

The Last Days – What Are Christians to Do?

“At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21: 27-28)

End Time Assertions

1. During the last days, between the first and second comings of Christ, the church is warned regarding certain things in general that will occur.
 - *The danger of being deceived*
 - There will be false teachers and false teaching
 - There will be certain events – war and rumors of war; nation rising against nation; famines, earthquakes and pestilences (Luke); and events in the heavens (Luke)
 - *The danger of defecting*
 - The Church and Christians will be persecuted; many will turn away from the faith
2. The Church’s Great Commission to the World will go forward during this time
 - During this time, Satan is bound and restricted from destroying the church and preventing the Gospel from being preached to the nations.
3. When the Church’s Mission to the World is concluded, Satan will be released to go out and attack the church and deceive the nations.
 - “Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them...” (Revelation 11:7)
 - “When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison... (Revelation 20:7)
4. The Man of Lawlessness (Antichrist) will appear before Christ’s Return (2 Thessalonians 2: 1-12)
 - He will speak against God and magnify himself
 - He may be of Jewish decent or Christian decent (Daniel 11:37)
 - He will try to change the set times and the laws (Daniel 7:25)
 - He will be defiant of both moral and civil law
 - He will lead or be a part of the rebellion or apostasy towards God
 - He may lead an end time world confederacy of power (Revelation 17:12-14)
 - He will persecute the Church and Christians (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:7-10)
 - His coming will be accompanied by counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders
 - Something or someone is presently holding him back until the appointed time

5. There will be a Great Tribulation at the end of time before Christ Returns
 - There could be an “abomination that causes desolation” as a sign of the Tribulation
 - The Antichrist and Anti-Christian government will compel worship and allegiance
 - The Church will be greatly persecuted and Christians will be martyred for their faith

6. There will be a Final Battle
 - Satan will deceive the nations and bring them to the Battle
 - The Battle at Armageddon could occur in Israel on the plains of Megiddo
 - Armageddon may be symbolic of the Last Battle against the Church and saints which will occur throughout the earth
 - Christ will appear in the sky with power and great glory and with the holy angels
“Remember that Armageddon (Har-Magedon) consists of two elements: the final attack of the anti-Christian power – the beast – upon the Church, and Christ’s victory over this vast army at His coming unto judgment.” (William Hendriksen)

7. Christ’s Return will be Visible, Cosmic and Final (Matthew 24:26-31; 2 Peter 3:10)
 - Jesus will overthrow Antichrist with the breath of His mouth and the splendor of His coming; Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire for eternity

How Are Christians to Live?

1. Do not be deceived or misled

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.” (Matthew 24:6-8)

“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce false heresies, even denying the Sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves. *Many* will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.” (2 Peter 2: 1-2)

2. Prepare for persecution

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.” (John 15: 18-19)

“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”
(2 Timothy 3:12)

“The world too is shrinking. People who don’t like Christians are all around us. Only a strange providence keeps our churches from being bombed. It is only a matter of time until the reality of the rest of the world comes home.” (John Piper, *Spectacular Sins*)

3. Be discerning of the times

Jesus Himself said that no one knows the specific day or hour when He will return, “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.” (Matthew 24:42)

The Lord’s Return will be devastating in its unexpectedness for the unbelieving world. But Paul indicates that although no one knows the exact day or moment when Christ will return, Christians are to be knowledgeable and aware of what is predicted and what must take place so that they are not surprised, “Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and Safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-2, 4-5)

4. While we wait for Christ’s return, we are to participate in His Work (Matthew 25)

Parable of the Ten Virgins: Watch and Be Ready as there is no second chance

Parable of the Talents: Make use of your gifts and opportunities

Parable of the Sheep and Goats: Demonstrate your faith by ministering and serving others

5. Persevere and Be Faithful to the End

“When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8)

“So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. (Hebrews 10: 35-36)

“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2: 10)

“When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21:28)