

“THE LORD IS AT HAND” PASSAGES

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. I have often challenged the scripturalness of the following songs: “It Won’t Be Very Long” and “Jesus Is Coming Soon”.
2. In spite of my challenge of the scripturalness of these songs, brethren in various churches over the country have continued to sing them, and some have questioned my arguments showing their unscripturalness.
 - a. I have reminded brethren that the Bible plainly teaches that we do not can cannot know when the Lord’s 2nd Coming is to be, Mt.24:36.
 - b. That not even the Lord himself knew when that time would be, Mk.13:32
 - c. I have reminded brethren that it is no more acceptable to God to sing error than it is to preach error.
 - d. These two songs teach error because they tell us the Lord is “coming soon,” or that “is won’t be very long” until he will come,’ something we cannot know if we can believe Mt.24:36 and Mk.13:32.
 - e. If I took to the pulpit and preached that the scriptures teach that the 2nd Coming “won’t be very long” in coming, or that “Jesus is coming soon,” brethren would demand that I produce the “book, chapter and verse” to prove what I had preached. And I would be duty bound to produce it. But how would I do that, since there is no such verse?
 - f. Why don’t brethren do the same thing when we sing such things? Why the difference?
3. Some have suggested there are some Bible passages which justify our singing “the day of the Lord is at hand” or “the Lord is coming soon,” meaning “the 2nd Coming of the Lord is at hand” or will “come soon”.
4. Another reason for studying the “at hand” passages to which I shall refer is that brethren have often been confused by these passages because on the surface when not considered in their immediate and remote context and in the light of other plain passages on the subject of the Lord’s 2nd Coming, they seem to be referring to the nearness of the 2nd Coming of Christ.
5. It’s these “at hand” passages we shall examine in this study, pointing out to you scriptural reasons, based on scriptural evidence, why these passages do not and cannot possibly be referring to the 2nd Coming of Christ.

II. DISCUSSION

A. PHIL.4:5: “THE LORD IS AT HAND”

1. Some jump to the erroneous conclusion that this is referring to the 2nd Coming of the Lord.

2. Other translations plus the context plus other plain N.T. passages on the 2nd Coming refute the possibility of this being a reference to the 2nd Coming of Christ, and prove we must look for another explanation of this passage.
3. First, other N.T. passages.
 - a. Mt.24:36 teaches that of the **time** of the 2nd Coming only the Father knows – neither man, nor angels in heaven know!
 - b. Mk.13:32 teaches that even Jesus himself did not know the **time** of the 2nd Coming. Again, only the Father knows the **time** of it!
 - c. 2Th.2:1-3,5-8 – Note:
 - (1) V.1.
 - (2) V.2.
 - (3) V.3.
 - (4) Vv.5-8.
 - (5) These verse **deny** that his coming was “at hand,” or “that the day of Christ is at hand.” Emphasize vv.1-3.
 - (6) Paul, by inspiration, by means of the Holy Spirit, would not teach one thing in Phil.4:5 about the 2nd Coming of Christ and still another or a different thing, in 2Th.2:1-3!
 - (7) He would not write to one church and say the Lord’s return is “at hand,” and write to another church and say, “no, it is not.” To do so would be a flat contradiction. Men speaking by the guidance of the Holy Spirit do not do that!
 - d. What, then, does Phil.4:5 mean?
4. Other translations help.
 - a. Phillips: “never forget the **nearness** of our Lord” (my emp.)
 - b. Rotherham: “”The Lord is near”
 - c. The idea is that the Lord is near to protect, bless, and shield his people. This is the reason given as to why they should ever use moderation (or gentleness and forbearance).
 - d. It teaches his “present-nearness” – his nearness at all times.
5. The context plus related passages agree.
 - a. Take note of Phil.4:4-9, the immediate context, esp. vv.4-7 and v.9.
 - b. Related passages: Ac.17:27; Mt.28:18; Jer.23:23,24; Psa.39:1-12; 145:18,19; 119:151.
6. Furthermore, Phil.4:5 was written almost 2,000 years ago. How, then, could it have meant that the 2nd Coming of Christ was then actually “at hand” or “almost here”, “soon to come”?
7. But some object and say W. E. Vines Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words teaches Phil.4:5 refers to “the time of the return of Christ,” Vol.II, 190,`191.
 - a. But note this about Vine.

- (1) Often times he will correctly define the original word.
 - (2) Then, having done that, he, in applying that definition, will offer his opinion or his commentary, or what or how he thinks it should be applied.
 - (3) His commentary often reflects his theology, not his scholarship!
 - (4) That is what he has done in the case of Phil.4:5.
- b. “AT HAND” ENGUS (), “near, nigh, frequently rendered ‘at hand,’ is used (a) of place... (b) of time...; in Phil.4:5, ‘the Lord is at hand,’ it is **possible** (emp. mine) to regard the meaning as that either of (a) or (b); the following reasons **may** (emp. mine) point to (b):...(3) the similar use of the adverb in Rev.1:3 and 22:10; (4) the similar use of the corresponding verb in Rom.13:12; Heb.10:25...Jas.5:8; 1Pet.4:7,” Vine, II, 190,191.
- c. Therefore, Vine is wrong in his comments or his commentary on Phil.4:5! As well as his reference to Rom.13:12 and Heb.10:25, as we shall see. While, he is correct on his definition on “near” and “nigh”.

B. ROM.13:12: “THE DAY IS AT HAND”