

The End Times

Introduction

Wars and rumors of war! Pestilence and famines! Multiple earthquakes! False prophets! Does this sound like the times we're living in? Is Jesus coming back soon or is it possible that He has already returned?

No Christian need live in confusion over these possibilities. Scattered throughout the Bible are descriptions of the last days of Planet Earth. For those willing to study, the Bible describes the end times and the return of Jesus for His Church.

Our Study

We are not the first people to wonder about the last days. Even the disciples questioned Jesus on this subject.

The Scripture: Matthew 24:3-8

"As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately. 'Tell us,' they said, 'what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?' Jesus answered: 'Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come... There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.' "

1. What did the disciples ask Jesus? _____

2. How did Jesus respond? _____

3. What does Jesus call these signs? _____

4. What does Jesus say about these events? _____

5. What does Jesus tell the disciples their attitude should be? _____

The Scripture: Matthew 24:9-14

"You will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of Me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

6. What further description of the end times does Jesus give? _____

The book of Mark gives us some further details about the end times.

The Scripture: Mark 13:13

"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All man will hate you because of Me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved."

7. What are some of these details? _____

Some of these signs have already taken place throughout the centuries. For others, we have only to read our newspapers and look around us to see them. But we must remember Jesus' words of reassurance too.

The Scripture: Reread Matthew 24:12, 13

"Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands to the end will be saved."

8. What words of reassurance does Jesus have for us? _____

Paul also has more to add in his letters to Timothy.

The Scripture: 1Timothy 4:1-4

"In later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron."

9. What are some further signs? _____

10. How does Paul describe these teachers? _____

The Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:1-5

"There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God - having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them."

11. What does Paul add? _____

12. What is his warning? _____

The Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:6-8

"They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women... [who] are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth... men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected."

13. How does Paul describe them? _____

The Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:3, 4

"The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."

14. What does Paul add? _____

Have you personally encountered such teachers and teachings? What did they teach?

Paul uses the term "myths." Recent newspaper articles told how some Scandinavian countries are returning to the Nordic myths.

When will Jesus return or has He already returned? The Bible tells us that before the end of the world, Jesus will come for His "Church," those believers who remain true to Him through these terrible times.

The Scripture: Mark 13:26, 27

"At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And He will send His angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens."

15. How will He come? _____

False prophets have appeared since shortly after Jesus' death. One Pharisee leader, Gamaliel, warned the Sanhedrin about putting the disciples to death:

The Scripture: Acts: 5:35, 36

"Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed and it all came to nothing."

16. What was his warning? _____

False prophets continue to appear today. Few of us will forget the "prophet" who led a large group of people to Jonestown, Ghana. There, upon his instructions, all, men, women and children committed suicide.

The Scripture: Matthew 24:23, 24

"If anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect - if that were possible.' "

17. What does Jesus say the false prophets will do? _____

18. What is Jesus' caution? _____

Periodically, so-called prophets come along predicting the date of Jesus' return. However, the Bible is very specific on this issue.

The Scripture: Matthew 24:36

"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

19. Who knows the exact time of Jesus' return? _____

The Scripture: Matthew 24:42

"Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."

20. What does Jesus tell the disciples to do? _____

Paul writes largely about this in his two letters to the Thessalonians.

The Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:15

"We do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him."

21. Why is Paul writing? _____

22. What does Paul believe? _____

The Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:15

"We who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep."

23. What will happen to those who are still alive? _____

The Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17

"The Lord will come from Heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."

24. Describe what Paul writes. _____

25. How long will we remain with Christ? _____

Paul has more to say about this in his first letter to the Corinthians.

The Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:51-57

"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed - in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

26. How does Paul describe our earthly bodies? _____

27. How will we be raised? _____

28. Who is our victory through? _____

Paul gives us further instructions for Christians in his second letter to the Thessalonians.

The Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 2:2, 3

"We ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for, that day will not come, until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction."

29. What is Paul's warning? _____

30. When will that day come? _____

The man of lawlessness is of course, the anti-Christ.

31. What is his destiny? _____

What a glorious future awaits those of us who belong to Christ. Before the days of the tribulation, Jesus will return for us - His Church - and take us to be with Him forever.

The Answers

1. What would be the sign of His coming and the end of the age?
2. Many would come in His name, claiming to be the Christ. There would be wars and rumors of wars, famines, and earthquakes.
3. The beginning of birth pangs
4. They must happen, but the end is still to come.
5. They should not be alarmed.
6. Persecution, many will turn away from the faith, betrayal, false prophets, deception, but the gospel will be preached to the whole world.
7. Family members will betray each other; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death; people will hate Christians because of Christ.
8. Those who stand to the end will be saved.
9. Some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits
10. As hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.
11. People will love themselves and money. They will be boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without self-control, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.
12. To have nothing to do with such people
13. They worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women who are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth and have depraved minds.
14. In time men will not listen to sound doctrine. Instead they will find teachers who teach what they want to hear. They will turn away from the truth and turn aside to myths.
15. With great power and glory His angels will gather up the elect.
16. He reminded them of a leader who rallied many around him but was killed and his movement came to nothing.
17. Perform great signs and miracles.
18. We should not believe them.
19. Only the Father
20. "Keep watch."
21. So the followers of Jesus will not be ignorant or have no hope
22. That Jesus died and rose again, and that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep (died) in Him.
23. They will not precede those who have died
24. The Lord will come from heaven and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, those still living will be caught up together with them in the clouds and will meet the Lord in the air.
25. Forever
26. As perishable
27. As imperishable
28. Jesus Christ
29. That Christians should not be alarmed by false prophecy that says the day of the Lord has already come.
30. After the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed
31. Destruction

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