

This Eon is Ending Soon

'The preacher was preaching on the second coming of Christ. He raised his voice, leaned over the pulpit and shouted the text, "Behold I come". Further along in the sermon he repeated the text and leaned over the pulpit again shouting, "Behold I come". Coming to the end of his sermon and, trying for a big finish, he again leaned over the pulpit and shouted, "Behold, I come". But this time he leaned so far that he tumbled over and landed in the lap of an old lady on the front row. He was red in the face, totally embarrassed. Getting up, he apologized profusely, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, ma'am". But she answered, "That's all right young man, I should have moved. You gave me fair warning three times".'

So, how many of you are like that old lady? You know what I mean—*people* not heeding a warning? Well, the Lord is coming. But it seems to have taken quite a while. Actually, though, it's not been long at all. From our human perspective it's seemed like it's been a long, long time. But with our increasing understanding of exactly what God has written down in the Holy Bible, we're coming to see that it hasn't been long at all. In fact, we're also coming to see that this eon of time, this age of humanity, this phase of the earth's existence, is soon coming to an end. Consider Mark 13. Mark relates the Lord's long answer to a question a few disciples

asked him. This entire episode is recorded in Matthew 24, Luke 21, as here in Mark 13. Each Gospel biographer focused on slightly different aspects and details of the Lord's lengthy explanation. Since it's reported three times, this must be a very important teaching, coming straight from our Lord's mouth. Now while the Lord tells us that no one, not even Himself, no one except the Father, knows the exact day and time when the Tribulation will begin, the general time frame is absolutely discernible, as He instructs the disciples including us. What escaped the disciples, however, was the length of time the Lord was talking about. They all knew, correctly so, that He was the prophesied Messiah Who had come from heaven to save the Chosen People from their sins. In their minds, this included, incorrectly, immediate deliverance and salvation from their physical oppressors.

In those days, it was the Romans. This was no new thing. The Jews had been oppressed, subjugated by world powers for several centuries, and they were quite tired of it. One world empire after another tried to ground them into the dust, but stubbornly, the Jews just refused to cooperate and die, unlike every other people and nation conquered by the succession of Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and now Romans. So when the Lord revealed Himself to be the Messiah, the people thought He was going to overthrow the Romans and reestablish the people of God as an independent nation once again. But not so fast.

So when He was arrested, tried, convicted and crucified, it

became evident that He was not going to get rid of the Romans any time soon. At which point, the sparse support He had among the wealthy all but dried up. Even many of the common people had had enough of Him. For, in their minds, He was just like all the rest of the self-proclaimed messiahs who had come, promised great things, and then, just as quickly disappeared from the scene having accomplished nothing. Now here, on the Mount of Olives, looking across the valley toward the Temple Mount, He is telling His closest disciples that there is a great deal of time to pass between now and their final deliverance when He Himself will return. At this point, I suppose the disciples imagined that He would be gone for maybe a few months, maybe a few years, at most a decade or two. Though they had no idea of what would happen soon with His crucifixion, their expectation after His resurrection and return to Heaven was that He would be back very soon.

But years passed. And more years passed. So just when is He coming back? In the meantime, they had to obey His commands. To watch, pray, go into all the earth and make disciples. Which they did. The Gospels had to be written, at Holy Spirit's direction. Then all the letters to the different churches, collected and shared among the multiplying new believers. So what did He mean when He said He was coming back soon? How soon? Many began reexamining His teachings, which has continued over the centuries since. A few over the intervening centuries have noted, and more and more today, that, just as the Apostle

Peter himself stated, referencing none other than the great Moses in Psalm 90, that a thousand years is as one day to the Lord, then what seems like a long time to us is, in reality, not long at all.

In looking at the whole sweep of history in these terms, it looks like God's following the pattern He set in the re-creation of this earth and cosmos. As He completed everything, including mankind, in just six days, He "rested" on the seventh day. You see, God was just plain tuckered out after all that hard work, and He just had to take a long breather. Not! The seventh day was to be a sign and example for us, His image-bearers wielding His dominion on this planet, that we would need to rest, recuperate, reset and refocus ourselves every seventh day. But this seven-day pattern of things is found not just in every week, and in all the world. Why, seven days as a unit of time is not particularly convenient. It can't be equally divided. Seven itself is a prime number, for heaven's sake! Prime numbers, as we were taught in elementary school arithmetic, are numbers that can not be divided into another whole number, except by itself. It seems appropriate that God would make seven a "prime" number, and use it as the number of days in a week, to indicate perfection and completeness, etc. Though attempts have been made over the centuries to redefine weeks to have an even number of days, notably ten, none of these attempts have ever succeeded. So even officially atheistic, Godless communistic nations are still stuck with the seven-day week that God ordained from the beginning of time.

Now since God created our current planetary abode in six days, and if He prefers this pattern to measure units of time, and if, to Him, a thousand years is just one larger, longer type of day, then one can theorize that our current eon of history may well be six thousand years. For when the six thousand years are over, then the seventh thousand years will begin, which in the beginning was the Sabbath day. Since God instituted that the land was to be given a sabbath rest, to lie fallow, each seventh year, and furthermore that after seven sets of seven years, the fiftieth year was to be special, the Year of Jubilee, when all debts were to be forgiven, all lands reverted back to their original owners, all slaves freed, etc., this pattern of seven is foundational to all existence, including the universe, as we know it. So if one thousand years is as one day, then the seventh millennium or seventh thousand years, would be equivalent to the sabbath day of rest and restoration. But it would last an entire millennium, an entire thousand years. Which, just so happens the Bible prophesies that when Christ Jesus returns, He will reign on earth. For how long? A few hundred years? Eight hundred? Nine hundred? No. For one thousand years. Which is why it's called the Millennial Kingdom. For it will last one thousand years. And it will begin once the Tribulation is over, which itself lasts, you guessed it, seven years.

The Tribulation, which the Lord speaks of here in Mark 13, Matthew 25 and Luke 21, referencing Daniel 12, is the seven-year period when God's wrath is poured out on the rebellious, unbe-

lieving, unrepentant world, detailed in Revelation. The first half of it, while nothing anyone would want to have to go through, is less severe, so to speak. The last half, well, it's so bad that, as our Lord tells us, if it were to last any longer, nothing would survive. It is the Lord's wrath on those who have opposed Him, spit in His face, but it is executed as God simply allows the devil to have his evil way unhindered on earth. But at the end of the final three and a half years, Christ Jesus will come in the clouds, bringing us along, the Church, the saints, and with a single word, put a final stop to all of it. His word might even be just "Stop!". And all the global calamities, "natural" disasters, nuclear wars, genocide, all of it, will cease in an instant. Recall how the Lord stilled the storm on the Sea of Galilee. It will be like innumerable angels suddenly appear and handcuff every evil entity, whether spiritual or physical or human. All evil instantly immobilized, unable to move, to blink, all at one word from the Lord's mouth. The reign of evil on the earth is finished. And so ends the sixth day, the sixth millennium, and the seventh begins. The Sabbath millennium commences. The whole of creation begins its glorious restoration, a true, righteous and correct reset, with the reconstitution and reconstruction of a new Garden of Eden on earth. And all of us who abide in Christ will be there to see it all! And it may begin sooner than we imagine. So though there are going to be dark and difficult times to go through these next few years, never forget that our sure and certain hope is in Christ Jesus. And He never ever fails!!

