

Joel Osteen Discusses Views on End Times and Heaven

Harold Camping was sure he knew when Jesus would return. Megachurch pastor Joel Osteen is sure he doesn't know.

Osteen sat down with Colorado's 9News anchor Lance Barry to discuss a range of topics, from gays in the church to heaven to the rapture.

Barry called the times we live in "scary" and pointed to massive storms, unrest in the streets and financial crises. Then he asked Osteen a pointed question: Is there any suggestion this is the beginning of the end?

"You know, I'm not sure. The Scripture said towards the end we'll see all these things happening," said Osteen, pastor of Lakewood Church in Houston. "My encouragement has always been to keep moving forward, keep being your best, to live your life like every day like could be your last and to make your life count. So I'm not sure about all the end times, but I do believe we're living in significant times."

Barry followed up with a related question: Are we on the cusp of either by choice or by no other choice turning to God as a people?

"I believe we are and we are seeing some of it now," Osteen answered. "When things go down in the economy and natural disasters [happen], we see our churches go up, because many people do turn to their faith in these difficult times."

Some Christians are expecting a Great Awakening while others are expecting Jesus to return at any moment. Barry asked Osteen if Christians should be excited about the prospect of Christ's Second Coming.

“What we believe as Christians is that at the end it only gets better when you go to be with the Lord, and so I don’t think there’s anything to fear,” Osteen said. “I think that’s why the Scripture says when a lot of these things are happening, look up, be full of joy because there are going to be great things.”

Although widely criticized for his motivational sermons and books—as well as his comments about gays and Mormons—Osteen believes God has placed him in a visible place in the body.

“I do believe it is a calling. I don’t like to make it super-spiritual, but when my Dad died, I knew I was supposed to step up and pastor the church,” Osteen said. “I still stand and am in amazement at what God has done.”