

Luke 21:25-31

“Are You Looking Forward to the end of this World?”

25 " And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;

26 "men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken.

27 "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

28 "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

29 Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.

30 "When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near.

31 "So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.

Last week I got into a debate online with a fellow who posed the question, *“how do you think the world will end?”* Here are just some of the answers given by the non-Christians who responded:

“A Giant Meteorite”

“The Departure of the Moon from its orbit”

“A Global Pandemic”

“The Sun Burning Out”

One fellow lamented the fact that we weren't spending enough money on NASA so that the human race could survive the end of the world by colonizing other planets, which by an odd coincidence was the plan of the villain in C.S. Lewis's book *“Perelandria.”*

Now they that all had slightly different takes, but the majority all answered in terms of some “natural disaster” and predictably none of them framed the end as something *good or desirable*.

Ok, now maybe now some of you're thinking, “Ok Pastor, we can understand how Atheists and Agnostics in the internet community would have some sort of non-religious explanation of how the world will end, but who would speak of the end of the world as *something good???*”

Well, when I sent of my answer I said that the world will end with the return of Jesus Christ, and that the end of this world is something that I'm quite looking forward to.

Because you see brothers and sisters, for believers, far from being a catastrophe, the apocalypse is not something we fear, but something we desire. Why is that? Well the very word “APOCALYPSE” tells us why – We get our English word APOCALYPSE from the Greek Word *Apocalupsis* which means “revealing” or “unveiling” and it has a double meaning. It means to make visible that which was hidden, and Christians refer to the end of the World as the *Apocalypse* because it will be the day in which Jesus will return and he who has in one sense been hidden from the world, will be clearly visible to all, even those who have been denying his very existence all their lives.

And so you who are Christians do not fear the end of the world, because as Jesus tells us in these verses, the world will not end because of some sort of meteorite impact, or even via a nuclear exchange, rather the return of Jesus will be the end.

Some people might say, *“Yes but look at all those “signs” Jesus speaks of in verse 25. Those sound like they might be allegorical descriptions of natural disasters, I mean the Sun, the Moon, and Stars are all in outer space, so maybe the world will be destroyed by a meteorite impact after all, and then Jesus will come back after that.”*

Now I want to respond to that kind of thinking, because I’ve found it to be very common even in the Christian world; namely **the idea that the times when the Bible speaks of the End of the World, it is using poetic imagery to describe natural or man-made disasters.**

So that in effect, what we are reading are predictions of future cataclysms that God has foreseen and warned us about. So that eventually either the [QUOTE] “forces of nature” or “evil of men” [UNQUOTE] will destroy the world, and Jesus is waiting for that to happen and then he will come back to make the best of a bad situation. As if God is predicting, describing, and responding to forces beyond his control. So that while God is helpless to overcome the forces of nature, or helpless to overrule the evil of men, never fear Christians our hope is that somehow after the eggs have gotten broken and thoroughly scrambled by the uncontrollable Tornado, God will make it into an omelette.

That thinking is exactly the reverse of what the Bible tells us, Jesus doesn’t come back because the world ends, that would be like saying **“There were no more words in the book, so the Author stopped writing”** This world ends because Jesus comes back. It won’t be a meteorite, or a nuclear war, or a disease. Brothers and Sisters, you of all people should have no fear that the world will end by accident. No we know that God who is sovereign over all things is bringing all of history to his appointed ends, and history doesn’t end until He says it does. ***The book finishes when the author writes the final word.***

So what are these events that Jesus speaks of? They are signs that his he is coming back. Their importance lies in confirming your faith. So for you who believe in Jesus, these signs that Jesus speaks of shouldn’t be scary, because they are signs that greatest thing ever is about to happen.

Look at the times in this chapter that Jesus tells you just that:

Luke 21:9 "But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately."

10 Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

11 "And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

Do not be terrified, he says, these are not things for you who await his return to be scared of. These are signs that must come to pass. But wait a minute Pastor, sign or no sign, why shouldn’t we be afraid of Earthquakes or Wars. Those are pretty scary when you are in the middle of them.

Now in Matthew’s account of this speech of Jesus’ to his Disciples which is called the “Olivet Discourse.” The statement in that last verse 11 is followed by Jesus’ reassurance:

24:8 All these are the beginning of

5604 ὀδίν odin {o-deen’}

Meaning: 1) the pain of childbirth, travail pain, birth pangs 2) intolerable anguish, in reference to the dire calamities precede the advent of the Messiah

Origin: akin to 3601; TDNT - 9:667,1353; n f

Usage: AV - sorrow 2, pain 1, travail 1; 4

birth pains..

Now ladies, hands up if you've had a child. ***Let me ask you, because I don't want to presume here: would you agree that Labor, the pain associated with child birth, was pretty intense?*** Alright. Let me ask you another question how many of you either had another child after going through that, or intend to have other children. Now why would you go through such difficulty and pain more than once? I want to suggest, that the answer is because its worth it, because at the end you have a new baby, a new creation.

In fact the funny thing is that the intensity of the labor pains are a sign that the birth is imminent. As it gets nearer the contractions and the pain get worse.

Jesus tells us that the signs he points to, will get worse near the end, but they are in fact a sign that a new creation a new age is coming, which is good because sin has made a terrible mess of this one.

Brothers and Sisters the New Testament breaks all of time into two ages, this present evil age, which extends from the fall till the return of Jesus and the age to come which begins as soon as Jesus returns. It was in order to deliver His Sheep not only from the pains of Hell but the pain and sorrow of life in this present evil age that Jesus went to the Cross.

You see that in:

***Gal. 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,
4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,
5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.***

And then for instance we read in Ephesians 1:21 that Jesus is exalted:

21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

So the signs of his redemption and the coming new creation, because this sin filled creation is as Paul tells us in Romans 8 groaning with birth pangs, waiting to be made new, are painful but they are not a cause to fear for believers because they tell you, that the return of Jesus is yet nearer than when you first believed.

So one day, when you who believe, hear the trumpet sounding and the see the skies being rolled up as a scroll, then look up for you will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And the old heavens and the old earth, and even these old bodies of ours that were so broken by the fall will be made new. And there will be a new heaven and new earth. What will that be like?

Well turn with me in your bibles to Revelation 21:1 *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.*

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

No more sin, no more pain. After the birth pain, rejoicing.

For those who have refused the gospel that is even now being preached to the four corners of the earth, that day will be one of fear. For it will be the beginning not of new life, but the coming of judgment and eternal death. A death were there is no end to corruption, the worm does not die, and no end to the punishment, the fire is not quenched. So as they see these signs, they will cause hearts to fail and men to be filled not with joy but dread.

So let me ask you a critical question:

Are you looking forward to the end of this world, the end of this present evil age. Are you looking forward to it because it will mean that your savior has returned?

Are you able to respond to the words of Jesus in Rev. 22:20: *"Surely I am coming quickly."* In the same way his beloved apostle John responded: **"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"**

I hope that is the case, but if not, it is not YET to late. I say not YET deliberately, because a day will come when it will be. So close with Christ, Believe in Him, put your trust in him this very day. Do not wait for tomorrow.

For you who already have hear now and take to heart the words of Peter and put them into action:

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.