

“God’s Prophetic Calendar”

Matthew 24:1-8

Introduction

Wars. Rumors of wars. Famine. Earthquakes. Lawlessness. False prophets. Persecution. These things are merely the beginning signs of the end times (Matthew 24:8). Although these events may sound terrifying, the saints of God have nothing to fear because God has always been in control of history, and He is sovereign over the future as well. History is the unfolding of God’s prophetic plan and program for advancing His Kingdom for Him to receive the greatest glory.

God’s Word describes three key prophetic events that the saints should anticipate with grateful anticipation. First, the rapture will occur when Jesus Christ comes back with the saints who have already died to receive the saints who have not yet died and take them to the place He has prepared for them (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). Then, the saints will face the judgment seat of Christ, be rewarded based on our faithfulness and receive our glorified bodies. After the rapture, the seven-year tribulation period will begin. Satan will be let loose to cause unrestrained evil on earth through the anti-Christ, but God will also pour out His wrath against those who follow Satan’s agenda (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). Satan’s goal will be to destroy Israel and overthrow the program of God but God will restore Israel to repentance to fulfill the Old Testament prophecy (Ezekiel 38-39).

Finally, at His second coming, Jesus Christ will return to usher in His 1,000-year millennial reign designed to fulfill what God originally intended for man – to be His representatives on earth advancing His Kingdom (Revelation 20:1-6). Unbelievers will be judged, and believers will finally experience their eternal state in the new heaven and the new earth. What should our response be to this knowledge of the future? We should not be deceived because we know the truth (Matthew 24:4-5). We should not be afraid because God’s Kingdom will prevail and all of His enemies will be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:24-26). We should build our lives on the foundation of Christ because nothing else will survive the flames of God’s judgment (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). Knowing we will live eternally with God should bring us comfort, and in spite of whatever is going on in the world around us, we can comfort each other with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18).

Getting Started

1. What things do you typically hear about in the news today?
2. Do people seem to think the world is getting better, worse, or staying the same as it has been throughout history? What do you think?

Let's Get Personal

1. How do these prophetic events – the rapture, tribulation and Christ's second coming – change your perspective on current world events and the future?
2. In what ways has fear kept you from following God's call on your life and from participating in the advancement of His Kingdom?
3. How should you be responding daily to what God's Word says about the end times?

Take the Next Step

1. Knowing that Christ is coming back should produce an urgency in you to share the gospel. Who can you share the gospel with this week?
2. How can you comfort fellow believers overwhelmed by the intensity of what's happening in the world today or by the severity of the struggles in their own lives?
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: Matthew 24:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; I Corinthians 3:10-15; Romans 14:10-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Matthew 24:1-28; Revelation 13:1-8; Revelation 19:11-21; Ezekiel 38-39; Matthew 24:29-31; Zechariah 4:1-5; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:1-15; Zechariah 14:9-11; Isaiah 11:1-9; Isaiah 65:17-25; Revelation 21-22; Revelation 19:11-21; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26.

Renew Your Mind

"But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come."

Matthew 24:13-14
