

WHEN WILL THE WORLD END?

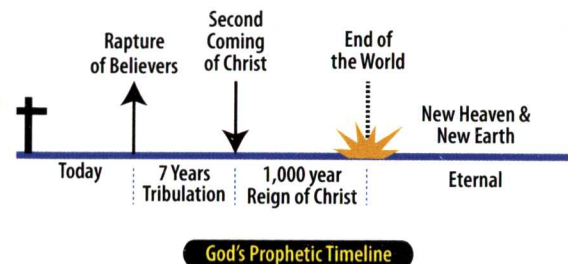
In May of 2011, radio preacher Harold Camping had many people excited by predicting that the Lord was going to return on May 21. When the day came and went without incident he declared that he was "flabbergasted," and that the Lord must have come spiritually instead of physically.

There have always been people who have taken it upon themselves to predict the Lord's return. Some are saying that the world will end when the Mayan calendar runs out in 2012. Forerunners of the Seventh Day Adventists claimed that the Lord would return in 1843 or 1844. In 1925 the Jehovah Witnesses were expecting the Lord's return. Pat Robertson predicted that Christ's return would be in November of 1982. A man named Edgar Whisenant authored a book titled, "Eighty-Eight Reasons Why the Rapture Will Occur in 1988." Obviously, all of these people have been proven wrong.

Anyone who claims to know when the Lord is going to return is ignorant of the plain teachings of Scripture. In a passage referring to the Lord's return, Jesus said, **"...the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not."** (Luke 12:40) Often His coming is compared to a thief coming in the night when no one is expecting

him. (1 Thessalonians 5:2) In Matthew 24:42 Jesus said, **"...ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."** In the same passage God says plainly, **"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of Heaven, but my Father only."** (Matthew 24:36) From these, and many other passages of Scripture it should be plain that no person will ever know when Jesus Christ is going to come back to this world. Any person who claims to know should immediately be written off as a false prophet.

Though no one knows when the end of this world is coming, nor all of the exact details of the end times, we are told what the main events of the end will be. These events are as follows: the rapture, the great tribulation, the second coming of Christ to earth and the millennial kingdom, followed by the destruction of this world and the creation of new heavens and a new earth. These events are explained by the diagram below and a brief summary describing them.



1. THE RAPTURE

The next great event in our world's history predicted in the Bible is known as "The Rapture."

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 says, **"For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."**

The Latin word for the phrase "caught up" is the word "rapturo" which means "caught up" or "snatched up." Birds which swoop down and snatch up their prey are called "raptors." This extraordinary event referred to in this passage will occur when Christ descends from Heaven with a shout, and snatches up the true believers who are living at that time, to meet Him in the air and go with Him to Heaven. As they are taken up into the clouds their bodies will be transformed into new and glorious bodies which will be able to enter into Heaven. Paul says, **"...this corruptible (body) must put on incorruption, and this mortal (body) must put on immortality."** (1 Corinthians 15:53)

This will happen in an instant of time. Paul describes it as **"in the twinkling of an eye."** (1 Corinthians 15:52) At the same time the genuine

believers who have died since New Testament days, will be raised from the dead in new, glorified bodies and will also be taken to Heaven in their new bodies. Those who are not true believers will be left on this world in their existing condition.

2. THE GREAT TRIBULATION

After the true believers have been removed (raptured) from this world there will be seven years of terrible judgments from God. The prophet



Zephaniah describes it as **"the great day of the Lord" and "a day of wrath."** (Zephaniah 1:14-15) Jeremiah refers to it as **"the time of Jacob's trouble."** (Jeremiah 30:7) and Jesus says that it will be **"...great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."** (Matthew 24:21) Those seven years will be times of awful judgments: famine, plagues, earthquakes, scorching heat, hailstorms and more, described in detail in the book of Revelation, chapters 6-19. The person the Bible refers to as

the "Antichrist" will assume control and demand that the entire world must worship him or be killed. Since all true believers will have been removed at the rapture, God will send two witnesses who will preach the gospel. Through their witness many

will turn to God and be converted, though many of these will be martyred by the antichrist.

Some people say that we must already be in the tribulation because there are earthquakes, famines and other troubles. But these troubles have always been a part of life on earth. The problems in the world now are nothing in comparison to the awful judgments during these seven years of tribulation when over one half of the world's population will be destroyed.

3. THE SECOND COMING

Jesus Christ personally came to earth when He was born of the virgin Mary in Bethlehem. Instead of accepting Him as the Messiah, the Jewish nation rejected Him. After He died on the cross for our sins and rose again, He returned to Heaven, with the promise that He would come again. (Acts 1:11) This second coming to earth will occur at the end of the tribulation. Christ will return with the armies of Heaven following Him. The Antichrist will gather the armies of the world to attack Christ in the battle of Armageddon. Antichrist and his armies will be defeated and he and the devil will be cast into Hell. Christ will destroy all of the unbelievers and will set up His kingdom. (Revelation 19:11-21).

4. THE MILLENNIUM

After the Antichrist has been defeated, Christ will set up His kingdom in Jerusalem and reign over all of the earth for one thousand years. (Revelation 20:4-6) Those will be years of wonderful peace, justice and prosperity. The lamb will lie down with the lion. Weapons of war will be turned into farming equipment. Every man will sit in peace under his own vine and his own fig tree. The whole world will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord and come to worship Him in Jerusalem.

5. THE END OF THE WORLD

At the close of the millennium, the devil will be released from Hell for a short time. Again he will gather the armies of earth to rebel against Christ. Again he will be defeated and this time cast into the lake of fire forever. (Revelation 20:7-9) Those who have not trusted Christ as their Savior will stand before God's Great White Throne and be condemned to a lost eternity with the devil and his angels. (Revelation 20:12-15) Then this old heaven and earth will be burned with fire and God will create a new heaven and new earth where His true followers will enjoy the glories of God's presence forever. (Revelation 21:1-8, II Peter 3:10-13)

Friend, there is only one way to escape the eternal lake of fire and enjoy the blessings of God's

eternal Heaven. You must recognize that you are a sinner and completely unable to pay for your own sins or earn your eternal salvation by any good deeds or religious works. You must come to God, admit your sin and believe that Christ died on the cross to pay for all of your sins and provide you the free gift of salvation. Believing the promise of God that offers you forgiveness and salvation, you must call on Christ who rose again from the dead, and lives to give you eternal life. God will then do a work in your heart and give you eternal life so that you can have a place in His eternal kingdom. Please contact the church listed on this pamphlet for more help and answers to your questions. God loves you, in spite of your sins, and wants you to spend eternity with Him. (Ephesians 2:8-9, John 3:16)

NOTE: The above views are generally held by those in Bible-believing Baptist churches using a literal and dispensational hermeneutic in the interpretation of Scripture.

For More Information Contact:

 **Brentwood
Baptist Church**

588 Dara James • Des Plaines, IL 60016
(847) 298-3399 • www.brentwoodbapt.org
Daryl York, Pastor

Service Times

Sundays at 9:30 AM, 11 AM, and 6 PM • Wednesdays at 7:00 PM

THE END OF THE WORLD

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?