



Are We In the "End Times" by [John T Polk II](#)

All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.

Question: My Pastor said we have entered the End Times because there are wars and rumors of wars, after which Jesus will come again for the Rapture.

Answer:

- (1) There is no Bible "sign" that precedes Jesus' Second Coming; and**
- (2) There is nothing in the Bible about a millennial Rapture of God's people from off the Earth.**

Let's study Scripture for each part of the answer.

(1) Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (**Matthew 24:1-2**) and His disciples asked when that would take place and added another question about His coming (**Matthew 24:3**). Jesus then proceeded to answer the first (**Matthew 24:4-34**) by pointing to common occurrences:

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake (**Matthew 24:7-9**).

The "beginning of sorrows" connected with Jerusalem's destruction should have caused Jesus' disciples to begin watching what would otherwise be regular events, but when these circled closer to Judea, His disciples should have been on the alert (**Matthew 24:10-14**). When these events entered the Judean area, then Jesus says disciples should flee from the "abomination of desolation" prophesied by Daniel the prophet (**Matthew 24:15-34**), for this is the final rejection of the Jews as God's chosen people (**Matthew 21:33-46**). The "end" (or "completion") of which Jesus spoke (**Matthew 24:6,13,14**), was the destruction of Jerusalem, which was clearly understood as the "abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (**Matthew 24:15-34; Daniel 11:31**), and identified in **Luke 21:20**: "when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies."

All of the preceding and prediction "signs" Jesus had directed in His prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem ("And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" **Luke 21:24**). "The times of the Gentiles" refer to God ruling in the affairs of men to the extent that, just as the Jews had crucified Jesus Christ by "lawless hands," or Roman soldiers (**Acts 2:23**), God would bring His destructive judgment upon the Israelites through those same "lawless hands" (Roman soldiers).

There are no indicators that describe activities before His 2nd Coming and the destruction of the Earth.

The similarity drawn, in **Matthew 24:27-31**, between Divine Judgment upon Jerusalem and the end of the world is to emphasize that it is caused by a heavenly decision and not just earthly events! This destruction of Jerusalem was God's ultimate show of rejection of the Jews as His chosen people. *[Be watching for the next issue of Gospel Gleaner when this column will discuss the question of whether modern-day Jews are still God's chosen people]* Lest we forget His purpose in this answer, Jesus immediately reminded them that He was referring to "this generation" (**Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:32; Matthew 23:34-39; Mark 8:11-12**), that is those living then. And His words would not be changed until they were fulfilled (**Matthew 24:35**).

But like a broad-brush line painted down the middle of the highway, Jesus turned his attention to His 2nd Coming when He said:

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (**Matthew 24:36**).

Clearly, He is addressing a "day and hour" which will occur at a time known only by God, Himself. ***This could not be the same event that has been discussed in the previous verses, for that one was identifiable by preceding indicators, and this one has no way of knowing when it will happen.*** Angels don't know when, Jesus, while on Earth, did not know when; and the Father has not revealed it to anyone, including all who read His Bible. Thus, ***there is absolutely no Scripture that indicates, hints, or in any way reveals when Jesus Christ is coming again. Therefore, all who attempt to pry into God's mind when He has chosen not to reveal something are demonstrating their lack of faith in God's Word.***

Jesus proceeds to give 4 illustrations to show the suddenness with which the 2nd Coming will happen:

- 1) The flood in Noah's day (**Matthew 24:37-42**) which ends with: "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming";
- 2) A thief breaking into a house (**Matthew 24:43-44**) which ends with: "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him";
- 3) A wicked servant taking advantage of his master's absence (**Matthew 24:45-51**) which ends with: "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of";
- 4) The parable of 5 foolish virgins who were unprepared for the bridegroom's coming (**Matthew 25:1-13**) that ends with: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."
The certainty and completeness of that Judgment Day to come are set before us with the parable of the 1-, 2-, and 5-talent men who were to use their talents until their lord settled their accounts (**Matthew 25:14-30**), and the fact that "all nations" will stand before "the Son of Man" who separates the sheep from the goats (**Matthew 25:31-46**).

It is the "untaught and unstable" people who "twist" the Scriptures "to their own destruction" (**2 Peter 3:16**) and unfortunately all who follow their doctrines

(**2 Peter 3:17**). To combine passages that discuss two entirely different things is to ignore the complete inspiration of the Scriptures, themselves. Those who cannot see the difference Jesus drew between the destruction of Jerusalem (**Matthew 24:4-35**) and the 2nd Coming of Jesus (**Matthew 24:36-25:46**) may be blind to other Scriptures as well.

The distinction Jesus drew in **Matthew 24:36** between the two discussions is easy to see if one is paying attention to what the Bible actually says! I surely would not recommend that anyone keep following any preacher/pastor who cannot understand what Jesus said about any subject.

(**2**) When disciples were to be delivered up to "great tribulation" (**Matthew 24:21**) or "the days of vengeance" (**Luke 21:22**), there is NO mention made of any "Rapture" to deliver them from such – not here, not anywhere in Scripture! In fact, if God was going to "snatch away" (a.k.a. "rapture) saints who are undergoing "great tribulation," then John could not have seen in Heaven those "who have come out of the great tribulation," for they would have been snatched away" and spared from it (**Revelation 7:9-17**)! The only time a "snatching away" of disciples will occur is mentioned in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**:

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

When the expression "caught up" is used, it means the living saints will be taken at the same time as those saints who have died at the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ. There are no "signs" to warn of this coming; it will begin the life in eternity; it will be heard and known by all at the same time; and there is no separate resurrection for the saints and for the wicked, for Jesus has said:

"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (**John 5:28-29**).

When the 2nd Coming of Jesus occurs, it will involve everyone in the tombs, both good and evil. Judgment will take place for both at the same time (**2 Corinthians 5:10**). The Thessalonian passage simply explains that when the saints are "caught up" to meet the Lord, both the living and the dead saints are involved.

According to Jesus' statement in John, at the same time that those who have done good are raised, those who have done evil will be raised. The Corinthian passage shows that all in both classes (good and evil) will be judged at the same time. In other words, there is no "rapture" of good people from the Earth separating them

from the evil people, and no time separation of the resurrection from the Judgment Day.

Since no one knows when Jesus will come again, since there will be no second-chance for the wicked, and since Jesus Christ now rules from David's throne in Heaven (**Acts 2:29-33**), all should obey His words:

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:15-16**).

-----**John T. Polk II**

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