

# able Talk

College Hill Lutheran Church

## The End Times

### The Question:

What does Scripture teach about the end times? What about all the predictions about the exact time of the end of the world (i.e. May 21, 2011 according to Harold Camping, president of Family Radio)? What about the recent rebellions and natural disasters?

### The Answer:

*But concerning that day and hour NO ONE KNOWS not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. – St. Matthew 24:36-39*



*The Flood by Julius Schnoor von Carolsfeld*

### **No Doubt, Jesus IS Coming Again in All His Glory to Judge the Living and the Dead**

Holy Scripture teaches most emphatically that in His appointed hour (Acts 1:7; John 5:28-29) Christ, the God-man (Matt. 25:31), will appear visibly (Acts 1:9-11) to all men at the same time (Matt. 24:27-30; 1 Thess. 5:2) in divine glory, and surrounded by His assisting angels (Matt. 25:31; 1 Thess. 4:16; Matt. 13:41-42), to judge “all nations of the earth” (Matt. 25:31), both the living and the dead, the latter after their resurrection (1 Cor. 15:51; Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29), to cast the wicked into eternal hell-fire (Matt. 25:46), and to lead His saints into eternal glory (Heb. 9:28), so that the Church Militant (*ecclesia militans*) will in all eternity be the Church Triumphant (*ecclesia triumphans*).

The Scriptural doctrine of Christ’s glorious return must be emphasized both over against the blasphemies of the ungodly, 2 Pet. 3:3-4, and the forgetfulness of Christian believers, who because of the weakness of their flesh are prone to overlook their glorious hope, Mark 13:23.

### **NO ONE KNOWS the Time—So Don't Try and Don't Listen (Those who try to predict the end of the world show that they have no regard for Christ and His Word!)**

With respect to the exact time of Christ’s second advent Holy Scripture teaches that this is both unknown, Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32, and unknowable to men, 1 Thess. 5:2-3; Matt. 24:44; Mark 13:33-36. If in spite of Christ’s warning even believing theologians have

tried to compute the time of His second advent, this proves how deeply sinful curiosity (Acts 1:6) is embedded in the human heart.



### Signs Remind Us to Keep Watch

However, while Christians should not try to compute the time of the Lord's return, they should carefully observe the signs of the times, which God has appointed in order to arouse His saints to greater watchfulness and preparedness, Matt. 24:32-33; Luke 21:29-31; 2 Thess. 2:3ff.

**From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. – Matthew 24:32-33**

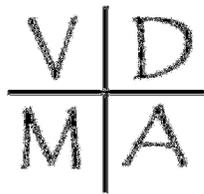
### What Are the Signs?

Among the signs of the times Holy Scripture names abnormal conditions

- a) in the realm of human activity and life (warfare, hatred against the Church, pestilences, famines, general distress, great wickedness, Matt. 24:5-14, 37-39);
- b) in the realm of nature (earthquakes, floods, disturbances in the movements of the celestial bodies, Luke 21:25-26);
- c) in the realm of the Church (the rise of false teachers, apostasy from Christ, Antichrist, Luke 21:8, 16-17; 2 Thess. 2:3-4); etc. As sickness is a sign of the impending dissolution of the individual person (microcosm), so also the disturbances in the world (macrocosm) foretell its final destruction.

That these signs are not recognized as such by men is a proof of the amazing stupor (*mirabilis stupor*) which sin has wrought in man.

Especially is the wanton persecution of Christ and His Gospel a most certain sign of the coming Judgment; for this sin of sins involves the basest ingratitude on the part of man. After Christ has redeemed the whole world by His holy suffering and death, all men should gladly worship Him and join and support His Church; but instead they persecute those who love and serve Christ, Matt. 24:9; John 16:2; Matt. 10:17; Rom. 8:36; Acts 14:5-6, 19; 16, 22ff.



### The Word of the Lord Endures Forever!

Despite this shameful ingratitude of men, Christ most graciously preserves His Word upon earth and has it preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, Matt. 24:14. This is at the same time an outstanding sign of the times : ***This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Matt. 24:14***

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! – Rev. 22:20**



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