

The End of the World Is Coming, Just Not Yet

Did you hear the announcement last week? The “‘Doomsday Clock’ moves closest ever to midnight.” It appears the end is very near!

As the article explains, “Top scientists and security experts moved the ‘Doomsday Clock’ forward on Tuesday to just 90 seconds to midnight—signaling an increased risk to humanity’s survival from the nuclear shadow over the Ukraine conflict and the growing climate crisis.

“The new timing of the clock set by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists is closer to midnight than ever before.”

More specifically, “The hands of the clock, which the Bulletin describes as a ‘metaphor for how close humanity is to self-annihilation,’ had been at 100 seconds to midnight since Jan. 2020—the closest to midnight it had been in its history.”

Have we truly come to the end of our rope? Is an Armageddon-type event at hand?

To be clear, I do not want to minimize for a second the chaotic situation in which we find ourselves today, worldwide. Even more, I do not want to minimize the acute suffering that is experienced by millions of people, moment by moment, every single day.

The chaos is real and the suffering is real. But does this mean that we are reaching the last seconds of human existence? Can we expect the final conflagration very soon? Is global warming about to kill us? Will there be a nuclear war? Will the earth be struck by a devastating meteor? Will the final events of the book of Revelation unfold in the next few years?

Anything is possible, and mass destruction could occur at any moment. Things may accelerate more rapidly than many of us have expected. But from my perspective, that final cataclysm is not yet.

I have often stated that when I came to faith in late 1971, I learned quickly that the end was near and that all the biblical prophecies were about to be fulfilled.

I was 16 years old then, which is now the age of our youngest grandchild, and I'm about to turn 68. Still, the end has not come.

But this is not the first time we have speculated and been wrong. As I have studied church history, I have been struck by how many times the end was predicted. Yet the expected end never came.

Even from a secular perspective, we have to consider these end-time warnings carefully.

This was illustrated in a Nov. 12, 2021 op-ed in the New York Post, written by the Post Editorial Board and entitled, "50 Years of Predictions that the Climate Apocalypse Is Nigh."

Similarly, a March 19, 2019 article on Fox by Maxim Lott listed, "10 Times 'Experts' Predicted the World Would End by Now." The article was responding to a comment by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez who said, "Millennials and people, you know, Gen Z... we're like: 'The world is gonna end in 12 years if we don't address climate change.'"

Personally, as one who is neither a climate alarmist nor a global warming denier (I've not studied the issues sufficiently to offer a strong opinion), my issue is not so much with the science as with the warnings. Perhaps these voices are a bit too shrill?

Yet my own perspective is not based on science. It is based on

Scripture and on my relationship with God.

Scripturally, I see that much work still needs to be done before the Lord returns, most obviously when it comes to the Great Commission. After all, if there will be a multitude of believers that no one can number from “from every nation, tribe, people and language” (Rev. 7:9), then it would follow that the gospel must go to “every nation, tribe, people and language.”

At present, “there are still over 5,000 languages that do not have a full copy of the Bible” while about half of all languages do not have any portion of the Scriptures at all. And while it is true that these existing translations can potentially reach more than 95% of the world’s population, there is still much more work to do to get to the rest.

More urgently, the Joshua Project asks, “So how many of the approximately 17,400 ethnic people groups are considered unreached i.e. less than 2% Christ-follower and less than 5% Professing Christian?”

The answer is that, “The latest estimates suggest that approximately 7,400 people groups are considered unreached. That means over 40% of the world’s people groups have no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize the rest of their people group. Over 42% of the world’s population live in these over 7,400 people groups.”

And there are these “sobering facts about just the 50 largest unreached people groups.”

- All 50 of these people groups have less than 2% Christ-followers
- Individuals in these groups may have very limited, if any, access to the gospel.
- These 50 unreached people groups are comprised of billion souls.
- One in five people on earth live in these 50 unreached

peoples.

- Every group is larger than 10,000,000 in population.
- None have an indigenous church capable of taking the gospel to the entire group.
- Primary religion: 26 are Muslim, 17 Hindu, 5 Buddhist, 1 Ethnic Religions, 1 non-Religious.
- All of these 50 largest unreached people groups are in the 10/40 Window, 47 are in sensitive countries.

Again, things could explode overnight exponentially, and hundreds of millions of unreached people could suddenly have access to the gospel. But for sure, that has not happened so far—and this is just one indication that, while the end may be near, it is not yet.

Speaking from the perspective of my relationship with God, I do not sense that the time of final upheaval is at hand. Again, things could change on a dime, and I live in readiness before the Lord. But I firmly believe that as that season draws nearer, the biblical warnings will become clearer and the prophetic voices will shout more loudly (and accurately!).

In this regard, I remember something that Rush Limbaugh used to say, “I’ll tell you when it’s time to panic.”

-  That time is not yet. And for people of faith, the time when the world panics is the time when we lift up our eyes, knowing our redemption is near (Luke 21:25-28).

That being said, let’s roll up our sleeves afresh. There’s a lot of work to be done and the world harvest has never been more ripe. {eoa}

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