

What Does the Bible Teach About the End of the World?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Matt. 24:36-39

1. Jesus is coming again. His return is a central truth of the Gospel, and it motivates Christians to be urgent in the work and faithful with the stewardship of it - Heb. 6:1-2; Acts 24:24-25
2. However, history is filled with pseudo prophets and religious conspiracy theorists attempting to set a date for His return. Every attempt to set a date for His return has failed.

I. PROBLEMS WITH PREDICTING JESUS' RETURN

A. God is not bound by time or by human measurement of it - 2Peter 3:8

B. There are no inspired prophets today - Matt. 24:4-5; 1John 4:1

C. People are often unwilling to be bound by scripture contexts

1. Matt. 24:3 - The disciples asked three questions. Jesus answered them in order, beginning with the fall of the temple and Jerusalem
2. Matt. 24:14 - First, the gospel would be preached throughout all of the world - Col. 1:6, 23
3. Matt. 24:15-16 - They would see signs of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem and have time and the ability to flee. Not so for the end of the world.
4. Matt. 24:33-34 - The previously prophesied events would happen within the lifetime of that audience
5. Matt. 24:38-41 - There will be no signs preceding the end of the world.
6. Matt. 24:42-44 - As it is not possible for humans to predict the coming of Judgment Day, their only response to it is to be perpetually prepared.

D. People often make prophetic images literal, and literal Divine commands figurative in order to fit their own doctrines

1. They make the figurative 144,000 literal to support rapture theology
2. They make baptism an archaic figure of speech that becomes a subjective option to support faith only doctrines

E. Anyone who predicts a date for the return of Jesus is a false prophet

1. Deut. 18:20-22 - All of their past prophecies have failed
2. Deut. 13:1-5 - All of their prophecies of the future are in contradiction to revealed truth, and therefore false.

II. PURE PROPHECIES ABOUT JESUS' RETURN

A. He is coming again - Acts 1:11; 1Thes. 4:13-17, 5:1-6

B. The time of His return is unknown to everyone, including all of the angels, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit - Mark 13:32; 2Peter 3:10

C. There will be no signs preceding His return - Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 12:39-40

D. The entire universe will be destroyed - 2Peter 3:10-13

1. Psalm 102:25 - He brought it into being from nothing in an instant by speaking a word; He can bring it to nothingness in an instant with a word

- E. The only visible precursor to the Judgment will be a loud trumpet, the resurrection of the dead, and the transformation of the living
 - 1. John 5:28-29; 1Cor. 15:51-52
- F. What Will Happen When This World Ends?

III. IT WILL BE THE END OF OUR PROBATION

- A. God is waiting for us - 2Peter 3:9; 1Peter 1:17
 - 1. The Lord is patiently waiting for us; we should fear to test His patience.
 - 2. Fearing the Lord is a healthy activity; some are saved by fear - Jude 23.
- B. We are pilgrims journeying to a better land, temporarily being tested here.
 - 1. This is not home, and our time here is limited.

IV. IT WILL BE THE END OF THE WORLD

- A. 2Peter 3:7-10 - "The unsinkable Titanic"; "No one can stop the Third Reich"; "Noah, that flood will never come."
- B. Disaster and cataclysm are insufficient as words to describe the end.
 - 1. Imagine all of the floods, fires, earthquakes, blizzards, wars rolled into one, and it still would fall short.
 - 2. Those who have seen their own house burn down can begin to grasp it.
 - 3. Only in the end, the whole world will be on fire and there will be no place to run to from the flames.

V. ALL OF THE DEAD WILL RISE FROM THE GRAVES

- A. John 5:28-29, 6:40 - That is why Jesus came into the world.
 - 1. Everyone will be raised: those lost at sea, burned, or eaten by cannibals.
 - 2. We all will have to be in order to give account for what we did, to receive sentence for that life. No one will be able to say, "just let me sleep."

VI. EVERYONE WILL BE JUDGED

- A. John 12:48; Acts 17:30-31 - God will judge those who don't believe in Judgment Day, too.
- B. He will judge us based upon:
 - 1. Matt. 12:36-37 - The words we speak
 - 2. 2Cor. 5:10 - The things we do
 - 3. Ecc. 12:14 - The things we think
- C. Many do not believe.
 - 1. 2Peter 3:3-11 - They didn't have to believe in the Flood to drown.
 - 2. Modern science has confirmed the existence of the ark and of a worldwide cataclysmic flood dating back to the correct time.
 - 3. There was a Flood, and the day before it came people were laughing at the very idea. Just as there was a Flood, there will be a Judgment Day.
 - 4. And there are unbelievers who will continue to laugh until they see the sky ripped open and the Lord return in the clouds - Rev. 1:7
 - 5. We do not have to believe in Judgment Day in order for it to happen. We will stand before God to answer for our lives, whether we believe or not. And there is nothing we can do, say, or think that will change that.

VII. THE SAVED WILL ENTER HEAVEN

A. 1Peter 1:3-5 - The saved are patiently waiting for it.

1. Calm anticipation while sojourning here. "This is a nice place to visit, but I really wouldn't want to stay here for an eternity."

VIII. THE LOST WILL ENTER HELL

A. Matt. 25:41-46; 2Thes. 1:7-10

1. Imagine the despair, helplessness, fear, and grief of one who waits until entering the eternal fire before they finally start believing.

IX. WHEN WILL IT BE?

A. Matt. 24:35-51 - Sunday dinners, weddings, summer vacation, retirement plans, remodeling, saving for college; life going on as usual.

B. 1Thes. 5:1-3; Luke 16:25 - Rich man in torments: "Remember that in your lifetime..." What we do now will count then.

C. Might Jesus return today? Absolutely! But it won't be because of some pseudo prophet's contrived calculations, but by God's unrevealed sovereign choice.

1. If He returns today, we will have no advance notice of any kind; there will be no warning.
2. There will be a great sound like a trumpet heard simultaneously around the world. In the blink of an eye, the dead will rise and the living transformed (an eye blink is less than 1/3 of a second). The Lord's appearance in the clouds will be as lightning that flashes from the east to the west (lightning can travel around the world in a quarter of a second). The world and the universe it occupies will burn in an instant like a puff of vapor (Isa. 51:6; a puff of vapor vanishes in about 1.15 seconds). Combine the great sound of a trumpet, the resurrection and transformation, the Lord's appearance in the clouds, and the destruction of the universe, the total time is 1.73 seconds from the start to finish of the return of Jesus.
3. Not suggesting that Jesus will be on the clock, but that Judgment Day will not be a prolonged experience. No one will have any time to obey the Gospel or for erring Christians to repent and pray for forgiveness

B. In view of this, how should we live? 2Peter 3:11-12

1. Jesus is coming again. Remember this one thing: everything that God, Jesus, and the Spirit are going to do for salvation of humankind has been done, except for one thing... return to gather up the righteous and carry them to heaven, and to consign the unrighteous to perdition.
2. Jesus is coming again. One day the sun will rise for the very last time. One day you will eat breakfast for the very last time; you will go to work for the very last day; you will go to bed for the very last night; you will kiss your mate and children for the very last time.
3. Jesus is coming again. One day you will hear your very last sermon. One day you will hear the last invitation song you will ever hear, and then the end will come. Are you ready? Jesus is coming again.