

FROM THE PREACHER'S DESK

BY: DAVID OLMOS

If you are reading this article, you have survived the Apoc-Eclipse! Throughout history, people have tried to predict the end of the world. Jewish groups in the first century thought the battle between Jews and Romans in Judea would lead to the arrival of the Messiah. In 365 AD, French Bishop Hilary of Poitiers predicted the end of the world to begin that year. In 1000 AD, many believed the first millennium would end the world, causing riots in Europe as people headed east to Jerusalem. In 2000, which marked the beginning of the second millennium, many different groups and religions predicted the world's end. In 2012, some people believed the Earth would end with an asteroid named Nibiru, an alien invasion or a supernova. Scholars believed the Mayans had even forecasted this impending doom. A blockbuster movie called "2012" was even made, which only fueled more fear and anxiety. However, despite countless predictions, no one has ever been true. The most recent one was on Tuesday, April 8, 2024, when the United States experienced a total solar eclipse.

In ancient times, a solar eclipse was an ominous warning of impending doom or destruction. Some people today still associate this natural phenomenon with the end of the world, citing biblical references such as Matthew 24:29. This verse reads, "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." However, the issue with interpreting scriptures is taking them out of context.

Matthew 24 is often the subject of speculation and wild theories about the end of time and the events surrounding the return of Christ. However, in verses 1-13, Jesus is not talking about the destruction of the world but the destruction of Jerusalem. This becomes clear when we read verses 14-31, where Jesus describes the destruction of Jerusalem and instructs, "let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" (Matt. 24:16). And "alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath" (Matt. 24:19-20)." If these verses are referring to the end of the world, why would Jesus

encourage people to flee? If it were indeed the second coming of Christ, there would be no escaping or hiding. Matthew 12:36 states that on the day of judgment, people will give account for every careless word they speak." Jesus was talking about Jerusalem's destruction, and his language was symbolic, as he often did. The "lights out" in Matthew 24:29 references the nation of Israel. Consider what Ezekiel said regarding the destruction of Egypt. Ezekiel. 32:2 says, "Son of man, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him..." Specifically, v. 7 speaks of Pharaoh, "When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light." Pharaoh was the light put out by his death.

The problem with making predictions about the world's end is that we can't do so. Matthew 24 transitions in verses 34, 35, and 36. Concerning Jerusalem's destruction, v.34 says, "Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." If the previous verses were about the end of the world, then there is a generation of people somewhere who have lived almost 2000 years. In verse 35, Jesus assures us that His words are absolute, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." In verse 36, Jesus changes direction and draws our attention towards the second coming. He says, "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." There were plenty of signs regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, but we won't know the day or hour of the destruction of the world. God wants our obedience willingly, not out of fear. Imagine if we knew the hour; what would the final Sunday before look like? It would be standing room only!

Here's a profound truth: since we cannot predict the day or the hour of our departure from this world, we must live each day as if it were our last. As Matthew 24:42 states, "Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." If today is our final day, and it coincides with a solar eclipse, who cares? The bigger question is, are you ready for that day? God bless and have a great week!

YOUTH GROUP

There will be a YOUTH DEVO AT THE CHURCH BUILDING THIS SUNDAY, APRIL 14TH, AFTER EVENING WORSHIP.

Youth Minister update:

April 14th, we have invited our youth minister candidate, Jonah Stewart to come interview with our congregation. Please make plans to attend worship service to meet him and hear him preach. We will also have a parent Q&A meeting at 4:00 p.m.

If you would like to host Jonah and his fiancé, Darla (4/12-4/14), in your home while they are here visiting, please see John Trammel or Scott Ratcliff.



Camp Bandina

June 2-8 for 6th-12th graders.
Camper fee: \$180
Additional camper (same family): \$160
Pre-camper fee: \$50
If you have any questions contact Curtis or Tammy Sanford.
Register at:
www.bandina-cecilhutsonsession.com

Camp Awesome

July 31-August 4 for 3rd- 6th graders
Camper fee: \$160
Volunteer fee: 125

There will be a Men's Bible Study this Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. We will be continuing our study on Romans 8:12-30.



Ladies Day
April 27, 2024

starting at 8:30 a.m.
Hosted at the Graeber Road Church of Christ.



Free Goods Giveaway



We are collecting for our 2nd Annual Free Goods Giveaway. If you have items you would like to donate, please put them in the cradle-roll room.

Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Please Pray

Mary Miller is having eye surgery on both eyes 4/19/24... Howard King, father of Jeff King, is in the hospital after a fall, and he also has pneumonia... Patsy Kita, mother of Karen Ratcliff, is having respiratory issues.