

Imminently Is Not Instantly

I am going to rattle some cages, upset some carts, and ruffle some feathers, so fasten your seatbelts.

Deuteronomy 19:15 – “A fact must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

2 Corinthians 13:1 – “Every fact must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

No doubt you have heard it said by many Pastors, Teachers, and Biblical Scholars that “*Imminent means immediately and instantly*”. Those statements are a complete misinterpretation of the Biblical scriptures.

Imminency, as it relates to Bible prophecy, simply means that the return of Yeshua Ha’Mashiach for his bride is anticipated and approaching – perhaps even near at hand. **Imminent Is Anticipated** but Imminent **does not** mean it will happen instantly or at any ol’ time.

Instantly Imminent

We use many words to define the words imminent, instant, or instantly including: abrupt, fast, immediate, instantaneous, prompt, quick, rapid, sudden, and unexpected. Scripture, likewise, uses many different words translated as imminent, instant, or instantly.

It’s All Greek To Me . . .

The words used in the Bible describing a period or moment of time are:

- **H7280** רָגַע raga and **H7281** רֵגַע rega which both mean: a very short space of time – as in a wink of the eyes
- **H6597** פִּתְאוֹם pith'owm from **H6621** פֶּתַח petha] which both mean: in a wink, i.e. moment
- **G2117** εὐθύς euthus or **G2112** εὐθέως eutheos which both mean: directly, i.e. at once or soon, forthwith, straightway, immediately
- **G3916** παραχρημα parachrema which means: at the thing itself, forthwith, presently, straightway, soon; that is instantly
- **G4743** στιγμή stigme which means: a point of time, i.e. a moment, an instant
- **G823** ἄτομος atomos and **G4493** ῥιπή rhipe which together mean: in the instantaneous, indivisible blink of an eye, i.e. in a twinkling of the eye

Imminent and Instant Defined in the Older Covenant

In the Older Covenant raga [H7280 רָגַע] and rega [H7281 רֵגַע from H7280] which both mean: a very short space of time – as in a wink of the eyes, are two words that Jeremiah uses frequently (see [Jeremiah 4:20](#); [18:7](#); [18:9](#); [49:19](#); [50:44](#); [Isaiah 47:9](#); [Lamentations 4:6](#)). Raga and rega are used 35 times.

Isaiah also uses the word pith'owm [H6597 פִּתְאוֹם from petha פֶּתַח H6621] which both mean: in a wink, i.e. moment ([Isaiah 29:5](#); [30:13](#)). We need to understand that a wink is not a blink, but is just a very short space of time, as in quickly. They are used 32 times.

Wink and Blink (or Twinkling) are not equal in length.

Imminent and Instant Defined in the Newer Covenant

In the Newer Covenant, Matthew, Mark, and John prefer euthus [G2117 εὐθύς] or eutheos [G2112 εὐθέως from G217] which both mean: directly, i.e. at once or soon {see [Matthew 20:34](#); [Mark 1:42](#); [5:29](#); [9:24](#); [10:52](#); [John 6:21](#); [18:27](#); [Revelation 4:2](#)}. Euthus is used 15 times.

Luke uses two different words, but seems to prefer parachrema [G3916 παραχρημα] which means: at the thing itself, forthwith, presently, straightway, soon {see [Luke 8:44](#); [8:47](#); [18:43](#); [22:60](#); [Acts 3:7](#); [5:10](#)}. Parachrema is used 19 times.

Only once does Luke use stigme [G4743 στιγμή] which means: a point of time, i.e. a moment {[Luke 4:5](#)}.

Again, we see the image of something that takes place soon, in a very short time, as in quickly, but this does not equate to an indivisible moment of time.

In 1 Corinthians 15:52 Paul introduces us to the words atomos [G823 ἄτομος] and rhipē [G4493 ῥιπή] which together mean: in the instantaneous, indivisible blink of an eye, which today we define as a split-second or nanosecond of time.

Only in this singular verse do we find the concept of an event that takes place in an indivisible moment of time; when he is teaching about the **resurrection**, **not** the rapture.

Instant Defined Today

Today we have all kinds of instant food items: instant coffee, instant noodles, instant potatoes, instant rice, and instant milk. These items are considered instant if they can be prepared in less than one minute. However, even using a microwave oven it often takes at least one minute to boil the water for the coffee, noodles, potatoes, or rice. It takes much longer to cool the water for the milk! *I don't see any split-second or nanosecond of instant occurrences here – do you?*

We have instant communications, but again, it takes time to dial the number, time for the dialed number to ring, and more time for the person to answer the phone that is ringing. The same can be said for lightning. We say lightning flashes instantly but a single flash is formed by a series of about four lightning strokes. Each stroke lasts for about 30 microseconds so a flash of lightning can take up to 120 microseconds, substantially longer than a split-second or nanosecond. *I don't see any split-second or nanosecond of instant occurrence here, either – do you?*

We generally (and incorrectly) apply the definition of “in a split-second” or “nanosecond” of time to most items we consider imminent or instant!

In other words, we apply the atomos [G823 ἄτομος] and rhipē [G4493 ῥιπή] definition of an indivisible, instant blink of the eye to our understanding of imminent.

The application of instant to these occurrences is not at all accurate.

Me thinks our thinking about the word imminent needs a little fixin' – What do you say?

Imminent as Defined by Biblical Scholars

There are some scholars that wrongly teach that:

“Imminent means immediately and instantly.”

However, there are others that correctly state that:

- Imminent is defined as a recognized closeness based on unbiased and perceptible incidents, events, incidents, or occurrences.
- Imminent is based on facts or occurrences that can be easily observed.
- An event that is said to be Imminent Is an anticipated event, but does not mean that the event will happen instantly or at any ol' time.

Therefore, “*Imminence isn't randomness*” according to Lee Brainard.

Review Imminent Is Not Instant

Both we and scripture use many different words that impart an understanding of something that takes place imminently, soon, in a very short time, or quickly. None of those words indicate an instantaneous, split-second, nanosecond, twinkling of an eye type occurrence.

Me thinks our thinking about the word imminent needs a little fixin' – What do you say?

Near At Hand

Matthew 24:32-33 – “*Learn a lesson from the fig tree: When its branches become green and soft and new leaves appear, you know summer is near*^{G1451}.”

Luke 21:28 – “*But when these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near*^{G1451}.”

The Greek words eggus [G1451 ἐγγύς], eggizo [G1448 ἐγγίζω], or tachy [G5035 ταχύ] mean at hand, near, or without delay – in other words: imminent. They are equivalent to the Hebrew word qarowb [H7138 קרוב].

Imminence is always the meaning of at hand or near when speaking about the return of Yeshua. For example:

- The night is far gone, the day is near (Romans 13:12)
- Yeshua is near (Philippians 4:5)
- The time is near when all things will end (1 Peter 4:7)
- You see the day drawing near (Hebrews 10:25)
- Yeshua’s return is near (James 5:8)

Imminence does not mean that Yeshua can come at “*any ol’ time*.”

Yeshua gave us many specific signs that would be happening in the last days, clearly wanting us to know when the time of His return was rapidly approaching, in other words when that “day and hour” would be near at hand or imminent. Many of the signs are being fulfilled today which strongly indicates we are living in the last days. We are, after all, living through revolutions, wars and rumors of wars, and horrifying persecution, for starters.

Luke 21:29-31 – “*Look at the fig tree—indeed, all the trees. As soon as they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves that summer is now near at hand*^{G1451}.”

Luke speaks of both the fig tree and all the trees. These trees represent both Israel and the other nations that sprouted up at about the same time: Lebanon 1943, Jordan 1946, Syria 1946, Egypt 1952. And are not these the nations that are constantly in daily news reports at this time?

Clearly, the generation that has seen both the fig tree and all the trees put forth their branches is our generation. Without doubt, that “day and hour” is near at hand, eggus [G1451 ἐγγύς]. In other words, it is indeed imminent!

Joel 2:1 – “*Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of Yahweh is near at hand*^{H7138}. . .”

When Joel prophesied about the coming day of Yahweh, he was saying that it was near at hand, qarowb [H7138 קרוב], not that it was imminent. Many things including the birth of Yeshua Ha’Mashiach had to happen first.

Revelation 3:11 – Yeshua says he is “*coming quickly*^{G5035}” so we are to hold on to what we have, so that no one will take away our crowns. Quickly is the Greek word tachy [G5035 ταχύ] which means shortly, i.e. without delay, soon, suddenly by surprise. Coming quickly is not synonymous with imminent.

“*Near at hand*” is a popular phrase used to support an “instant” definition of imminent. Near at hand is found in many places in scripture and simply means “approaching.” It does not mean suddenly, instantly, or imminent.

There is strong evidence for giving the impression that Yeshua might come back very soon – even in one’s own lifetime. Paul, Peter, and Yeshua left the disciples with the impression that his second coming could be soon (John 13:36, 14:3, 17:24; Revelation 3:11).

However, this does not prove that Paul or Peter taught that Yeshua was coming back during their lifetime. They never say this, as Yeshua also said “*Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow later*.” Later does not even come close to being imminent.

When something is soon, or near at hand, it refers to something that is anticipated, approaching, or about to happen, not something that is imminent or that will happen instantly.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 – “*But in connection with the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Mashiach and our gathering together to meet him . . . don’t let anyone deceive you in any way. For the Day of Yahweh will not arrive until after the apostasia^{G646} has come and the one without Torah has been revealed, the one destined for destruction.*”

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 completely debunks the possibility of an imminent return of Yeshua. Paul unequivocally informs the Thessalonians that two events are required to happen before the “coming of our Lord Yeshua Ha’Mashiach, and our gathering together to meet him.

Those two events are:

1. the apostasia [G646 ἀποστασία] – the defection from truth, and
2. the arrival of the one without Torah, i.e. the anti-messiah.

The Days of Yeshua and The Apostles

Two thousand years ago the people living in the days of Yeshua and the Apostles had just witnessed Yahweh complete, or as some would say, fulfill, the first four Moedim. The prophecies were the death, burial and resurrection of Yeshua, and the giving of the Ruach Ha’Kodesh.

Finally, they reasoned, Yahweh is on a roll. The first four moedim have been fulfilled, and the fulfillment of the last three moedim **must be imminent**. We’ve waited thousands of years to see this happen, and now it is beginning. Can’t wait to see it all take place. Finally the promises to Abraham will be fulfilled in their entirety. Finally, we will see the resurrection of the dead and rapture of the bride, the tribulation period, and the one thousand year reign of our Mashiach, Yeshua.

The people living in the days of Yeshua and the Apostles had great expectations of instant gratification tied to the fulfillment of the final three moedim. They did **not** expect Yeshua to come at any time, even while they were talking or reading, unless that time was on the day and hour of the next Yom Teruah moed.

Unfortunately, their instant gratification expectations were not fulfilled and they are still waiting! “*Yeshua’s return is imminent*” is not at all accurate.

Yeshua Will Only Come at the Set Time and Season

Yeshua himself proclaims that he can only come at the set time or season – in other words, at Yom Teruah to resurrect the dead and then rapture his Bride. “*Yeshua’s return is imminent*” is not accurate – but Yeshua can **not** come at any ol’ time is a fact according to the scriptures – He will come at the set time and season.

Ignoring the Moedim – those pesky dates and times that Yahweh has set by his own authority – is not a scripturally accurate way to define imminent. Imminent has everything to do with the Moedim of Yahweh, Yahweh’s set dates and times, and nothing to do with being an instant occurrence. The imminent return we should be looking for is the Resurrection of the Dead in Yeshua.

Imminent Today

The same holds true for us today. We do **not** know which Yom Teruah will be **THE** Yom Teruah to be completed or fulfilled. It could be five years from now, next year, or even this year on the Biblical Calendar, hence an imminent event! – An event that we are to watch for and anticipate experiencing.

Still, today, just as it was in times past, “*Imminently means immediately and instantly*” is not at all accurate.

Review Near At Hand is not Imminent

“*Near at hand*” is a popular phrase used to defend a definition of imminence. This phrase is found in many places in scripture and simply means “soon.” It does not mean “suddenly, at any moment, instantly, or imminent.” “*Near at hand*” does not indicate an instantaneous, split-second, nanosecond, twinkling of an eye type occurrence.

Me thinks our thinking about the word imminent needs a little fixin’ – What do you say?

Conclusions

The statement that “imminent means instantly” is not at all accurate.

Imminency, as it relates to Bible prophecy, simply means that the return of Yeshua Ha’Mashiach for his bride is anticipated and approaching – perhaps even “near at hand”.

Paul reminds us – “*Do not be deceived . . .*” (Galatians 6:7).

Yahweh commands us – “*Listen to Yeshua*” (Matthew 17:5, Mark 9:7, Luke 9:35).

Yeshua commands us – “*Listen to me*” (Mark 7:14) and states that “*Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to me*” (John 18:37).

Listen to Yeshua, not to inaccurate paradigms.

Final Thoughts

The prophetic signs are burgeoning and not abating.

Time is incredibly short

– Yeshua Ha’Mashiach is coming soon

– so be of great cheer, keep looking up, and keep maintaining an attitude of gratitude.

Be sure you are believing The Truth, not The Lie.

Be sure Yeshua is your Redeemer, King, and High Priest.

Be sure that your sins are forgiven.

Me thinks our definitions and interpretations need a lot of fixin’ – What do you say?