

# Is this the end-time?

## Who knows, and does it matter?

Does it matter? It did to my church some time ago. It stated with great authority that the world would end in 1975. And when the world didn't end in 1975, it did a hasty shuffle and came up with 1982 for the end, instead.

When the world didn't end in 1982 either, along came the Gulf War in 1991 and the prophets came alive again with new pronouncements that the end of the world was upon us.

The Gulf War, however, was a short-lived skirmish, and by that time my church had abandoned its obsession with pinpointing the end. But then 9/11 happened, which fired up a whole new crop of prophets elsewhere stating just as boldly that the end is near. But with global climate change, financial chaos, fragile sources of energy and the Earth's resources reaching their limit, could these prophets actually be right this time?

Well, not too long ago I would've been out there yelling "the end is near" right alongside them because I was utterly convinced the end would come in my lifetime and the players in the end-time drama could easily be identified. Like most prophecy bloodhounds I thought God had left a trail in the Bible that anyone could latch onto and pinpoint the end-time exactly - until, that is, I began bumping into people with end-time scenarios from the Bible that didn't agree with mine!

The question then became, "Who's right, them or me, and how can either of us prove it?"

The Bible, fortunately, gives an easy and obvious answer. Be right, it says, in every prediction you make, Mr. Prophet, or be dismissed as a fraud (**Deuteronomy 18:22, Jeremiah 28:9**). One's entire credibility as a prophet, therefore, rests on being 100% accurate. But even that hasn't stemmed the steady tide of prophecy buffs offering their version of how and when the end will come.

They're in good company, though, because Jesus' disciples also wanted to know if the end was coming in their lifetime. Jesus, however, breezily dismissed their curiosity and concentrated their attention on what was really important, which was him. He was the key to the future, he said, not pinpointing when the end was or who the end-time players were. That's why John says "[those who bear witness to Jesus have the spirit of prophecy \(Revelation 19:10\)](#)."

But how is Jesus the key? Well, that's where prophecy does become extremely important because Jesus made two remarkable predictions of his own. He predicted he

would raise humans from the dead into eternity, and as proof of it he'd rise from the dead first. And like every other prophet, his credibility stands or falls on those two predictions being 100% accurate. If he didn't rise from the dead we can all justifiably dismiss him as a false prophet and a fraud, and we can dismiss the whole idea of us rising from the dead, as well.

Did he rise from the dead, then? Yes he did, and there were hundreds of eye-witness accounts confirming it (**1 Corinthians 15:3-8, Acts 1:3**). It was these eye-witnesses to his resurrection that kick-started Christianity in the first place. If Jesus hadn't been resurrected, Christianity would never have got off the ground, the proof of which was Jesus' disciples. They shuffled off back to their boats after Jesus was crucified, thoroughly disillusioned and confused. It was only after Jesus appeared to them alive again that Christianity took off.

As a prophet, therefore, Jesus is batting the required 100%. That being the case, his prediction about our future has to look good, too. And on that we rest our hope, because what difference does "knowing when the end comes" make anyway? It's what happens to us after the end that counts, and the life we live forever, not the end of life now. And that's why Jesus came, to assure us of life forever, based on faith in him (**John 3:36**).

That's good news, because the new crop of self-proclaimed prophets and their predictions are just a rehash of the same old game of guesswork I used to play. And there's no way of knowing if they're right, or not, until the end actually happens, but who cares by then anyway?!

So I'm done with trying to predict when the end is. I don't know for certain anymore if the end-time is going to happen in my lifetime. I do know for certain, however, that my lifetime is coming to an end, but because of Jesus' two predictions I have a very real hope, and a guarantee, of a life beyond the end.

Is the end-time upon us? Scary as it may seem, it doesn't have to matter because Jesus came to tell us that life goes on forever, even if the world we live in looks like it's doomed.