

Eye-Opener Studies

Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. (Ps. 119:18)

14: The End Of The World

Both the ardent atheistic scientist and the most strident fundamentalist, Young-Earth Creationist agree, the world will end by being incinerated in a fiery, apocalyptic catastrophe. Science says so; the Bible says so; so it must be true! They sort of disagree as to when this event is likely to occur, in fact they differ time-wise by roughly 10,000,000,000 years, give or take a year or two, but burn up it will. The atheist believes it will be purely a materialistic, naturalistic consequence of the laws of nature (the existence of which he simply cannot explain naturalistically); the Christian who believes implicitly in the Bible with its promises and predictions, accepts that this will happen when Jesus returns, though he has no time-scale from the Bible on which to estimate when it might occur. Jesus had predicted the destruction of Jerusalem within the lifetime of those who heard Him say so (Mt. 24:34, Luke 21:32) (see study 12: The Destruction Of Jerusalem), but He gave no such specifics about the end of the world and His return. He even declared that He did not know the time this would happen for only the Father had that information - or did at the time He was speaking (Mt. 24:36). Jesus, however, knew exactly what would happen to Jerusalem at the end of its time, and at the end of the ages when all time ceases. Some quite ludicrously find comfort in the scientific view that the end is thousands of millions of years away, forgetting that

whenever it ends for everybody is largely immaterial because it ends for us individually the moment we die, and that can happen in an instant at any time, and sadly often does, thereby catching out the unprepared unawares. Jesus warned about this, for example in Mt. 25:1-13, with the story of the wise



and foolish virgins.

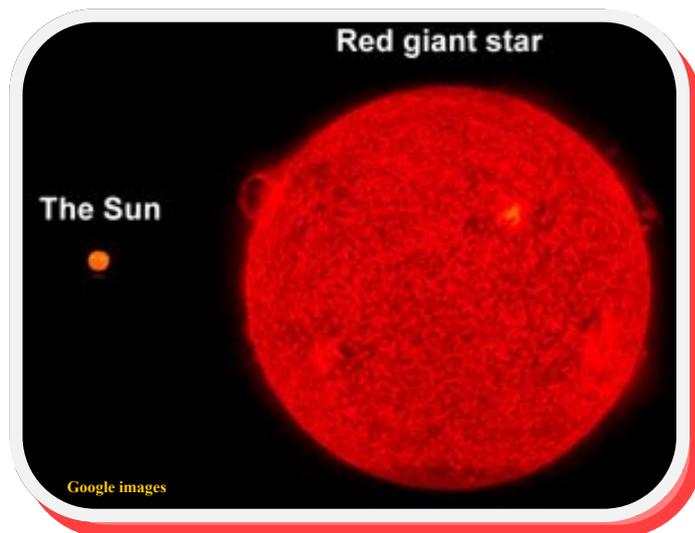
The scientific version of events

Scientists can only study experimentally in the here and now for they can only measure accurately what currently occurs in nature. They have to guess what happened in the past and therefore make predictions for the future based on current results and these educated guesses. This does not mean that their guesses

are basically foolish but they are usually underpinned by the prevailing axioms of their day which are rarely, if ever, questioned. 'The present is the key to the past' is the great axiom of the geologist and this carries over into other disciplines too. Thus what can be measured as happening now is transposed back in time on the assumption that such processes have always operated thus since time began. Peter had a warning to us on this front, which directly relates to our topic. *'This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.'* (2 Pe 3:1-7).

His predictions have certainly come true. Most scientists do not factor in God and God's Word into their predictions. They most certainly believe that 'all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation', and most definitely 'deliberately overlook' the fact and reality of the Flood. Indeed those who would suggest otherwise, namely that the Flood was real, are mocked as being naïve at best and educationally and scientifically illiterate at worst. This is not careless overlooking but deliberate opposition and rejection of the Bible.

Consequently they assume that the universe began some 13,800,000,000 years ago, which is a current estimate but always liable to dramatic revision over time, and that our Sun, which is a normal star, was formed about 10,000,000,000 years ago. The planets, including the Earth of course, came along 4,500,000,000 years ago and the Sun is just about middle-aged having 'lived' about 50 per cent of its life. It is fuelled by nuclear reactions and be-



gan its life as a hydrogen gas ball. The nuclear reactions which keep it alive are converting it from a hydrogen mass into a helium mass, and by assuming the rates of these reaction times to be constant, by calculating the proportions of hydrogen and helium in the Sun, a guesstimate of the Sun's age is arrived at. At the end of its 'life', when it is largely helium, it will expand rapidly and will turn into a Red Giant star. This will be so large it will swallow all the planets in the Solar System and destroy them by rapid incineration. Afterwards it will equally rapidly contract, shrinking back to a very small, dense object called a White Dwarf star, and may possibly collapse entirely, ending up as a Black Hole. Who knows and who will care, since there will be nobody around to witness it? But don't worry, that is still 5,000,000,000 years away and not even a modern Methuselah need worry over a time-scale like that!

Apocalypse fever

Leaving the relatively unexciting predictions of the end of the world from the orthodox scientific community to one side - predictions which we believe are totally inaccurate because they ignore God and His Word - there is an almost fatal fascination with the predicted biblical apocalypse. Unfortunately this is frequently fuelled by either misguided or unscrupulous, ostensibly fervent, religious fundamentalists, some of whom look to make a fast buck from the gullible who believe in them. Books which generate large sales and make their authors very rich, and even internationally famous, are written, such as *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsey. Whole religious cults too have also been founded as a result of such prophecies, such as Jehovah's Wit-

nesses and Seventh Day Adventists, and are sustained even after their founding prophecies and predictions failed to materialize. Adherents have either forgotten, or never even knew, the Deuteronomy ‘test’ which we have mentioned in previous studies. ‘...if you say in your heart, “How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?”—when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.’ (Dt. 18:21-22, or ‘afraid of her’ as has sometimes been the case!). But with almost every unusual occurrence the doom-mongers are hovering around, even in our own day of our oft-believed-in naturalistic sophistication. Scratch the surface and we can still be pagans at heart! (By ‘we’ here we are not referencing true Christian believers but rather people in general.)

Some examples

The year 2016 saw the 350th anniversary of ‘The Great Fire of London’, when a large conflagration started in a baker’s shop in Pudding Lane and decimated huge swathes of the tightly-packed medieval wood, lath and plaster buildings of the city. It was 1666 and apocalypse watchers saw great significance in the 666 part of the date of that year as they drummed up Revelation 13:18 to back their fears that the Apocalypse was beginning.

They had a better case than some Russians living in Siberia, actually in September 2016, when their river turned blood red (the photos date from

8th), reminding them of one of the Plagues of Egypt at the time of the Exodus (Ex. 7:14-25). There was a chemical factory upstream and it was obviously far from being a plague sent by God, yet reminders like this are useful if they occasionally keep the normally unthinking on their spiritual toes.

Blood Moon*

On Monday morning of 28th September 2015, at 3.20 a.m., Barbara and I dragged ourselves out of bed. We did so voluntarily because we had been told that it would be a cloudless night and we would be able to see the heavens very clearly – which more often than not we can’t when we want to. That’s the Law of Murphy in the UK over such celestial matters. We hoped to see a total eclipse of the Moon, which was at its nearest point to the Earth, and would turn red in colour as the eclipse took effect. They call it a ‘Blood Moon’. We saw it in all of its glory. The next one like this will occur in 2033 and I’ll be 92 if I’m still alive. I doubt my leaping out of bed then will be an electrifying experience for me, or for any who witness it, if I try to do it! Mind you it wasn’t too exciting this time either - but nobody saw me anyway!

The fact that you are reading what I’ve written today tells me that we are all alive and that the world has not ended, as supposedly it should have done. Just what am I on about? On Friday 18th April 2014 the article entitled ‘Moon of Doom’ alongside a photograph of a ‘Blood Moon’ (see over) appeared in the *Daily Mail* newspaper. Apparently there were to be a series of four similar events from then culminating in the September encounter of 2015 where the Moon was not only eclipsed and turned red in colour but also coincided with the point at which the Moon on its orbit is closest to the Earth (its orbit is not perfectly round but is elliptical). As a result it looks about 14% larger than it usually does, and – the icing on the cake that year – this came at an important festival time in the Jewish calendar, the Feast of Tabernacles or Sukkot. Note the mocking caption under the photo of the Moon: ‘This week’s blood-red moon signals Armageddon, say the Bible thumpers. Time to head for the hills!’ These things seem like a heaven-sent opportunity

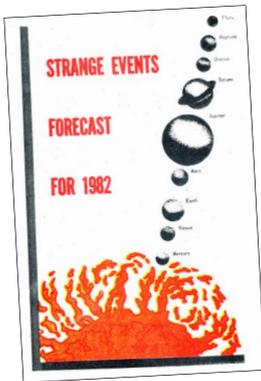
*This section from here to ‘So what will happen when the world ends’ (page 6) was first published in *The Voice*, number 14, February 2016.

for the flakes, or ‘Bible thumpers’, who delve into the Bible for signs and wonders and especially prophecies of the end of the world. It’s big business for some because many fervent, but relatively biblically ignorant, believers are led astray by such notions. Two men in America, ‘televangelists’ they call them, have made fortunes from predicting Armageddon: John Hagee and Mark Biltz. It’s been a great ‘game’ in so-called fundamentalist evangelical Christian circles especially since the Jews returned to Palestine in 1947-8. The most famous prophet of doom, whom we have already mentioned, is a man called Hal Lindsey with his best-known work, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, who rose to fame after the Six-Day War between Egypt and Israel in 1967, when the Jews trounced their enemies, which apparently was predicted in the Bible, according to him. He maintained that the European Union would never be larger than ten countries – it’s now 28 – and that the temple would be rebuilt in Jerusalem by about 1984, amongst other splendid prophetic failures. We remember Deuteronomy (18:21-22), yet Hal, though in his 80s as we write this study, still rolls along in his wealthy cocoon of biblical fantasy.

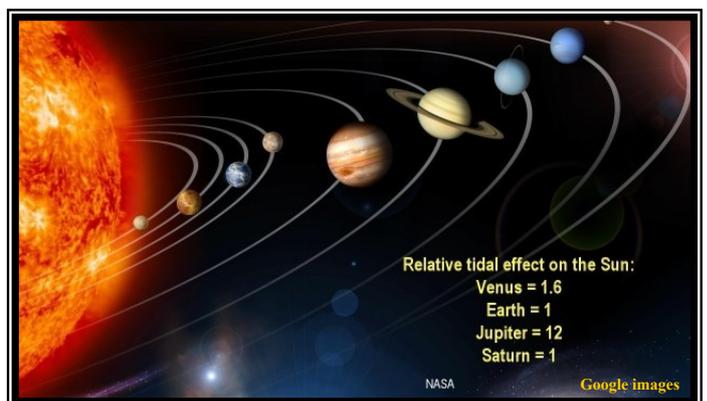
MOON OF DOOM



In the early 1970s the building we worshipped in in Liverpool was under fatal stress from vandalism and the elements and in 1974 we were examining alternative buildings to see if we could relocate. We couldn’t as it happened but we went along to view a small chapel building, of the Plymouth Brethren persuasion, which had come up for sale not too far away. While there I picked up a little tract about the so-called Jupiter Effect predicted for 1982. It’s called ‘Strange events forecast for 1982’. Put simply once every 179 years the planets all line up for a short time on the one side of the Sun. Since gravitational forces operate there will be a stronger than normal pull in one direction and the fear was that these tidal forces would trigger earthquakes and volcanic eruptions – California being under great threat from the former, apparently – strange weather patterns, solar flares, droughts, and so on. This pamphlet warns of these possibilities, though specifically refuses to predict the end of the world for that year. My ‘old world’ ended then be-



cause that was the year I met Barbara, and let her strong gravitational pull drag me over to California to get married in the spring of ’83. Nothing much else happened, or if it did I didn’t notice! I can’t think why – maybe I was too busy! The ‘Jupiter Effect’ was far too weak to affect the Earth at all, but don’t these biblical doom mongers make hay before the events occur, dragging the gullible into a highly-charged and spiritually emotional net, and when their predictions fail they have left the mockers of God and His Word with ever more ammunition to fire in our direction and turn people away from any sort of faith? We know Jesus said that we must become as little children if we are to partake in His Kingdom (Mt. 18:1-4) but we are not told to lower our intelligence levels to the age of seven, or less.



The Jupiter Effect

Good questions

‘So aren’t there prophetic passages predicting doom and gloom and linking them to stars, planets and the Sun and Moon?’

‘Yes there are.’

‘And don’t we, who believe in the truth and authority of the Bible from beginning to end, and whom many label as being “Fundamentalists”, believe them as prophecies from God?’

‘Yes we do.’

‘So why are these sorts of so-called “Bible thumpers” thought to be dragging our cause down leading to unbelievers mocking God because of what they are doing?’

To answer this is an involved study in itself and we do not have the time to do it here, nevertheless it is easy to point out what is happening so we do not fall into the same trap as the Doom preachers do. Let us very briefly look at two such prophetic passages and see what is going on.

Prophecies of climax

The Bible is not a modern Western book written as we today would write such things. The writers had their own language conventions and idioms which all people of their time would understand. If we say that ‘It’s raining cats and dogs’, we do not mean that a quick glance outside the door would reveal Jack Russells and ginger toms falling out of the sky. The sorts of biblical images which create ‘Blood Moon’ prophecies have nothing at all to do with blood moons and a literal understanding of them. Indeed most mistakes in interpreting flowery-phrased prophetic imagery have to do with people wanting a literal interpretation instead of a linguistic one. Such prophecies fall into the language of climax. When a prophet wanted to stress the importance of a situation as he foretold the overthrow of one world order and the establishment of another totally different one, the notion that the world was going to be turned upside down, as it were, comes into play. The fact that nothing physical happens to or in the heavens does not negate the significance of the prophecy.

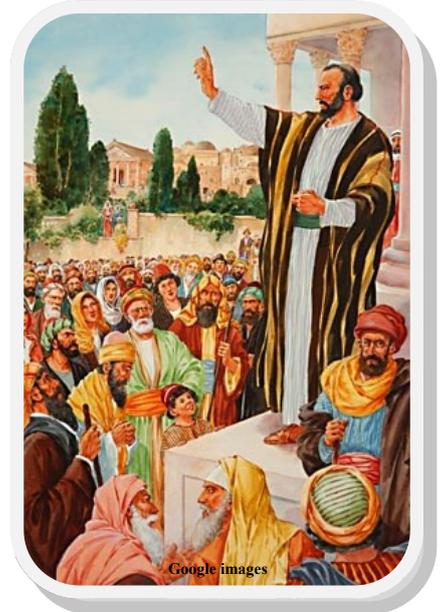
The prophet Joel is the favourite with the Blood Mooners. Here’s what he wrote:

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even

on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

“And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord

comes. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Joel 2:28-32)



Peter preaches at Pentecost

Does this seem familiar? Well, it should because it was what Peter quoted on the Day of Pentecost to the excited Jewish crowd, recorded in Acts 2, and he declared then that it was actually being fulfilled in their hearing. The inspired apostle tells us that *“this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel.”* (Ac 2:16). There was no blood moon, or solar eclipse, or anything changing in the physical world but the spiritual world would never again be the same. A new world order, a new world religion, was being born which would supplant their old one and usher in a message of salvation for all – for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord. This is the language of climax, the language of monumentally important change and all Peter’s hearers would recognize the metaphor as such. They did not go in fear and dread of their lives from death by catastrophic causes. That’s not the meaning of blood moons in the Bible.

In Matthew 24 we encounter Jesus using similar language, though not the blood moon metaphor. He had just predicted the doom facing the city of Jerusalem, towards the end of Matthew 23. Then He says, *“Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.”* (Mt 23:36). That’s clear; anybody can understand it. This will happen in the time of the generation still alive as He spoke. He then moves away and predicts the destruction of

the temple. ‘... his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”’ (Mt 24:1-2). Another very clear prophecy, though no specific time or date is given. Being naturally curious the disciples asked Him a question: “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?”’ (Mt 24:3-4). No doubt they thought that they had asked Him one question but it was, in fact, two questions: a) ‘When will these things be?’ i.e. the doom on Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, which He had clearly stated would fall on that generation; b) ‘What will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?’ i.e. the end of the world. They believed that without Jerusalem and the temple it had to be the end of the world! So Jesus proceeds to answer both questions in order. He gives a graphic description of events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, during the course of which He employs the language of climax to denote a change of world order. Here it is: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”’ (Mt 24:29). This is climax. I have prophesied it and the final sign of a true prophet, after the Deuteronomy statement, will authenticate Me as the Son of Man once and for all. Then, having finished with the first question, He concludes by re-emphasizing the time frame for these events: “Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.”’ (Mt 24:34). So we know that all the predictions in Matthew 24 before verse 34, refer to happenings in the times of that generation. That’s not difficult to follow.

Signs of the end of the world
 He then picks up on their second question and answers it clearly: “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven,

nor the Son, but the Father only.”’ (Mt 24:36). Having given away a long list of signs to look out for as the doom of Jerusalem approaches, Jesus then quite categorically warns that there will be absolutely no signs preceding the end of the world. NONE! Life will be going on just as normal when whoosh the end will hit like a bomb blast. All we can do “...therefore [is] be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”’ (Mt 24:44).

Nothing has changed. There will be no signs: no blood moons, no unusual earthquakes or volcanoes, no droughts, fires, floods, wars and rumours of wars. There will be NOTHING special to point to His coming, quite the contrary. The Lord told us clearly, so why these televangelists and others persist in playing this game, apart from the fact that many seem to make pots of money doing so, I do not know. And why some people fall for it and shell out to line those men’s avaricious pockets, I equally do not know. Maybe it’s a deep-seated fear that they just might be right so we’ll play it safe; it’s the old pagan in us, as we said earlier.

I did not expect the end of the world at 3.45 a.m. on the morning of Monday 28th September 2015 as I looked at the blood moon. I believed

what the scientists told me was happening and that it is a perfectly natural event which they can correctly predict and explain based on the laws God set in motion to govern the Earth. Equally I do not listen to any prophecies predicting the end of the world from political events, natural phenomena, mystical reading and interpretation of obscure biblical passages, for the Lord, and His inspired apostles, have told us clearly what will happen.

So what will happen when the world ends?

When considering this subject there is one simple, golden rule, always turn to the clear, straightforward passages in the Bible which explain things and not the mystical, eastern-style prophetic ones. In other words avoid poetical, apocalyptic passages



Google images

People will be doing this, as normal, when Jesus returns

in Books like Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Zechariah and Revelation, especially if they seem to contradict plainly spoken explanations. As a matter of fact there are no prophecies about the end of the world in any Old Testament Book. They only reach as far as the end of the Mosaic Age and the establishment of the church, so references to them regarding the final closure of time are irrelevant; they can be ignored (though we may well have to study further in order to understand what they *are* referring to). The End of the World is entirely a New Testament matter!

We always have to remember that the Bible is not a book which sprang from our Western Whig interpretation of history and the telling of stories, including biographical details. We see this in the structure and narratives of the Gospels where it is often difficult to follow exactly in the footsteps of Jesus on a day-to-day basis, and, of course, we find so many details we would never omit were we to be telling the stories today, which annoyingly from our perspective simply aren't there. I mean, when did Joseph, Jesus's earthly father die? What were His sisters' names, and how many sisters did He have? How tall was He? Did He have a beard and a nice singing voice or did He sound like a frog when He sang? I think we know that some of these details are not worth worrying about but we could all draw up a list of biographical details which we would like to know.

So, the best thing we can do here is let the Bible tell us what will happen and just make a few relevant comments as we proceed. Most of these Scriptures will cover several pertinent points, of course.

1) It will be sudden and unexpected - this eliminates any signs or warnings. - *"...stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his*

house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (Mt 24:42-44).

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." (Mt 25:13).

'... the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.' (1 Th. 5:2-3).

'But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.' (2 Pe 3:10).

2) It will be a noisy day.

'...the heavens will pass away with a roar...' (2 Pt 3:10).

'...I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.' (1 Co 15:51-52, emphasis ours)

'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.' (1 Th. 4:16).

3) The whole universe will be destroyed by fire.

'But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and

dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens



You can use your imagination!

and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.' (2 Pe 3:10-13).

4) Jesus will descend and every eye will see Him.

'...as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,

and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."' (Ac 1:9-11).

"Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen." (Rev 1:7). (NB: though we warned about using Revelation, this is the non-mystical introduction to the Book and fully accords with plain-text scriptures elsewhere.)

'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 we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.' (1 Th. 4:16-18).

Now, please note there is absolutely no mention that the Lord will ever set foot on the Earth again. He will appear in the sky, accompanied by the sound of the archangel's trumpet, and those who are His will rise to meet Him and then be with Him for ever. Because at that very moment of the resurrection of the dead, plus the passage of those left alive, we read:

5) We will all be changed and put on spiritual, immortal, heavenly, uncorrupted bodies - all, that is,



Jesus descending

who are His children. *'Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable,*

and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

"O death, where is your victory?"

O death, where is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' (1 Co 15:51-57).

Conclusion

Frankly there is absolutely no better, more triumphant way to conclude a study on The End of the World. It is the clear, unvarnished, uncomplicated truth and you do not require mystical prophetic insight to understand it or follow the arguments. When the Lord returns we will not have to wait for a thousand years whilst He sorts out the devil and the rest of the wicked; He did that at Calvary some 2,000 years ago. We live in His Kingdom now and He is our King now, not a king who is coming to reign. We have to keep our hands to the plough and our eyes firmly fixed on Him, for it is *'he who endures to the end who will be saved.'* (Mt. 10:22, 24:13, Mk 13:13) We have to fight, stand firm and be ready for He could return even before you have finished reading this study. When He does call down on time, it will indeed be THAT sudden!

Task

When the trumpet of the Lord sounds will the morning break eternal, bright and fair? Using the passages cited above, and others such as Exodus 19:16-19, describe the Day the Lord returns, what it will be like physically for saved and lost alike, and what will happen to those who belong to Christ.