

Will the World End? If So, When?

Contrary to what Mr. Harold Camping predicted, the world did not end in 2011.

Mr. Camping, a self-proclaimed Bible teacher and owner of the Family Radio Network, had long ago predicted that the world would end in September 1994.

When this did not happen, Mr. Camping reviewed his data and found an “error” in his calculations. His new prediction was that Christ would return for judgment, and the rapture would occur, on May 21, 2011.

And, when on May 22, 2011, the world was obviously still in existence, Mr. Camping revised his prediction by saying that the world would end on October 21, 2011.

But here we are. It is January, 2012.

With the dawn of 2012, the question shifts from “what does Mr. Camping say?” to “what does the Mayan calendar indicate?” Does this calendar predict a catastrophic, world-ending event on December 21, 2012?

While some say so, others say that December 21, 2012 will mark the end of one “baktun” (a period of time lasting 144,000 days, or about 394.5 years) and the beginning of another. For the Mayans, December 21 will have about the same significance as did the dawn of the new millennium in 2000 for Western civilization.

The end of the world is on people’s mind. Will the world end? If so, when?

Will the world end?

Yes. At some point, the world as we know it, and history as we know it, will end.

Let me be clear: I am no follower of Mr. Camping, nor of his teachings. Nor do I live by the Mayan calendar. So I do not predict *when* the world will end, nor do I base my conclusions on calculations or calendars.

Yet the world will end. That the world has not ended *yet*, is no reason to say that the world will *never* end. One might as well argue that, because to this point he has not yet died, he will never die.

How do we know that the world will end? Jesus predicts this, and the Bible speaks of it. If Jesus is God, and if God cannot lie, and if the Bible is God’s Word (I believe all these to be true), the world will end someday.

Jesus speaks of this reality of the end of the world in Matthew 24. Admittedly, among Christians this is a controversial chapter. But in this chapter, Jesus answers the question of His disciples in verse 2: “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” In I Corinthians 15:24, the apostle speaks of the “end,” when Christ is victorious over all His enemies and the kingdom of God is realized. And Peter says in I Peter 4:7: “But the end of all things is at hand.”

We must be clear on what this “end” is. That the world as we know it, and history as we know it, will “end” does not mean that at some point everything will simply cease to exist.

Rather, the word “end” in the Bible has the idea of a goal being reached. The “end” of which we speak is the coming of Christ to raise the dead and judge all who have ever lived, to recreate this universe, and to make God’s kingdom complete and visible.

When will the end come?

No man knows when the end will come. “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only,” said Jesus (Matthew 24:36). If no man knows, then no

man may predict. Or, to put it differently, that one who tries to predict the day and hour of Christ's return, shows themselves to be a false teacher.

But Jesus did give *signs*, by which we can know that the end is near. Wars, famines, plagues, earthquakes, false prophets (men claiming to teach the truth but not knowing the truth) - even the spread of the gospel throughout the world by the work of missions - these are signs. As these things happen, and as they happen with increasing frequency or severity, we know that Jesus' return draws nearer and nearer.

My limited space in this article prevents me from demonstrating that these things are happening with increasing frequency. But you already know this, if you pay attention to the news reports.

Looking for the end.

"Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer," says Peter, when he notes that the end is near (1 Peter 4:7).

The child of God need not be afraid of the end. Rather, with spiritual sobriety, we must observe the signs of Christ's coming being unfolded around us.

The child of God must not stop carrying out the physical activities of life, including work and recreation; rather, we must do our work, in service of our Father who sees.

And we must pray. Christ so taught us: "Thy kingdom come!" (Matthew 6:10). And the church does, in the prayer recorded in Scripture (Revelation 22:20): "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Pastor Douglas Kuiper

Sources consulted:

- 1) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_calendar
- 2) <http://www.familyradio.com>

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. . . . But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

1 Thessalonians 5:4-8