

HOW NEAR IS THE END?

Introduction

Isaac Asimov, *A Choice of Catastrophes*
Middle East turmoil: Gulf War, Israel
Six-thousand year theory of human history
Adam: c4000 BC; Abraham: c2000 BC;
Jesus: 0 BC; 2nd Coming: AD 2000

Can We Tell?

Not exactly:

Matt 24:42-44: be on alert; don't know when; when you don't expect it
24:36: no one but Father knows day or hour
1 Thess 5:2: day of Lord comes as thief in night

But should be able to recognize its approach:

Matt 24:32-35: parable of fig tree (misuse to calculate year, 1988)
real meaning (cp Luke 21:29: all trees)
signs indicate approach
1 Thess 5:1-6: though like thief, shouldn't surprise believer, since not in dark; stay awake!

Signs of the End

Jesus' message on Mt. of Olives (Matt 24):

3: sign of coming, end of age
4-6: false Xs, wars, etc, but not yet end
7-8: nations at war, famines, earthquakes
beginning of "birth pangs"
9-14: persecution, general hatred of Xns, betrayal, false prophets, increased lawlessness, love growing cold, Gospel preached to all nations
15-28: The Great Tribulation
Abomination of Desolation, Dan 9:27; 11:31 (Antiochus); 12:11
get away quickly
nothing to match it in human history
continued appearance of false Xs and false prophets
Lord's return will be unmistakable
29-31: Christ's Second Coming

Paul's predictions of moral collapse & Man of Lawlessness:

2 Tim 3:1-5: compare Matt 24:12

2 Thess 2:1-12: apostasy and Man of Sin (antichrist)

compare Matt 24 on abomination of desolation

vv11-12: God will allow delusion as judgment

John's predictions of world government & religion:

Rev 13: one world govt under beast (antichrist)

666 in 13:18 probably symbol for Serpent's Christ

Where Are We Now?

Technology

unprecedented: one-second communication, few hour travel has produced one world & possibility of one-world govt; has also speeded up spread of Gospel to whole world

population growth due to medical & agricultural advances has put severe strain on resources and environment, making famine, disease & environmental disaster more severe if anything goes wrong

allows larger scale, more disastrous wars; danger of nuclear proliferation; these favor one-world govt as solution

Scientism (Evolutionism, etc.)

undermines all traditional religions & their concepts of moral absolutes

Ecumenism

desire to unite all religions, partly to avoid conflict, assisted by loss of absolutes

Israel

regathering has produced tensions in Middle East, which superpower confrontation and oil embargo have spread to whole world; may be setting stage for abom of desolation

Disasters

not much yet, some famines, usual earthquakes, tho even San Francisco type earthquake would be far more destructive to human life today, and much bigger earthquakes have occurred (New Madrid, MO, 1811)

AIDS is feared by some to reach proportions of Black Death

What Should We Do About It?

How near is the end?

Don't know, but it may be close

Whether the end of the age is close or not, your end may be close

Repent!

Recognize that you won't make it on your own when you stand before God to answer for everything you've done or thought

Trust in Jesus:

he obeyed for us and paid for us

explain how to trust in Jesus

Live like each day is important