

Vineyard Statement of Faith about the Future

WE BELIEVE that God's kingdom has come in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it continues to come in the ministry of the Spirit through the Church, and that it will be consummated in the glorious, visible, and triumphant appearing of Christ - His return to the earth as King. [Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 4:23; Matthew 12:28; Matthew 6:10; Matthew 10:7-8; Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:11; John 15:26-27; Romans 14:17-18; Mark 13:26; Acts 1:9-11; II Thessalonians 2:8; Rev. 19:11-16]

After Christ returns to reign, He will bring about the final defeat of Satan and all of his minions and works, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the eternal blessing of the righteous and eternal conscious punishment of the wicked. [Matthew 25:31-32; I Corinthians 15:23-25; Revelation 20:10; I Corinthians 15:51-52; John 5:28-30; Revelation 20:11-15; Matthew 25:31-46]

Finally, God will be all in all and His kingdom - His rule and reign - will be fulfilled in the new heavens and the new earth, recreated by His mighty power, in which righteousness will dwell and in which He will forever be worshipped. [I Corinthians 15:24-28; I Timothy 6:13-16; II Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:5; Revelation 21:27; I Timothy 1:17; Rev. 7:9-12]

Comment: We welcome people with a variety of end-time views, but ask that people do not quarrel about it.

However, we insist Jesus' return will be in person in bodily form and visible. It was not just the invisible spiritual "coming" at Pentecost, nor the 70AD destruction of Jerusalem, nor will it just be some future invisible event.

The majority of Vineyard pastors, but not all, hold loosely to the "historic premillennial view" with a post-tribulational rapture, rather than to the popular "dispensational premillennialism" that began in the 1800's with its new teaching of a pre-tribulational rapture.

Christians differ over details of the following:

- the timing of the rapture
- the nature of the tribulation
- the nature of the millennium
- the question of Israel
- And if Christ could come back at any time or if there are things that need to occur before the resurrection and rapture occur.

But we all agree these details are not a matter of salvation.

Four Major Future Events

1. The Return of Christ - Jesus will return visibly and bodily; everyone will see Him. He will come with his angels and with the souls of the departed saints. This will begin the next phase of our great salvation.

2. The Millennium

Does the Bible teach a future age on this earth that is greater than this present age, but still falls short of the eternal state?

Rev. 20: 1-10, Matt. 19:28, Luke 19:17, Psa. 72:8-14, Isaiah 11:2-9, & 65:20, Zech. 14:6-21, ICor 15:23-26, Rev. 2:27, 12:5, 19:15.

Christ will reign as king on this earth. Satan will be bound. We will "come to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years." The resurrection of the rest of the dead occurs after this 1000 years.

3. The Final Judgement & Eternal Punishment

To vindicate God's glory and plan, and to bring about final justice. Anyone not found in God's book of life, will be thrown into the "lake of fire."

4. The New Heavens and New Earth -

Believers will live with Christ in a new heaven and a new earth for eternity in which there will be no more sin, sorrow, or suffering. Rev. 21 & 22.

No One Knows the Date of Christ's Return Because...

1. The Bible does not give us a date, nor is there even a single scripture instructing us to figure out the date of His return.

- A. Date setting has always made Christians look foolish.
- B. Date suggesting can discourage believers from making plans for the future
- C. Date suggesting can make some people indifferent to the social problems of their generation.

2. Only God the Father knows the date and He does not intend to tell us.

Matt 24:36 - "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Acts 1:6-8 – Jesus said, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Jesus specially says He wants us to be concerned about missionary work, not dates (Acts 1:6-8).

Some attempt to say - that although we may not know the hour or the day - it may be possible to know the year. But this misses the whole point of why Jesus is saying this.

3. Christ's return will come suddenly and unexpectedly to find his true followers prepared, but others will be found in their sins.

Jesus specifically told his followers "you do not know on what day your Lord will come" and "the Son of man will come at a hour when you do not expect him." (Matt 24:36-51).

(also Luke 17:34-36, 2Peter 3:10, Luke 21:34, 1Thess 5:1-11)

4. The Biblical purpose of preaching about the return of Christ, including the resurrection, rapture, and judgment, is...

(1) Not to look for special knowledge of future dates. Jesus and the apostles brush this question aside. Matt 24:36, Acts 1:7, 1Thess 5:1-2

(2) To encourage us to live righteously Luke 12:35-46, Matt. 24:44-51, 1Cor 1:7-9, Col. 3:1-10, 2 Pet 3:10-12, 1John 2:28-29, Acts 24:55

(3) To give us hope because of our coming salvation from this present age of evil and groaning. 1Peter 1:3-5 & 13, Romans 8:17-25, Titus 2:12-14,

[Drawn from two books: "99 Reasons Why No One Knows When Christ Will Return" by B.J. Oropeza and "Systematic Theology" by Wayne Grudem]

Prophecies of Things That Are Yet to Precede Jesus' Return

On one hand we are encouraged to be ready because Jesus will return at an hour we do not expect (Matt. 24:42-44 & 50, 1Thess. 5:2).

On the other hand, there are a number of passages below that speak of certain events that will happen before Christ returns.

Most (but not all) of Christ's prophecies in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 were fulfilled within 40 years by the time the Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. What prophecies remain to be fulfilled before Christ returns?

1. Preaching of the Gospel to Nations - in such a way that people get saved from every tribe, language, nation, and peoples – Mark 13:10, Matt 24:14, Rev 5:9, Col 1:23

This is the final fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 28:14). There are still over 2 billion people in thousands of language groups, tribes, and towns that have never heard the gospel.

2. The Coming of the Man of Sin and the Rebellious Apostasy. Paul writes that before Christ returns that there will be a rebellious apostasy and the appearance of the "man of sin" or "lawless one" (this is the final antichrist -1Jn 2:18, 2Thess 2:7). Then the Lord Jesus will destroy him at His coming. 2Thess 2:1-10, Rev 13, Daniel 7:8 & 7:15-27

How can the Antichrist be recognized?

A great falling away from Christ occurs leading up to him – 2Thess 2:3, 1Tim. 4:1-3, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Matt 24:12-13

He or his nation has an astonishing recovery a seemingly fatal wound – Rev 13:3 & 12 & 14.

His political base will be the same area as the old Roman Empire –Rev 17:8-14. This means that

those European and Mediterranean nations will first have to form a coalition and rise in world power. This also means he will have the political, military, and economic intelligence, cunning, and magnetism to be a world-class leader. The Bible says he will depose 3 nations (that is their leaders) to take over the head of this coalition of nations (Dan 7:24-25).

He will be accompanied by a supernatural religious dimension. He will oppose and exalt himself above all gods, and will set himself up to receive worship as God. He will use miracles, signs, and deceiving wonders. He will be against Christ and Christians and present himself to be worship instead of Christ. 2Thess 2:3-4, Rev 13:5-7, Rev 12:17, Daniel 7:21 & 25.

He will cause Jerusalem to be trampled and controlled by Gentiles for 42 months – Rev 11:1-3, Zech 13:8-9, Zech 14:1-2, Rev 16:12-16.

3. The Great Tribulation – Rev. 7:13-17, Rev. 13:6-10 & 12:17, Mark 24:21-30 - This will be the most intense opposition to the gospel and distressful time for God's people ever under the final Antichrist.

Others understand this to be the tribulation Jerusalem endured in the three and a half years of Roman-Jewish Wars of 66-70AD.

The Protestant Reformers during the 1500-1600's using the "day is a year theory" thought the tribulation was 1260 years under the pope, who they called the antichrist.

In our lifetime, many of the Christians that have suffered under the Soviet Union, or Communist China, and in Muslim countries believed they were in it.

4. A Large Ingathering of Jewish People as they turn to Christ. Paul says sometime in the future a large number of Jews will be saved and that this will bring "riches to the Gentiles" and "life from the dead." - (Romans 11:12,15 & 25-26.)

Zechariah said a time is coming when all

nations will gather against Jerusalem. At that time many Jews will mourn their sin (of unbelief or of being enemies of the gospel - Zech. 12:9-14, Romans 11:28).

At that time, Jerusalem will be invaded and half will be carried off into exile (Zech 14:1-2). John says that Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles for 42 months (Rev. 11:1-2).

5. Immediately after the tribulation there will be Signs in the Heavens. This is spoken of very often. It is just after the Tribulation and just before the Lord's coming.

'Following that distress, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' – Mark 13:24-25.

(also Matt 24:29, Luke 21:25,26; Acts 2:19,20; Rev 6:12-17, Joel 2:10,30,31 & 3:14-15, Isaiah 24:23; Eze 32:7,8).

Most conservative evangelicals believe this is literal, but some view this as figurative poetic expressions meaning the dramatic changing of the world and powers - like Isaiah's description of Babylon's fall in Isaiah 13:1-22.

6. Are There Any Remaining Personal Prophecies over your life or the lives of your children?

Example of a personal prophecy: Christ prophesied that Peter will die an old man. **So at least Peter did not live with the expectation that Christ would return in his lifetime.** Christ could not have come back "at any time" during Peter's lifetime (John 21:18-19, 2Peter 1:14).

Example of a personal prophecy: Christ prophesied that the story about woman pouring expensive perfume on Jesus would be told "wherever the gospel is preached throughout the whole world." (Matt 26:13)

What are we to make of the prophecies of the present day "charismatic prophets"?

They all seem view the future with many years to come. Do you know of any present day charismatic prophets who are prophesying differently?

- **Bob Jones** – Has repeated prophesied that a move of God has begun that will bring in one billion souls to Christ. That this will happen in three waves, the first of which will be young adults that will be then leaders in the second wave.
- **Bob Jones** - Bob said the Lord showed him things in the 2030's, 2040's, 2050's and 2060's. He said he can not say if the 2060's is the end, but that is all the Lord showed him.
- **John Mark Pool** – in his "Word for 2008" John speaks of events over the next 12 years.
- **Dennis Crammer** - in 1997, he published a book **The Next 100 Years** with prophetic words to 57 different nations, upcoming revivals, wars, economic conditions, miracles, weather patterns, population shifts, natural disasters, investments, governments, world religions, and more.
- **Kim Clement** – On Jan. 26th, 2007 – Kim prophesied about the the USA presidents for the next 3 terms (2009-2020)
- **Chuck Pierce** – In his 2007 book - *God's Unfolding Battle Plan* – Chuck outlines a spiritual war period from 2008 – 2015.