

Until the End of the World

Mark 13



Welcome to the End of the world

According to the Mayan Calendar, December 21st, 2012 is the end of an age.

The Mayan Calendar has a long count or long cycle of 7885 years.

The end of this cycle is on December 21st, 2012.

(By the way, this oft used image is an Aztec "Stone of the Sun" Calendar, not Mayan!)

They even made a movie about this.

But this has not been the only prediction.

In 2011, Harold Camping, a Californian Christian Radio Preacher predicted the return of Christ on May 21, 2011 and the destruction of the earth on October 21st, 2011.

Suffice it to say, he was wrong.

He had actually made two other predictions in 1994 and 1995.

In fact there have been hundreds if not thousands of predictions about the end of the world or the return of Christ.

This includes people like, Martin Luther (pre 1600), Christopher Columbus (1568), Nostradamus (July 1999), John Wesley (1836), The Seventh Day Adventists (predicted at least 7 different times), The Jehovah's Witnesses Cult (11 times since 1874; Most recently May 2nd, 1984; They actually believe that Jesus did come in spirit form in 1914), Murderer Charles Manson (1969), Pat Robertson (1982, April 29, 2007), Louis Farakhan (1991 - first Gulf War), Marshall Applewhite of the Heaven's Gate Cult where all members committed suicide (March 26, 1997), Jonathan Edwards (2000), Jerry Falwell (2000), Isaac Newton (2000), Tim LaHaye & Jerry B. Jenkins of the "Left Behind" book series (2000).

I could go on but you get the idea.

They were all wrong.

Being an expert in one field or being popular or being mystical or even having strong conviction does not make you right.

Jesus and the End of the Temple

This all started directly after Jesus has a run-in at the temple with the elite. He ends his time there by looking at how a poor widow has been duped into giving everything she has, bilked by religious hucksters.

I cannot abide televangelists who prey on the poor and desperate.
It pisses me off and it pisses Jesus off.

And so, while they are leaving the grand temple of Jerusalem, the disciples comment on how magnificent the Temple is.

Jesus replies, "Not one stone will be left on another."

In other words, he is saying, this won't last.

Is he being philosophical here? Of course nothing is forever.

I don't think so. I think he is still upset.

His disciples only see the outside, the spectacle of the temple and they are taken in.

Taken in like the widow.

Taken in like the desperate.

Taken in by the allure of celebrity, the image of success, the power and the glory.

But Jesus is not only upset, he speaks the prophetic truth of God.

In 70A.D. The Jewish State rebels against the Romans.

And the Romans bring their legion to raze Jerusalem to the ground under the leadership of the Roman General Titus.

Titus loots the temple and destroys it completely.

This is a an image from the Arch of Titus that still exists in Rome today commemorating this victory.



Jesus and the End of the Age

The disciples ask Jesus when this will happen privately in the Olivet.

My guess is that they want to know when the temple will be destroyed.

But Jesus' answer is not about the temple.

Instead he speaks about the end of the rule of man and the fullness of the Kingdom.

This Kingdom begins with his first advent - infiltrating the world, but it will be fulfilled in the second advent.

This isn't' about the end of the world, about Armageddon or asteroids hitting the earth or nuclear war.

This is and always has been about the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God means what the sick and sinful human heart gravitates towards, the temple, the power, the wealth, the hedonism, the materialism, the hatred, the jealousy, the oppression, the abuse, the shooting of children, of war, of famine, will come to an end.

And there are things he needs us to know:

1. Do not be deceived by false claims of the end. (5-8)

Whether the second coming or by war or natural disasters.

These are not the end but a beginning.

2. The Agents of the Kingdom will not be welcome. (9-12)

Why? Because we break the sinful system of the world.

How? By simply living out the teachings of Jesus.

You don't need to know everything about theology and history.

You only need to obey Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.

Living every moment of your life with Jesus and for him is the greatest act

of resistance against evil.

You do this where you work and play and live.

And even at home, you may well be rejected and misunderstood.

The home is the place where we are taught the ways of the world.

Even in Christian homes, we need to know the difference.

Yes, it means you will struggle, you will be torn - but you will choose.

3. The Return of the Messiah will be Obvious (21-27)

There will be false claims of messiahship.

There will be false claims of his return.

But Jesus' actual return will be unmistakable.

4. All these things will happen While in the disciples' time. (28-31)

These things are not in reference to the return of the messiah.

They reference the wars, the strife, the false claims.

So What?

The conclusion is that No one knows when the return will be.

We have no knowledge of the time of these things.

Even Jesus did not know - even he made no predictions.

All he knows is that these things will happen and that the Kingdom will Come.

He uses the image of a man who leaves and entrusts his house to his servants.

Jesus is that man.

We are his servants.

In another place he speaks of that day coming like a thief in the night.

What are we to do in this time?

This time of wars, oppression, famine, sorrow?

This culture and society of privilege and comfort

Where money, power, influence and success is defined by human terms?

There is one word Jesus repeats again and again:

γρηγορέω

gregoreo

watchful, vigilant, awake

This does not mean disassociate from reality or the world or your culture or your family.

What is means is to pay attention to where the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the world conflict with each other.

This includes within your own heart.

We are to live in this world, to work, and play and build friendships and families.

But we are to remains awake the to the Kingdom, the presence of God in our lives, Father, Son & Spirit.

Do not fall asleep.

How awake are you?