

The End of the World? Matt. 24:3

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“Tell us when shall be ... the end of the world [age]?”

1. The Greek language, in which the NT was written, has at least three different words that have been translated as “world” in the English:
 - a. AION[OS] – *Age*, an indefinite duration of time, dispensation.
 - b. KOSMOS – *Orderly system* or organization, beautiful arrangement.
 - c. GE – *Land, ground, earth*, Rev. 13:3.

2. In this lesson we will deal with the burning up of the Heavens and Earth. Matt. 24:3 uses the Greek word “Aionos” which means “age” or dispensation. Heb. 9:26 has the word “Aionon” which is plural, of more than one age or dispensation. In keeping with Biblical teaching, we identify three different ages here: (1) the *Patriarchal* age from Adam to the giving of the law of Moses, (2) the *Mosaic* age from Moses to Christ, and (3) the *Christian* age from Christ to eternity.

3. The Greek words “aion” (age, singular) and “aionon” (ages, plural) are speaking of periods of time, which do not burn up, but simply pass by as another begins. The Greek word “ge” (land) defines what part of the world (not the universe) is being spoken of. “Kosmos” means an orderly system or arrangement of governments, nations, cities, towns, buildings, groves, trees, etc., not the whole universe. The word (“ge”) means “the land” or the surface of the ground as opposed to the sea or the air, a variable part of earth, a particular land—never speaks of the whole earth including the seas and atmosphere. So when the Bible speaks of the burning up of the world, KJV, it speaks of a land, an orderly system, or an age (or dispensation), but never of the whole universe.

4. *KOSMOS* – Colossians 2:8 gives an excellent glimpse into the meaning of the word “kosmos” in that we are looking for the end of something or destruction. 2 Pet. 3 is another good example “the world at that time was being flooded with water.” Now ask yourself what was destroyed? Answer—the orderly system of human and animal population. Planet earth remained, it was not annihilated! Only the human and animal inhabitants were destroyed.

5. *GE* – 2 Pet. 3:10 has been the one verse to which teachers go to show the complete annihilation of Heaven and Earth. “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in which the Heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements [Gr. stoichea, fundamental principles or “basics”] will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth [Gr. ge] and its works will be burned up.” Notice the word “earth” [Gr. ge] here, meaning a land, a particular land or nation. Now since Peter is writing to Israelites only (compare 1 Pet 1:1-2 and 2 Pet. 3:1), Peter reminds them that the prophets had warned of this destruction. Zech. 14:1-9 And Christ had warned them of this impending doom as well. Luke 21:20-32 So, Peter was speaking of the “land” of Israel.
 - a. A corresponding example where the prophet uses the same language is found in Isa. 13:1-18. Read, and notice verse 13, the Heavens will tremble, the Earth

shaken. Heaven represents the place of power in this land (verse 5), the rulers. This “land” was Babylon. The stars of verse 10 are the rulers of their heaven, the place of power. Is this the language that Peter is using in 2 Pet. 3:10?

- b. See also Ezekiel 7. Here is the coming of the Lord. A complete end! All four corners of the earth (land).
6. Did God ever intend, after the flood, to burn up or annihilate the universe? We have already seen that (kosmos) or (ge) do not convey a message of annihilation, rather a judgment upon certain lands, or nations. Well just what does God really say about even a judgment as severe as the flood?
- a. Genesis 8:21, God made an oath to himself, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, and I will never again destroy every living thing as I have done.” Verse 22, Nothing will change as long as earth remains. See also Eccl 1:4; Ps. 78:69; Ps. 93:1; Ps. 104:5; Ps. 119:90; Ps. 148:1-6.
 - b. Dan. 2:44, speaking of Christ’s Kingdom it has no end. It takes humans to constitute a Kingdom. Isa. 9:6, His Kingdom and His reign has no end. Dan. 7:13-14 Christ’s Kingdom is to all people, every nation, every language it is everlasting, has no end.
7. Now allow me to scripturally answer the question asked by the Apostles “Tell us when shall the end of the WORLD BE. Heb. 9:26, (*AIONON*) dispensation, REMEMBER. The end of the world (KJV) was at the death of Christ. This message came through the Holy Spirit from God. Can we deny what the word of God says?

Comments: People are strange. In the art of wrestling when two men began to beat each other and draw blood, we get excited, thrilled, we are heard to say, “I enjoyed that match!” However, when two wrestlers just simply mat wrestle, we are not excited, nor are we thrilled, and again we are heard to say, “I did not enjoy that match!”

The same principle applies to the teaching of the gospel of Christ. Modern day teachers has learned the art of exciting his audience with emotional thrills, world burning, and the Great White Throne Judgment, Satan, and the lake of fire. We have reached the point where educational lessons regarding the word of God is boring! But God said “Ye shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.” John 8:32.

Sources used:

King James Bible
American Standard
Young’s Analytical Concordance, page 1073
Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon, page 115, Article 5
Analytical Greek Lexicon, Wigram, page 78, “A country, a land”
Vine’s Bible Dictionary
The Christian System, p. 258.