

The Bible and the End Times (Original Script in the Maltese Language by Marilyn Bellizzi based on teachings by Pastor Vince Fenech, translation by Anthony Zarb Dimech)

Note: All Bible Scriptures from New King James Version (NKJV)

Will the world ever come to an end? This question comes to the mind of many people. In fact, the subject of the end times is one that always creates controversy. It is also one which brings out different opinions. But, what does the Bible says about the end of the world as we know it? Above all, what is the truth?

Many are of the opinion that the world will never come to an end. But Jesus Christ Himself spoke and confirmed that the end of time will come to pass. He told us that He will come back and appear to the world for a second time. We find the Scripture in the Gospel of John 14:2-3,

14: 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

We also find this in the Gospel of Mathew 25:31-32,

25: 31 When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

Still, many consistently ask the question: When is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ going to happen? How are we going to know whether we are living in the end times? What does the Word of God say about this?

Jesus Christ revealed to us signs that show us that we are approaching the end times and that the end is near, in Mathew 24:6-7,

6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

St. Paul, also penned down the following about the end times in 2 Timothy 3:1-4,

3 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

And in 1 Timothy 4:1, St. Paul says,

4 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

All the above things which St. Paul warns us about are taking place around us today. But there are those who still think that we are not yet entered the end times, or worst still, there are those who go even further to claim that the world will never come to an end and will dismiss the end times as just plain rumours. These people, known as scoffers think this way because in the past there were many who declared that the end times were at hand and since the end never eventually materialised, they go on thinking that in reality the end will never take place. This is a mistaken notion and in itself this reasoning is a sign that the end times is near. Why? In 2 Peter 3:3-4, we read,

3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

So, all this continues to fill us with the hope that the Second Coming of Jesus is indeed near. But to what extent are we prepared for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? In Luke 18:8, we read,

8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?

But, what would your reply to Jesus' question be?

To have faith does not simply mean to declare it, but you need to live by faith, meaning that you are always ready to follow Jesus and please only Him in what you say and do. To follow Jesus is not an easy task, but when you follow Jesus you walk in the expectant hope that when He returns in His Second Coming and when He separates the sheep from the goats (cf: Mathew 25:31-46), you will be on the side of the righteous, so that you will enjoy everlasting life in a much better way than this earthly life....in Heaven with the Lord!

What are the signs preceding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?

Other signs which herald the end times may be the following:

- a) The re-building of the Temple in Jerusalem
- b) The creation of a New World Order by which all the nations of the earth will be under one world leader, government and currency.

The following are the signs that **must take place** (meaning that these signs will surely take place) before Jesus Christ returns in His Glory to separate His own from the rest.

1. Jesus Christ will take with Him all those who are still alive in this world

He will take those who believed in Him and followed Him. This event is known as the Rapture. The Bible does not mention the word, 'Rapture', but St. Paul uses the word, 'caught up' to be with the Lord. This

is what St. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. In Greek '*Harpazo*' means to seize (in various applications):--catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take (by force).

16 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. 17 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.

And in 1 Corinthians 15:52, we read,

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

This, in other words, means that those who believed in Jesus will 'disappear'. This is not the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

2. **So if during the rapture, the only ones that will be taken are the ones who lived according to the Word of God and believed in God, what will happen to those who will be left behind in the world?**

This will be a time of great chaos, sadness and awesome fear that the world had never witnessed before. Jesus describes this time as follows in Luke 21:23-26,

23 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. 24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

25 And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26 men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

These happenings will pave the way for a powerful person to take the opportunity to be entrusted with the leadership of the whole earth. All world government will be in his hands.

3. **In the Bible, this person is referred to as the 'Beast' or the Anti-Christ (a person who will do his utmost to take the place of Christ and be worshipped as God)**

The Anti-Christ will enter into a 7-year agreement with Israel (this period is known as the Tribulation and this agreement or covenant that the Anti-Christ will enter into, may take place either before the rapture or even after the rapture). The Anti-Christ will yield enormous strength, power and authority and he will perform great wonders. This will be so because he will be vested with these abilities by Satan himself. As a result of these wonders and magical powers which he will perform, many people will be captivated and consider him as a hero and a ray of hope amidst the turmoil and chaos.

The Anti-Christ will not appear as an evil being, at first and he will not declare himself as the Anti-Christ and this will deceive many. The Anti-Christ may be a person who is already living today or else a person who has passed away. This means that Satan can use an image (clone) of someone who is already dead to give the impression that this person has returned from the dead. The image will be a replica and not the actual person who passed away. Hand in hand with the Anti-Christ will be another person whose task will be to convince people to worship the Anti-Christ (Revelations 13:12),

12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

This person is known as the False Prophet who will have the same authority as the Anti-Christ because he will be vested with such powers directly by Satan, in the same manner as the Anti-Christ.

The False Prophet will also perform great wonders, even commanding fire to fall from heaven straight in front of multitudes. The False Prophet will also deceive those living on earth through the performance of miracles as we read in Revelations 13:13,

13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

4. Mid-way through the 7-year agreement, the Anti-Christ will break the covenant in the Temple of Jerusalem

This will be the moment when the true identity of the Anti-Christ will be revealed as the person who will want to take the place of God leading many to eternal damnation. The Anti-Christ will require everyone to worship him as God. The precise words in the Bible regarding worship are found in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4,

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day (*the Second Coming of Jesus*) will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

After all the events described above have taken place (i.e., after the Anti-Christ enters into the Temple of God and declares himself God), those who are still on earth (as they would not have yet been raptured), if they make their correct calculations, would know that there would be three and a half years left before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. These last three and a half years will be extremely hard times for those still alive.

5. The Anti-Christ and his institution will start beheading (Revelations 20:4) those who refuse to worship him because they recognise that he is not God

The Word of God tells us in Revelations 13:15-17,

15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

The strategy of the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet will be to take the place of God by forcing everyone to worship the Anti-Christ. Those who refuse to worship and take his mark on their right hand or on their forehead, (because they realise that he is the person who is bringing eternal damnation), will be executed. The mark may be something having to do with money.

- a. Because money is something used globally (and we must not forget that the Anti-Christ will be ruling over the whole world).
- b. As already explained, without the mark it will be impossible to buy or sell. The trick of the devil is already being slowly introduced during these present times. We already are aware that it is now obligatory for animals to be micro-chipped.

Important Questions

- Could it be that the mark of the Anti-Christ has something to do with some kind of micro-chip?
- Could it be the introduction of some seemingly innocent new technology that will take over the use of credit cards and debit cards?
- Will it be a law that will require all citizens to take a chip on their hand?

Therefore, we must be vigilant so that we will not be deceived. The Anti-Christ will not come and tell you that this is the mark of the Anti-Christ, but he will use easy ways of deception! If you accept the mark of the Anti-Christ, you would have accepted that the Anti-Christ is God. If you do not accept, you will be killed. But we should not lose hope because all these signs are prophesied in the Bible and they continue to confirm the veracity and truthfulness of the Bible. So, if the Bible is The Truth, we should look forward and remember that Jesus Christ promises Heaven to those who confess Him as their Lord over their lives. Keep in mind, that the power of the Anti-Christ will execute those who are left behind and refuse to worship him, and instead declare their faith in the True God. These late believers would go directly near Jesus Christ for eternity. 3 2 1 Halleluia!

6. Ultimately, the earthly power of Satan will reach its climax

Towards the end of the tribulation, the Anti-Christ will organise the final assault on Jerusalem. This attack is known as the Battle of Armageddon. In this battle, Jesus Christ will appear for the second time on earth and He will descend to deliver justice upon the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet and on all those who choose to take upon themselves the mark of the Anti-Christ and worship him. The Lord Jesus will destroy them all.

Points to keep in mind,

- a. Before the return of Jesus Christ on earth, the rapture must take place and then the Anti-Christ will manifest himself.
- b. When Jesus Christ returns, He is not coming back to live with humans in the same manner as He did over 2,000 years ago when He became man and died and was resurrected for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus is coming back to deliver justice on those who are still alive.
- c. You should never accept to take on the mark on your right hand or on your forehead, more so, from someone who depicts himself as God, even if this is an enforced law.

Open your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ now, and confess Him as your Lord and Saviour and allow the Holy Spirit to guide your life in what you say and do, so that everything will be according to His Holy Will. Repent and turn to Him who is able to save you from the devil. Give your life to the only One who is able to save you and start to live again through the New Birth that only He can give you (John 3:3).

The Lord is asking you to start building a relationship with Him.

May the Lord's Blessing be always upon you.

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