

Intro: Open your Bibles to Matthew 24... We live in troublesome times, with wars, disasters, injustices, a lack of morality, many false religions...

They say the end of the world is near!

Many ask: "When will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3)

But when Peter asked this question, he was not asking about the end of the world.

Those who, in error, apply these passages to the end of the world overlook some details in the text. In the first place, the question was not about the end of the world, but rather about the end of Jerusalem (and the Jewish age):

Read Mark 13:1-2. Then as He went out of the temple... ² Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Read Mark 13:14-18, 30:

"Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵"Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. ¹⁶"And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁷"But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ¹⁸"And pray that your flight may not be in winter. ... "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place." (Mark 13:14-18, 30)

(See also Matthew 24:20, etc.)

These chapters refer to the destruction of Jerusalem – the end of those buildings and stones, and the end of the Jewish "world/age" – and not to the end of the world. So, what passages DO speak of the end of the world?

Peter and the End of the World

1. When?

Noone knows. **There will be no sign.**

"...As a thief in the night." (**2 Peter 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:2**)

2 Peter 3:1-13 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11 1 Corinthians 15 John 5:24-29

2. What will happen at the end of the world?

Peter himself taught about the end of the world, (and it does NOT come from Matthew 24):

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." (**2 Peter 3:10**)

Noise – End –

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 – “The dead in Christ will rise first.”

This comes right after more details about the “noise” – shout, voice of an arcangel, the trumpet of God.

Noise – End – Resurrection –

The above passages are written to Christians...

Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-55 – “We shall all be changed”

Noise – End – Resurrection – Change –

THIS one, to all.

→ **Read John 5:26-29 – “He has given Him authority to execute judgment”**

Noise – End – Resurrection – Change – Judgment So, 2 Peter 3:11-14

3. Meanwhile, where do the dead go?

All the dead go to Hades...

... which has two parts, ‘torments’ and ‘Paradise.’

There is a great gulf between them.

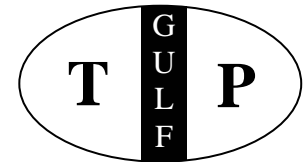
Luke 16:23 – The rich man was in “torments”; :26, “gulf”

Jesus on the cross: “Today you will be with Me in Paradise.” – *Luke 23:43*

After the resurrection Jesus had gone to Paradise, but had not ascended to the Father. (Read John 20:15-17)

Jesus’ soul *went to*, but was *not abandoned to*, Hades. (Acts 2:27)

Hades is equivalent to “death.” “The gates of Hades shall not prevail” against the church. (Matthew 16:18)



At the end of the world, God will raise all the dead. Many on that day will no longer have a physical body, because of decay, causing the dust to return to the dust. The bodies of some will have been burned (such as the Christians persecuted by the Roman government). Others will have been destroyed in disasters, etc. Our physical body will not matter in the day of judgment. God knows every human being, every soul, and knows every soul that will be in Hades. He is going to empty Hades, and just as He created man from the dust of the ground in the beginning, He will give us incorruptible bodies. So it doesn't matter whether we are buried, or cremated, or whatever.

What makes the difference between those in Torments, and those in Paradise?

4a. Corruption and False Teaching

...come from within the church: Destructive heresies (2 Peter 2:1) ...

Many heresies and false teachings have even come up concerning the end of the world. The truth is that there will be NO special tribulation, no rapture with some receiving their reward before others, NO failed mission of Jesus that He will correct with an earthly millennial reign on the earth, NO limited number of saved people in heaven, NO second chance to be saved, NO physical battle between the followers of Jesus and the armies of Satan...

Such false teachings support the evil practices of many of those who spread them:

Destructive ways, blasphemies (2:2); covetousness (:3); the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries (:10); brute beasts (:12); eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin (:14); slaves of corruption (:19).

... and come from outside the church, from scoffers (3:3-4)

Those who would corrupt the church should consider the punishment of the angels who sinned (2:4), the wicked from the times of Noah (:5), y and of Sodom and Gomorrah (:6).

4b. The power of God's word

With the world, as with the false prophets, God's word can...

create ... destroy ... reserve for fire ... destroy again ... judge

Invitation:

We do not know when the end of the world will come. But even if it's not for another 2,000 years, there is ANOTHER DAY: The end of our lives!... and we don't know when THAT will occur, either.

Illustration from college: Confetti balloons over the doorway... a surprise upon entering the room... a note which dropped down... "If this had been the end of the world, ***were you ready?***"

- **What will happen to me?**
- **Where will I go?**
- **Will I have completely trusted in God, or, will I have believed a false teaching, perhaps even hoping for a second chance?**

Peter teaches us how to prepare for that day:

Non-Christians: Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21.

Christians: Acts 8:18-23