

WORD STUDIES ON TIME STATEMENTS

Part 4

The third and final “time word” in the book of Revelation that we will study is the Greek word “eggys”, translated as “near” in both Revelation 1:3 and 22:10 in the NASB translation. We will look at all 30 texts in the New Testament which use this Greek word, and demonstrate that in each of the texts (both “non-eschatological and eschatological) “eggys” refers to either time, people, places or events that were in fact “near in time” in the first century. This study will prove that “eggys” can’t be interpreted as “not near” (thousands of years away) anywhere in the New Testament, specifically in the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

This study will demonstrate beyond doubt that the fulfillment of the prophecy of the book of Revelation was truly “near”, and “soon” to take place in the first century; that is, “shortly” after the time of its writing. And, that to place its fulfillment future to us (2018) is to be biblically inconsistent, and to overlook, misinterpret, and even reject the clear and emphatic language of “time” communicated in the book of Revelation and in the rest of the New Testament. May the Lord give us all the courage and the humility to follow the truth, wherever consistency may lead. Let’s begin.

Definition:

Eggys: Strong’s #1451, used 30x (in 2 forms) in the New Testament

Interpreted as: at hand, nigh at hand, near - of time or place, ready (Strong’s)

“Eggys” in Non-Eschatological Texts

John 2:13

The Passover of the Jews was **near** (eggys), and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

John 6:4

Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was **near** (eggys).

John 7:2

Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was **near** (eggys).

John 11:54-55

Therefore, Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country **near** (eggys) the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He stayed with the disciples. Now the Passover of the Jews was **near** (eggys), and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves.

Luke 22:1

Now the feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, **was approaching** (eggys).

Who would deny that these Jewish feasts – Passover and Tabernacles (Booths) – was objectively “near in time” when the disciples penned these words. I know of no one that would. The Jews kept these feasts each year according to the Law of Moses, and therefore we know that each year these feasts would “draw near”.

Mathew 26:18

And He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is *near* (eggys); I am to keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.

Mathew 26:45-46

Then He came to the disciples and said to them, are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is *at hand* (eggys) and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is *at hand* (eggys).

Likewise, who would deny that time (the hour) for Jesus to be betrayed and crucified was “near” and “at hand” in the first century when Jesus spoke these words. The answer is obvious.

Luke 19:11

While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was *near* (eggys) Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.

Luke 21:20

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation *is near* (eggys).

Again, no one can deny the historical fact of the desolation of Jerusalem at the hands of the Roman armies in AD70. When Jerusalem was “surrounded by armies” beginning in 66AD, the time of her desolation was “*near*”. Jesus had warned his disciples about false prophets and false Christs who would say that the “end” (the destruction of Jerusalem) was near before it was; they were not to believe them (Luke 21:6-9). The definitive sign of the “end” was when Jerusalem was surrounded by Rome. At that time, the end of the age (Jerusalem’s desolation) was truly “*near*”.

As we have just seen above, so we will see below; whether the context concerns time, people, places, or events, the word “eggys” when used in the New Testament, always and without exception refers to “nearness in time”.

John 3:23

John also was baptizing in Aenon *near* (eggys) Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being baptized.

John 6:19,23

Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing **near** (eggys) to the boat; and they were frightened.... There came other small boats from Tiberias **near** (eggys) to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks.

John 11:18

Now Bethany was **near** (eggys) Jerusalem, about two miles off.

John 19:20,42

Therefore, many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was **near** (eggys) the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek.... Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was **nearby**, (eggys) they laid Jesus there.

Acts 1:12

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is **near** Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

Acts 9:38

Since Lydda was **near** (eggys) Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, "Do not delay in coming to us."

Acts 27:8

And with difficulty sailing past it we came to a place called Fair Havens, **near** (eggys) which was the city of Lasea.

Romans 10:8

But what does it say? "The word is **near** (eggys) you, in your mouth and in your heart - that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,

Ephesians 2:13,17

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought **near** (eggys) by the blood of Christ.... and he came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were **near** (eggys).

Without exception, every "non-eschatological" text in the New Testament that uses the word "eggys", refers to either nearness in time, or to the nearness of people, places, or events which are contextually bound to the first century generation. We now once again turn our attention to the eschatological texts in which "eggys" is used.

“Eggys” in Eschatological Texts

Mathew 24:32-33

Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is *near*; (eggys) so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is *near*, (eggys) right at the door.

Mark 13:28-29

Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is *near* (eggys). Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is *near*, (eggys) right at the door.

Luke 21:29-31

Then He told them a parable: “Behold the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now *near* (eggys). So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is *near* (eggys).

There is no question that the word “near” (eggys) in these parallel synoptic texts refers to the genuine nearness of time. They all use the illustration of a tree - when it begins to bloom, it signifies both the beginning of a new “season” and the end of an old. In the illustration, once the tree begins to bloom, the summer season is not “far off”, nor does it take many seasons for the fruit to mature, the change undeniably near in time.

So it was with the Kingdom, the coming of Jesus, and the end of the age. When disciples saw the signs taking place - the abomination of desolation (Mathew 24:15), the surrounding of Jerusalem by Roman armies (Luke 21:20-22), they were to recognize that these things were in fact near. The first century signs indicated that the “Kingdom season” was not many generations off, but was about to arrive in their lifetime. This is exactly what Jesus confirmed only a few verses later. (Mathew 24:34, Mark 13:30, Luke 21:32) Therefore, the word “eggys” in these texts refers to nearness in time, and that time is limited to the first century generation.

Hebrews 8:13

When He said, “A new *covenant*,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is *ready* (eggys) to disappear.

In the context of Hebrews 8, the “first” (v.13) refers to the first (Old) Covenant. Paul (who I believe wrote Hebrews) stated that the Old Covenant was at that time in the process of growing old and was “ready” (near in time) to disappear. Since it is virtually universally agreed that the Old Covenant did disappear (completely vanish) no later than AD70 (Hebrews 12:26-28), then “ready” (eggys) in Hebrews 8:13 did mean near in time and was limited to the first century.

Mathew 3:2

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is **at hand** (eggys).

Mark 1:15

And saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is **at hand**; (eggys) repent, and believe in the gospel."

I know of no one who denies that these verses teach the nearness of the Kingdom of God in the first century, regardless of their concepts of the nature of the Kingdom. In one way or another, everyone believes on some level that the Kingdom arrived in the first century, and was therefore "near" when these words were spoken.

Hebrews 6:7-8

For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and **close** (eggys) to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

In the context of these words written to the Hebrews, we can see a clear time limitation placed upon the word "close" (eggys). Just as the sower - and not another - either blesses or curses the ground in which he himself has tilled, so those who had rejected Christ and the "powers of the age to come" had already yielded thorns and thistles, and would soon be destroyed for that sin, which they themselves committed.

Luke 21:28

Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is **drawing near** (eggys).

Notice the context of Luke 21:28. Jesus' "these things" surely included the surrounding of Jerusalem by armies (21:20) between 66-70AD, which Jesus limited to his contemporary generation (21:32). Therefore, the redemption of Israel (Luke 1:68) was in fact near in the first century. This supports the words of Paul in the next text....

Romans 13:11

Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is **nearer** (eggys) to us than when we believed.

The salvation that Paul referred to in Romans 13 was the "salvation of the soul" mentioned by Peter in his first epistle (1 Peter 1:3-9). That soul-salvation was to be revealed in "those last times" (1 Peter 1:5,20), and brought to them (not us) at the "revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:9-13), that is, at Jesus' second coming (Hebrews 9:28, Mathew 16:27-28).

Philippians 4:5

Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is **near** (eggys).

James 5:8

You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is **near** (eggys).

Both Paul and James taught that the Lord was “near” in their lifetime, specifically his “parousia” (James 5:8 – compare Mathew 24:3,34). Therefore, the coming (return) of the Lord to bring and establish salvation was genuinely near in the first century. Those who would “endure to the end” (the end of the Old Covenant age – Mathew 24:3) would be saved (Romans 13:11).

Hebrews 10:25

Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day **drawing near** (eggys).

In the context of Hebrews 10:25, the phrase “the day” refers to the Day of Atonement, which Paul discusses extensively in chapter 9. Paul and the first century generation were eagerly expecting the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement, when the High Priest (Jesus) would “return” to the people from the Most Holy Place to consummate the salvation of Israel (Hebrews 9:24-28). Since Jesus emphatically placed the redemption (complete atonement) of Israel in the first century (Luke 21:28,32), we conclude that “the day” in Hebrews 10:25 was at that time “drawing near”, and was fulfilled in Paul’s generation. On a side note, the “assembling together” of Hebrews 10:25 was the “gathering together of the elect” in Mathew 24:31, which Jesus also placed in the lifetime of his contemporary generation (24:34).

“Eggys” in Revelation

Based on the meaning of “eggys” in all other New Testament texts, there is no biblical reason to insist that “eggys” in the book of Revelation should have a different meaning. Therefore, we will keep our comments brief regarding the two texts below.

Revelation 1:3

Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written therein; for the time **is near**. (eggys).

Revelation 22:10

And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time **is near**. (eggys).

It is most significant this book both begins and ends with an emphatic “time limitation” placed upon the entire prophecy. These “book-end” time statements form an inclusio in which the whole prophecy is to be interpreted. And, in the context of these time statement, we find the promise of the second coming of Jesus Christ. In other words, it was the return of the Lord which “near” when John wrote the book. As we have demonstrated repeatedly in these articles,

Jesus promised that his return (his second coming) would take place in the lifetime of his first century disciples. Notice....

Mathew 24:3,30,34

Tell us, when will this be, and what will be **the sign of your coming** and of the close of the age... Then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory...** Truly, I say to you, **this generation will not pass away till all these things take place**

Mathew 16:27-28

For **the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father**, and then he will repay every man for what he has done 28 Truly, I say to you, **there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.**

Since the return of Jesus and the establishment of his Kingdom is the focus of the book of Revelation, but, the time for the fulfillment of the Revelation was said to be “near”, and, the return of Jesus and the establishment of his Kingdom were to be accomplished in the first century, there can be no denying that “near” (eggys) in Revelation chapters 1 and 22 does in fact mean near in time, and must be limited to the lifetime of Jesus’ first disciples.

In conclusion:

Through the evidence and exegesis put forth in these four short word study articles, we have demonstrated beyond doubt that the fulfillment of the prophecy of the book of Revelation was truly “near”, and “soon” to take place in the first century; that is, “shortly” after the time of its writing. To place its fulfillment future to us (2018) is to be biblically inconsistent. It is to overlook, misinterpret, and even reject the clear and emphatic language of “time” communicated in the book of Revelation and the rest of the New Testament.

May the Lord give us all the courage and the humility to follow the truth wherever consistency may lead, and to leave the traditions of men concerning the time for the fulfillment of the book of Revelation to the scribes and Pharisees.

Dan Dery