

When Will Judgment Day Come And What Will It Be Like?

Advent ... ad venio, the Latin for 'to come to'. The advent of our God ... He came first as the child Jesus, to save us! He will come again to judge us!

When we look at all the craziness going on in the world today, it makes us curious about what might happen at the end of the world and what will Judgment Day be like; when will it come? There are a lot of people today who are concerned about such things, but people have always thought about it. Even back in the first century, as the disciples walked with Jesus before His death and resurrection, they asked Him, "Tell us when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming at the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3 ESV) But, when it came to the timing of Judgment Day--also known as Jesus' second coming--Jesus said this, "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only" (Matthew 24:36-37 ESV).

Therefore, we can't predict when Christ will return. But people try to do it, don't they? No matter what system we develop or what signs we try to use to discern that, Jesus made it clear: we do not know, we can't predict it; in fact, we weren't meant to. Jesus also said: "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come" That's our job. Our job is not to know the timing, but to be prepared for Christ's arrival whenever it will come.

However, Jesus did give us some signs to watch for. In fact, Jesus was up front about what the days following His ascension into heaven would be like. By the way, that's what we mean by the last days and end times. The Bible says it this way in Hebrews, "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son..." (Hebrews 1:1-2 ESV). Notice that the first-century writer even called his time in history "these last days." The time between Jesus' ascension and His return, that's the end times. So for the last 2000 years we've been living in the end times, and Jesus and His apostles were very explicit about what the end times would be like. In fact, Jesus said that the world would be a turbulent place. He talked about "wars and rumors of wars," famines and earthquakes. He mentioned the persecution of the church and the rise of false teachers. He even talked about the love of people growing cold during a time of great tribulation.

Sounds a lot like today, doesn't it! It sounds frightening, too. Jesus reminded all believers that before His return, these days are going to be filled with heartbreak, violence, and difficulty; but He wanted to make sure we don't let those scary parts of those last days be that dominant message; because, amidst all that reality, Jesus offered great hope. He told us that the Gospel of God's Kingdom would be proclaimed throughout the world and that whoever endures in faith to the end will be saved. Jesus even promised that the days of suffering would be cut short because of God's mercy.

But we must endure all these terrible events before Jesus returns. With Jesus, there always is a reason. The Apostle Peter reminded all Christ's followers who worried about that question. He said, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9 ESV). God doesn't want to lose anyone, so that's why we are here to spread the Good News of salvation in Jesus even amidst all this stuff. We are here to shine His light in a dark and difficult world.

If you're like me, you wonder what it will be like when Jesus does return. In the Apostle Paul's first letter to the believers in the city of Thessalonica, he outlined what the return of Jesus would be like. He said, "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then those who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air," here's the key: "so we will always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians

4:16-17 ESV). Those who have died over the centuries and millennia will not get to heaven before us or anyone who is alive when Christ returns. We and all believers will go together into heaven at the Resurrection on the Last Day.

Throughout the Bible we hear that these events will happen suddenly, when we least expect it. As we wait, we are called to watch, to be ready each day by trusting in the mercy and grace of our Savior, Jesus and to live in ways that glorify God and share His Good News with people in our lives right now. Even though it's something that we cannot predict ... can't pinpoint ... don't know when it will happen ... it will come like a thief in the night; it's still something we can look forward to.

That's the View from Here.

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