just read. It speaks of a time of **vengeance** (vs. 30) when **fury of fire** (vs. 27) was about to (mello) consume those who had **spurned the son of God** (vs. 29). In verse 37 we read **“Yet a little while and the coming one will come and will not delay”** (ESV). Has Jesus delayed his coming for 2,000 years? Or...
4. Or was he about to take vengeance on those who had **spurned the Son of God**? In Luke 21 Jesus speaks of days of vengeance. He predicts the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple saying: **“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that it's desolation is has come near... these are the days of vengeance to fulfill all that is written.”** (vs. 20-22) Could this be the time of vengeance that we read about in Hebrews 10? I certainly believe that this is the case; and I will demonstrate that this is true when we do a detailed analysis of Luke 21 and the other passages that quote Jesus' Olivet discourse.
5. There is so much more to say about the passage in Hebrews 10. In verse 25 the first century Hebrews are told to **“encourage one another... as you see the Day drawing near”**. We have seen that they were anticipating a time of **vengeance** when the Lord would **“judge his people”** (VS. 30). This leads us to an important question: **“How could these people 2,000 years ago, see the Day drawing near”**? Here is my answer:

6. In his Olivet discourse Jesus gives a list of signs that would portend the destruction the temple and the end of the age. I think that those first century Hebrew Christians could **see the Day drawing near** as they saw the signs that Jesus had predicted. As already noted, we will discuss these things, but we need to cover more ground first.
7. Context is so important for understanding any passage... A full analysis of the book of Hebrews is beyond the scope of this study, but I would like to direct your attention to some facts that further illuminate the passage under consideration in chapter 10.
8. The book of Hebrews was written in the **last days** of something (Heb. 1:1). The theme of the book is the transformation from the Old Covenant to a **better** New Covenant (9:22). The Old Covenant was **becoming obsolete and was ready to vanish away** (9:13). It didn't vanish away until the temple was destroyed in 70 AD. The book of Hebrews was written in the **last days** of the Old Covenant religion. In Heb. 9:26 we read that Jesus appeared "**at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself**". Do you agree that Jesus lived in the **last days** before the **end of the age**... the end of the Old Covenant age?
9. Jesus had ordered his Jewish followers to keep even the least commandments of the Old Covenant Law (Matt. 5:19). In Hebrews we read that the way into the Holy of Holies could not be opened **while the first tabernacle was yet standing** (Heb. 9:8). I believe that the "**first tabernacle**" represents the Old Covenant religious system that would be obliterated in the **days of vengeance** (Lk. 21:22) that were coming soon. That was the time when he made his enemies **a footstool for his feet** (Heb. 10:13). The year was 70 AD.
10. With this context in mind, I think that the meaning of Hebrews 10:37 should be obvious. "**Yet a little while and the coming one will come and will not delay**".

THAT WAS A BIG CHUNK OF MEAT... MOST OF THE BITES WILL BE SMALLER FROM NOW ON.