

RIVER BIBLE COURSE

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WILL THE WORLD COME TO AN END?

River Bible Course - Day of the Lord

It's a big laugh - all this talk about the end of the world.

Why? Because there is a scientific 'law' called the 'Law of Uniformitarianism.' It assumes that what happened in the past are the same natural processes as those which can be observed in the present. Therefore the world can expect to continue as it always has done. What they deliberately forget however, is there has been a precedent; the world has ended once before!

In the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."
(2 Peter 3:3-4)

What is the historical precedent which makes us realise the question is not so silly after all? (2 Peter 3:5-6)

When Jesus was here he actually said the world would come to an end. He was not speaking in hyperbole. Write Jesus' straight forward statement in the box opposite. (Matthew 24:35)

Furthermore, the final end of the world will be more than a surface destruction. It is the complete disintegration of the planet and its solar system! Join the following descriptions with the verses describing how it will happen.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Earth shaken out of orbit | Isaiah 13:10,13 |
| Heavens dissolve and collapse | Isaiah 34:4 |
| Sky's vanish like smoke | Isaiah 51:6 |
| Stars fall to the earth | 2 Peter 3:10 |
| Earth destroyed with fire | Rev. 6:13,14 |



THE DAY OF THE LORD

"The Lord almighty has a day in store ... " (Isaiah 2:12) and that day is what scripture calls the '**Day of the Lord.**' It is spoken about by the prophets and always in terms of dread and awe. The enclosed comparison chart shows the major references side by side. Study the chart in tandem so that an overall picture comes into focus. Tick the boxes wherever the box description can be found or where you feel it is alluded to.

	John	Jesus	Isaiah	Joel	Zeph	Peter	Paul
Called 'Day of the Lord' or implied*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun, moon, or stars affected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Major destruction on earth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sudden, shocking unexpected.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Note: Jesus did not explicitly use the term 'Day of the Lord' but Matt 24:29 is a word for word quote from Isaiah 13:10 implying the same event.

WHAT ABOUT ZECHARIAH?

Now we throw a cat among the pigeons. The prophet Zechariah also speaks of a 'day of the Lord' but his scenario is different to the other prophecies in that it speaks of survival after the holocaust. There seems to be a contradiction since it would not be possible for earth to survive what the other prophets talk about. Fill the missing line from Zephaniah 3:8 and compare it with what Zechariah says.

A day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided among you. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it ... Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King. (Zechariah 14:1,16)

Earth Survives

"I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out my wrath on them - all my fierce anger."

Earth Consumed

_____ (Zeph 3:8)

So what does Zechariah mean by survivors? Here are two possible explanations. Please tick the one you think best explains.

Strict Literal View

Zechariah 14 will happen in the future and has to be **fulfilled literally** in all aspects. It will begin at the return of Christ and will be a **partial destruction** after which the earth will be refurbished and the survivors go into the millennial reign. The end of the world, as described by other prophets, will occur 1000 years after that.

Double Fulfillment View

Zechariah 14 is a '**double fulfillment prophecy**.' The initial fulfillment was the destruction of Jerusalem by armies in AD70 followed by the spread of the gospel (in symbolic language) throughout the Church age. However this early fulfillment prefigures a final and **complete destruction** which happens at Christ's return.

WILL THERE BE A 1000 YEAR REIGN?

Any question about the end of planet earth depends on what we think concerning the 'Millennium.' The details are beyond the scope of this study but it cannot be ignored because one thousand is a lot of years to fit. Also the Christian world is seriously split on this matter and students of prophecy have to decide between (at least) two main views before considering what might or might not happen to the world.

The Pre-millennial view

The pre-millennial view teaches that the second coming of Christ will come **before the millennium** and that he will establish a literal earthly kingdom. This Kingdom will be centered in Jerusalem from where he will rule the whole earth. At the end of the 1000 year reign Satan will be loosed for a short season and will attempt to overthrow the kingdom but will fail. At this stage there will be a massive conflict culminating in the destruction of our present world and the creation of a new heavens and earth.

The A-millennial view

The A-millennial view considers the term 'thousand' in Revelation 20 as figurative - representing a long, indeterminate period from Christ unto his second coming. During this millennial period the New Testament harvest is reaped, then, in the latter days, Satan will be loosed for a season resulting in deception and apostasy. After that Christ will return and the earth will be consumed in fire. It will not survive the cataclysms to stand for another 1000 years. Instead there will be a new heavens and earth in which the righteous will dwell with God eternally.

Discuss this with Christian friends then share your point of view here. And remember, great men of God have held to one or the other belief.

Answers here:

www.5loaves2fishes.net/pdfs/answers2.pdf

John Revelation 6:12-17	Jesus Matt 24:29-44	Isaiah Isaiah 13:6-13, 34:4	Joel Joel 2:30 - 3:15	Zephaniah Zeph 1:2-18, 2:3, 3:8	Peter 2Peter 3:1-13	Paul 1 Thess 4:16 - 5:9
<p>¹²I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, ¹³and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. ¹⁴The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.</p> <p>¹⁵Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"</p> <p>¹⁷For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"</p>	<p>²⁹Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.</p> <p>³⁰"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. ³¹And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.</p> <p>³²"Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ³³Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. ³⁴I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.</p> <p>..... ⁴²"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.</p>	<p>⁶Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.</p> <p>⁷Because of this, all hands will go limp, every man's heart will melt.</p> <p>⁸Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame.</p> <p>⁹See, the day of the LORD is coming - a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger - to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.</p> <p>¹⁰The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.</p> <p>¹¹I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless.</p> <p>¹²I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir.</p> <p>¹³Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.</p> <p>^{34:}⁴All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree.</p>	<p>³⁰I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.</p> <p>³¹The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreaddful day of the LORD.</p> <p>³²And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.</p> <p>^{3:}¹"In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, ²I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.</p> <p>..... ¹¹Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD!</p> <p>¹²"Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side.</p> <p>¹³Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow - so great is their wickedness!"</p> <p>¹⁴Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.</p> <p>¹⁵The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine.</p>	<p>²"I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth," declares the LORD.</p> <p>³"I will sweep away both men and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. The wicked will have only heaps of rubble when I cut off man from the face of the earth," declares the LORD.</p> <p>..... ¹⁴"The great day of the LORD is near - near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the LORD will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there.</p> <p>..... ¹⁸Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath. In the fire of his jealousy the whole world will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth."</p> <p>^{2:}³Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger.</p> <p>^{3:}⁸"Therefore wait for me," declares the LORD, "for the day I will stand up to testify. I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out my wrath on them - all my fierce anger.</p> <p>The whole world will be consumed by the fire of my jealous anger.</p>	<p>⁴They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." ⁵But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. ⁶By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. ⁷By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.</p> <p>⁸But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.</p> <p>¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.</p> <p>¹¹Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹²as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth.</p>	<p>¹⁶For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.</p> <p>¹⁸Therefore encourage each other with these words.</p> <p>^{5:}¹Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ²for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.</p> <p>⁴But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breast-plate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.</p>