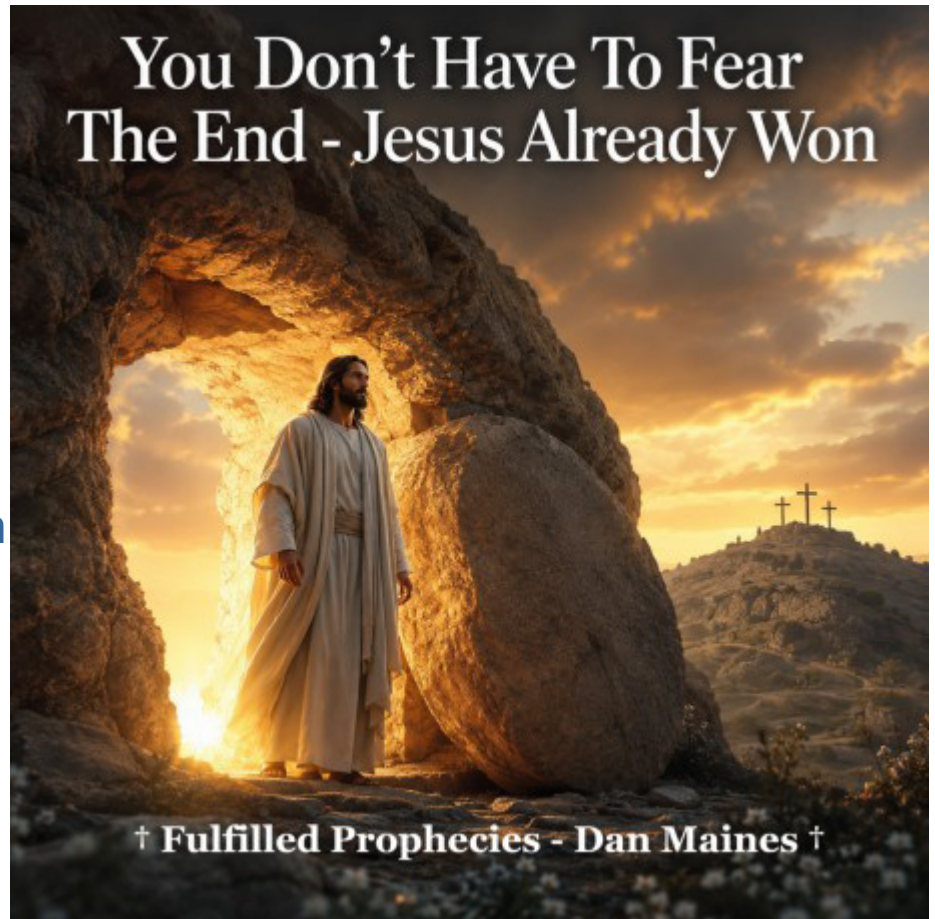


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**You Don't Have To
Fear The End -
Jesus Already Won**



By Dan Maines

You Don't Have To Fear The End - Jesus Already Won

Introduction

† Millions of Christians have been taught to look toward the future with fear. They're told to expect a terrifying Antichrist, a world-dominating beast, Armageddon, collapsing nations, global destruction, and events so terrible that believers wonder whether they'll survive.

† But the New Testament wasn't written to make Christians afraid of the future. It was written to give first-century believers courage while they were living through persecution, tribulation,

and the approaching judgment Jesus had already announced.

- † Jesus didn't tell His disciples that evil would ultimately win. He told them that He had already overcome the world (John 16:33).
- † Paul didn't describe Satan and the powers of darkness as an undefeated enemy waiting thousands of years for Christ to conquer them. He proclaimed Christ's victory over them through the cross (Colossians 2:15).
- † Hebrews doesn't present the devil as someone Christians should live in lifelong terror of. Christ came to break the power of the one who held the power of death and to release people from the fear that kept them in bondage (Hebrews 2:14-15).
- † Fulfilled prophecy isn't a message of fear. It's a message of victory. Jesus kept His promises, judged the old covenant world that rejected Him, established His kingdom, and reigns today.
- † We don't need to spend our lives frightened by every war, politician, technological development, disease, earthquake, or headline. Our confidence isn't in the condition of the world. Our confidence is in the finished victory of Jesus Christ.

John 16:33

These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

- † Notice where Jesus placed their peace. He didn't promise His disciples a life without trouble. Their peace was found in Him (John 14:27).

- † Jesus said, be of good cheer, because He had overcome the world. Christianity begins from the position of Christ's victory, not from the expectation that evil will eventually overpower His kingdom (Matthew 28:18).

- † The disciples were about to face persecution, rejection, imprisonment, and even death, yet Jesus told them to have courage. Their circumstances didn't determine whether Christ was victorious (Acts 14:22).

- † That same truth matters today. We can experience hardship without believing that every hardship is evidence that the world

is approaching a prophetic apocalypse.

Colossians 2:15

When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

† The cross looked like defeat to the world, but Paul describes it as Christ's triumph. Jesus publicly defeated the powers that stood against Him (Colossians 1:13-14).

† Christianity isn't waiting for Jesus to become victorious. His victory is the foundation upon which the gospel stands (1 Corinthians 15:57).

† This changes the way we read prophecy. We shouldn't interpret every frightening symbol as proof that Jesus is losing control of history. Revelation was given to suffering believers to assure them that Christ would judge their enemies and vindicate His people (Revelation 6:9-11).

† The victorious Christ isn't hiding from the powers of darkness. He has authority over them.

Hebrews 2:14-15

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, so that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

† Jesus entered humanity and defeated death through His own death. What appeared to be Satan's greatest victory became the means of his defeat (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

† The purpose wasn't to create another generation of frightened believers. Christ came to deliver people from bondage to the fear of death (Romans 8:15).

† A theology that keeps Christians constantly terrified of Satan, Antichrist, beasts, Armageddon, and the end of the world misses the victorious direction of the New Testament.

† Our message should produce confidence in Christ, not endless speculation about which modern person might be the

next prophetic villain.

1 John 2:18

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.

† John didn't tell his readers that the last hour would begin thousands of years after they died. He told them, it is the last hour (1 John 2:18).

† He also didn't describe one future political ruler called the Antichrist. John said that many antichrists had already arisen in his own time (1 John 2:22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

† John even explained that the appearance of these antichrists was evidence that they were living in the last hour.

† When we allow John's words to remain in their original first-century setting, much of the modern fear surrounding Antichrist disappears.

† We don't need to examine every modern leader to determine whether he's the Antichrist. John's antichrists belonged to the crisis his original readers were already experiencing.

Revelation 1:1-3

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, everything that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

† Revelation begins by telling its original readers when its prophetic events were expected. They were things that must shortly come to pass, and the time was at hand.

† Those statements weren't meaningless filler. They established the timeframe for the visions that followed (Revelation 22:6, 10).

† The beasts, judgments, warfare, Babylon, and other frightening images must be interpreted within the timeframe John gave his original audience.

† Revelation wasn't dropped into the first century primarily to frighten Christians living thousands of years later. It was given to real churches facing real persecution and approaching events.

† Revelation was intended to bless its readers, not trap every later generation in fear that the latest international crisis must mean the end is finally here.

Matthew 24:34

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

† Jesus placed the events He had been describing within the lifetime of that generation. He didn't say that generation would begin thousands of years later.

† The disciples had asked Jesus about the destruction of the temple they were looking at, and Jesus warned them about events connected with that judgment (Matthew 24:1-3).

† This included wars, persecution, false prophets, the gospel proclamation, tribulation, and His coming in judgment.

† The controlling time statement is unmistakable. This generation would not pass away until all these things were accomplished.

† Moving those events into our future removes them from the timeframe Jesus Himself provided.

Luke 21:20-22

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are inside the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; because these are days of punishment, so that all things which have been written will be fulfilled.

† Jesus gave His disciples something they could recognize. When they saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies, they were to know that its desolation was near.

† This wasn't a warning for Christians thousands of years later living in America, Europe, Africa, Asia, or Australia. Jesus

specifically addressed people who could flee from Judea when Jerusalem came under threat.

† Jesus called these the days of vengeance and connected them with the fulfillment of what had been written.

† Jerusalem was surrounded by Roman forces in the events leading to its destruction in AD 70. The temple was destroyed, exactly as Jesus had warned (Matthew 24:2).

† Instead of turning Jesus' warning into an endlessly future prediction, we should recognize the historical judgment toward which His words pointed.

Historical References

† Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian and eyewitness to the Jewish-Roman War, recorded the siege, famine, internal violence, destruction, and terrible suffering surrounding Jerusalem's fall in AD 70 in *The Wars of the Jews*, especially Books 5-7.

† Josephus' account provides important historical background for understanding the severity of the judgment that came upon Jerusalem and the generation Jesus had warned.

† Tacitus, the Roman historian, also recorded the Roman campaign against Jerusalem and the circumstances surrounding the city's destruction in *Histories*, Book 5.

† Eusebius later recorded the Christian tradition that believers in Jerusalem left the city before the war and went to Pella, connecting the escape of Christians with the warnings Christ had given His disciples in *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 3, chapter 5.

† These historical witnesses don't replace Scripture. They help us see that the first-century world actually experienced the kind of historical crisis described in Jesus' warnings.

How It Applies To Us Today

† You don't have to wake up every morning wondering whether today's news has finally triggered the end of the world.

† You don't have to fear every war because someone calls it Armageddon.

- † You don't have to fear every politician because someone calls that person the Antichrist.
- † You don't have to fear every new technology because someone connects it with the mark of the beast.
- † You don't have to fear every conflict in the Middle East because a prophecy teacher says the prophetic clock has started again.
- † You don't have to live watching for Christ's kingdom to arrive. Believers have already been transferred into the kingdom of God's beloved Son (Colossians 1:13).
- † You don't have to live as though Satan and evil have defeated Jesus. Christ triumphed over the powers through His redemptive work (Colossians 2:15).
- † You don't have to live in bondage to the fear of death. Jesus came to deliver His people from that fear (Hebrews 2:14-15).
- † Prophecy should strengthen our faith because fulfilled prophecy demonstrates that God keeps His word.
- † Jesus warned His generation. Jesus told them what was coming. Jesus gave them signs they could recognize. Jesus told them when those things would occur. History records Jerusalem's fall and the temple's destruction.
- † The Christian life isn't supposed to be spent staring anxiously toward the horizon waiting for Jesus to win.
- † Jesus already won.
- † That's why we can live with peace instead of panic, confidence instead of fear, hope instead of dread, and joy instead of endless end-times anxiety.
- † The kingdom isn't waiting helplessly for its King. Christ reigns.
- † Whatever difficulties we face today, our message remains the same. In Christ we have peace. In this world we'll experience trouble, but we can have courage because Jesus has overcome the world (John 16:33).

Q & A Appendix

Q: Should Christians be afraid that Armageddon could happen in our lifetime?

A: No. Revelation announced events that were shortly to take

place and said the time was at hand for its original readers (Revelation 1:1-3; 22:6, 10). Its judgment imagery shouldn't be disconnected from those inspired time statements.

Q: Should we be looking for the Antichrist today?

A: No. John said many antichrists had already arisen and used their presence as evidence that it was the last hour (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3).

Q: Does fulfilled prophecy mean Christians will never experience trouble?

A: No. Jesus specifically said His followers would experience tribulation in the world, but He told them to have courage because He had overcome the world (John 16:33).

Q: Does fulfilled prophecy mean nothing matters anymore?

A: Absolutely not. It means we live from Christ's victory instead of waiting for it. We're called to faith, love, righteousness, service, and the proclamation of the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20; Galatians 5:13-14).

Q: Why shouldn't Christians live in fear of prophecy?

A: Because biblical prophecy reveals God's faithfulness. Jesus told His disciples what was coming and assured them that He was victorious. Fulfillment gives us greater reason to trust Him, not greater reason to fear.

Q: What should Christians focus on instead of constantly watching end-times predictions?

A: We should focus on Christ, His kingdom, loving God, loving others, sharing the gospel, and faithfully living the life He's given us (Matthew 22:37-39; Colossians 3:1-4).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† John 16:33; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 2:18; Revelation 1:1-3; Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:20-22

† Historical writers: Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, Books 5-7; Tacitus, Histories, Book 5; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, chapter 5

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