

Apocalyptic Language

"Immediately after the Tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." (Matthew 24:29)

This is an example of the use of apocalyptic language. Apocalyptic language are physical words symbolizing spiritual realities. In the above verse in **Matthew 24:29**, the sun darkened refers to the Monarchy being overthrown.

The moon shall not give her light refers to the priesthood. The stars shall fall from heaven refers to the elders and the Sanhedrin Court. This is a metaphoric representation of the government and political system of the Jewish nation suffering irrevocable dissolution.

Much of the imagery used to describe the events accompanying the return of the Lord Jesus such as the sun not shining, the moon turning to blood, and the various plagues of Revelation is the use of what is called **"apocalyptic language"**.

This language is recognized by Bible scholars as the use of symbolic, metaphoric descriptions applied to common place events orchestrated by God.

For example, when God delivered David from the hand of Saul and his enemies, David described his deliverance in apocalyptic language.

"Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken, because he was angry. Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down with darkness under his feet. He rode upon a cherub, and flew; and he was seen upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness canopies around him, dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.

From the brightness before him coals of fire were kindled.....then the channels of the sea were seen, the foundations of the world were uncovered at the rebuke of the Lord, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils. (2 Samuel 22:8-13, 16)

In the historical narratives of David's conflicts with Saul, we never read of astronomical or tectonic activity playing a role or of God being seen physically at any time even though the text states that He was seen upon the wings of the wind. Yet this is how David described his deliverance. The language is used to describe God's direction of human affairs in the judgment or blessing of individuals and nations. To have the sun, moon, or stars not to give their light is descriptive of judgment.

Great numbers of people have been told by church leaders not to depend on a future. This is a falsehood being preached by money-hungry, self-serving ministries throughout the world.

But today growing numbers of people are beginning to realize something is wrong with this message. Your idea of the future will determine your philosophy in life.

These false preachers always use apocalyptic language to point to ***an "end of the world"*** message that is getting ready to happen in the future. In reality, this apocalyptic language is used to describe the end of an age, the end of a covenant, the end of a disobedient people, the end of the nation of Israel and its culture, religion, and society. The following verses discuss ***"an appointed time of the end"*** and state that ***"this end will not tarry"***. **(Habakkuk 2:3, Hebrews 10:37, Daniel 12:4, 9)**

History is full of good and sincere godly people who claimed certain knowledge of the end of the world and tried to fit the events of their day into the fulfillment of end-time prophecy. They have completely missed the meaning of the end. What you believe has consequences; it affects your personal life, community life, national life, even your international life. What do **"modern day"** wars in the Middle East, the present-day nation of Israel, famines and earthquakes mean for the fulfillment of end-time Bible prophecy?

Nothing, absolutely nothing!

The Bible never speaks of the end of time. The end of the world spoken of today in churches is a false doctrine made up by carnal-minded and traditional church leaders seeking to scare people into their churches and into giving money.

The truth is that the world and the present New Covenant Age simply do not have an end. **(Ephesians 3:21)** It's the timing of these end events being taught in these churches about the end that is wrong. They continually try to predict something that's not going to happen.

The world is never going to end, never!

We live in a never-ending world. This is what the Scriptures teach: **Genesis 8:21-22** *".....I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.....neither will I again smite any more everything living....day and night shall not cease...."* **Psalms 78:69** says *"....like the earth which he hath established forever...."* **Psalms 104:5** says *"Who laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be removed forever."* Read also **Ecclesiastes 1:4**, **Psalms 93:1**, **Psalms 119:90**, **Psalms 89:36-37**, **Psalms 148:3-6**.

The use of apocalyptic language in the Bible always depicted a coming judgment of God. For example, read **Isaiah 13:10, 13** *"....The 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...Therefore, 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."*

This is a figurative prediction of the literal destruction of Babylon by the Medes in 539 BC. This apocalyptic language meant the presence of God was involved in the judgment on these people.

The entire physical world was not destroyed, only Babylon's world. Read **Isaiah 34:4-5** - this is the account of the coming divine judgment on Edom which happened in the late 6th century BC.

Read **Ezekiel 32:2,7-8** - This is God's warning to Pharaoh of Egypt of his fall in the middle of the 6th century BC. Read **Nahum 1:1, 5** - God's coming judgment on Nineveh in 612 BC.

The same apocalyptic language terms that were used in the Old Testament are used in the New Testament describing judgment and the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. (**Matthew 24:29**)

Another commonly misunderstood scripture which uses apocalyptic language is **2 Peter 3:10-13**. ***"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.....the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat...."***

This is a description of the coming judgment of God against Israel. God used invading armies or natural disasters to bring His judgment. In every case, the social, political, and religious worlds of those receiving the judgment were ended or dramatically changed. These events were appropriately spoken of in world-ending terms.

Falling stars, bloody moons, darkened sun, shaking earth; signs in the sky....this collapsing universe, cosmic-cataclysm language is used throughout the Bible.

In our modern-day minds, it sounds like the end of the world. Scattered throughout Biblical history and mostly overlooked by popular prophecy writers of today, are numerous fulfillments of the apocalyptic language.

Knowing the nature of these previous fulfillments will enable us to make proper sense of this Biblical language. Popular end sayers today assume that the Bible's apocalyptic language must be interpreted literally and physically, and that since no one has witnessed a cataclysmic, earth-ending event of this nature, its time must lie in the future.

The shock value of earthquakes, exploding stars, cosmic eclipses, and nuclear holocaust is awesome.

This rendering of the Bible's apocalyptic texts serves the purpose of end sayers and has become fixed in the minds of millions of people. This is a very flawed method of interpretation.

This same figurative language is used when portraying the blessings promised to Israel if they submitted to God and were obedient. **Read Isaiah 30:26, 60:19-20.**

The Kingdom blessings brought by Jesus were also described using this figurative language. Read **Isaiah 35:1,6** and **John 7:38-39.**

We conclude from the Bible that God is never going to destroy the world. ***"For the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof"*** (1 Corinthians 10:26) Exodus 9:29 says ***".....that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's."***

When we fail to give proper attention to historical fulfillments, we do a grave injustice to understanding the Bible's use of apocalyptic language.

Without this historical perspective, we are guaranteed to misinterpret their meaning. As we allow the Bible to shed light on itself, we will see that this type of apocalyptic language always depicted a coming judgment of God. This earth belongs to God. He has dominion over it.

He stated in His Word that the earth is filled with His glory and will not be destroyed. ***".....all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."*** (Numbers 14:21) ***".....Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."*** (Isaiah 6:3) ***"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord....."*** (Habakkuk 2:14) ***"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end. Amen"*** (Ephesians 3:21)

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