

## Apocalyptic Nightmares

### Commentary for July 17, 2013 – Mass Entertainment Is Wrong

Over recent decades, movies and television shows, and even multi-year television series have had their plots based on the premise of a post-apocalyptic world. The story line is that disaster or man-made destruction destroyed civilization, and do the survivors cope with life? One common scenario has been nuclear destruction leaving the world with ruined cities, no electricity, no modern conveniences, back-to-basics survival living, limited or no mechanical transportation or trade, no running water, no heat. Today, many people live in fear of such an eventuality, that civilization will collapse and people will return to living like animals.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Such an eventuality will not happen worldwide.

The Bible indicates the breakdown of civilization will not occur before the Day of YHWH (the Day of the Lord); in other words, it will not occur before God brings judgment upon mankind. Up to the time just before Christ returns, worldwide communications will still be in place.

In Matthew 24:3, Jesus was asked when **“the end of the age”** would occur.<sup>1</sup> He answered that there will be false messiahs appearing, wars and rumors of wars, destructions such as famines, pestilences, earthquakes (Matthew 24:5–7) and signs in the skies (Luke 21:11) all before He returns. These events will not be the end. These are, as Christ said in Matthew 24:8, **“the beginning of sorrows,”** particularly for the Jews in Israel.

He answered later in Matthew 24:37–39, drawing on the example of the time before the flood of Noah, that for most people in the world, day-to-day life will continue as normal.

**“But as the days of Noe [Noah] were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And [they] knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”**

• **Matthew 24:37–39**

This tells us the disruptions of Matthew 24:5–7 will be local or regional, yet they will increase more and more around the world. Electricity will operate around the world, global trade will continue, water will pump, heat provided, food grown and transported, and worldwide communications will provide the means for another event to take place:

**“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached [to what extent?] in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and [what happens after the witness is given?] then shall the end come.”**

• **Matthew 24:14**

<sup>1</sup> In verse 3 Jesus was not asked when the end of the “world” would occur. He was asked when the end of the “age” would occur. The Greek word is *aion*, referring to time, not the Greek word *kosmos*, “system,” or *oikoumene*, which relates more to the “inhabited earth.”

The preaching of the gospel **“in all the world”** will result in God’s witness being given **“to all nations.”** This cannot be done by individuals preaching the gospel on streetcorners or to crowds in stadiums. It requires mass communication. Remember, in our world in this present age the gospel cannot be preached to SEVEN BILLION people without mass communication,<sup>2</sup> and more people are being born every minute. When God completes salvation, each of the seven billion will become a child of God in glory like Christ is now, and as you and I will be.

Mass communication requires electricity and massive infrastructure just to maintain the systems. God allowed man to invent the wonderful technologies we have today so the work He wants done will be completed, so the gospel will be preached to the entire world and to all nations. This seems unbelievable, but it is indeed true. To a large extent God has allowed Babel to be greatly minimized (Genesis 11:1–9). Be assured, even more marvelous technology will come in decades ahead, so all people can be reached even faster with God’s message, truth, and Word. This will be accomplished with less cost and duplication of effort.

It is important to understand that in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD the people of Israel and the world did not fully listen or respond to the gospel.

**“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!’ But they have NOT all obeyed the gospel.”**

• **Romans 10:15–16**

While the Gospel was preached to the world, Jesus’ prophecy of Matthew 24:14 still has to be fulfilled. That task is yet to be done. This time, when the gospel of the kingdom is preached, the people of Israel will repent, and they will carry the Gospel to the world. All will respond enthusiastically — for a while. This describes the **“times of refreshing”** (Acts 3:19), which is equal with, or soon followed by **“the times of restitution of all things”** (Acts 3:21).

**“For Esaias [Isaiah 53:1] said, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”**

• **Romans 10:16–18**

Indeed, the words have gone to the ends of the earth, but God has not opened their ears:

**“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of [the] many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”**

• **Matthew 24:12–13**

Note the word “[the]” in brackets. I inserted the bracket to reflect the definite article which is in the Greek text. In Greek the phrase reads **“the many.”** This means a tremendous number of people in the world (probably MOST people in the world) will love God for a period of time

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<sup>2</sup> Yes, I am aware of the angel who preaches the “everlasting gospel” in Revelation 14:6. Read the context of the verses after 14:6. The angel proclaims his message of the **“eonian gospel”** (the word “everlasting” in the King James Version is the adjective *aionian* in Greek) just before the Day of YHWH. This eonian gospel is only one aspect of **“the gospel of the Kingdom”** which **“shall be preached in all the world”** (Matthew 24:14). Jesus also spoke of this gospel in Matthew 26:13 and Mark 14:9.

before **“the love of [the] many shall wax cold.”** Why will their love **“wax cold”**? It will be **“because iniquity shall abound”** in **“[the] many.”** Perhaps verse 12 is better rephrased in reverse order. We can do this because Greek syntax is fluid in regard to word order. **“The love of the many shall wax cold because iniquity shall abound.”** **“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”** People are sinful through Adam. We should not expect people who lack God’s Spirit to act other than in a sinful manner.

### **Peter’s Information**

Civilization will continue, and in fact, many will be saying that Christ delays His coming, because things have not changed. Note what Peter wrote to believers in his generation:

**“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, ‘Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep [the Old Testament fathers], all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”**

• **2 Peter 3:3–4**

The scoffers will be saying (as some are beginning to say) **“all things continue ... from ... the creation.”** Peter notes that the scoffers ignore the flood in the time of Noah and go back to **“the creation”** as their reference point. They would not say such things if natural patterns of life were disrupted. Of course, the scoffers will not believe Scriptures anyway, but when they begin scoffing, everyday life will be relatively normal and regular (as in Matthew 24:37–39).

### **The Time of the End, How Will We Recognize It?**

We will know ... definitely, we will know. Let me give an analogy. Think about a fireworks show. At the end, there is a finale of fireworks. The finale of a fireworks display happens within a short time, while the number of fireworks going off is greatly increased, sometimes the number of fireworks per minute is multiplied. Consider how impressive a finale would be if the fireworks rate per minute was 100 times the norm?

God has put on such a display. At Mount Sinai the Israelites were stunned and terrified when YHWH came down upon the mountain to demonstrate His power and majesty:

**“And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because YHWH descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice. And YHWH came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and YHWH called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.”**

• **Exodus 19:17–20**

Later in Exodus 20:1–17, YHWH spoke to the people directly. He gave commands that He expected Israel to obey when He proposed the Covenant agreement. The people responded:

**“And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, ‘Speak you with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’ And Moses said unto the people,**

**'Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that you sin not.'**"

• **Exodus 20:18–20**

The End Times will be God's grand finale; there will be "fireworks." We will know when it happens. Everyone will know. There will even be "fireworks" in the sky, which the Bible calls **"signs in the heavens."** No one will wonder. However, people will begin to question whether the one calling himself the Messiah (the antichrist) is actually the Christ. The destruction will be worldwide as God's many and varied punishments upon mankind will last for years. **"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."** (Hebrews 10:31).

**"God is jealous, and YHWH revenges; YHWH revenges, and is furious; YHWH will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserves wrath for his enemies. YHWH is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked:"**

• **Nahum 1:2–3**

At that time the result will be the destruction of civilization as we know it. No electricity, no gasoline, no lighting at night, no heat, no pumped water, no roads. There will be no problem with overpopulation because God will kill almost all the people of the world. **"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved ..."** (Matthew 24:22). What is the difference between the events leading to the End Time, and the End Time itself?

**"And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come."**

• **Acts 2:19–20 (quoting Joel 2:30–31)**

Note, this describes what will happen before the Day of the Lord comes. These events are still building to the finale. Read what Isaiah says about the period when Christ reigns:

**"Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth. ... for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.**

**The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.**

**And it shall come to pass in that day, that YHWH shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high [spirit beings], and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.**

**Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, [when will this occur?] when YHWH of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.**

• **Isaiah 24:17–23**

These and all other relevant prophecies must be integrated for us to understand fully (and in their proper sequence) God's judgments upon mankind.

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