

# RIVER BIBLE COURSE

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## WHEN ARE THE END TIMES?

### River Bible Course - Last Day Signs

How do we know when – approximately when? That is a reasonable question and the disciples asked it. Write down their question then put Jesus' answers (verse references from Matthew 24:1-35) in the spaces provided. (vs. 2, vs. 3, vs.5-14, vs. 15-16, vs. 21-22, vs. 30-31)

"Tell us, they said, when will this ..."

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(Matt 24:3)



The above diagram gives an overview of how a long Church Age would extend from the beginning of the gospel until a time the Bible calls the 'last days.' After those times Christ would return! However the details in-between create many differences of opinion because not everyone agrees on what prophecies have been fulfilled in the past and what prophecies await fulfilment in the future.

One prediction (it seemed very unlikely at the time) has already happened and Jesus mentions a number of other things that would also come. Some are single definitive events; others are general growing conditions. Explore the following examples, jot down the signs we are told are to be expected, then tick the column which you think best describes what stage they are at today.

- Jerusalem temple destroyed Luke 21:20-24
- Matt 24:5
- Matt 24:6
- Luke 21:11
- Matt 24:9
- Matt 24:10
- 1 Timothy 4:1
- Gospel preached to world Matt 24:14
- Rom 11:25-27
- 2 Thess 2:3
- Mark 13:14
- Mark 13:19-20
- Jesus returns in clouds with angels Matt 24:30-31

already fulfilled	same as its always been	becoming more and more	not yet fulfilled
✓			
		✓	
			✓

## THE FINAL TIME MEASUREMENT

God measures to the world set times and seasons. For example, his dealing with Israel was based on a Jubilee cycle containing blocks of 49 years. (Leviticus 25:8) On the other hand, his dealing with us is called 'times of the Gentiles' (Luke 21:24) and they followed the former. No one knows how the times of the Gentiles count down (Acts 1:6-7) but we are told that at the end of these cycles comes a final span - brief yet definite – called, a 'time, times and half a time.'

Read Daniel 12:1-7 then write the last part here:

*"... and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying,*

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The term comes from an old Hebrew calendar where a year was called a 'time,' (Daniel 4:16) a 7-year block was called a 'seven,' (Daniel 9:24) and half of that was called, a 'time, times and half a time.' It means three and a half years. So, 'the last days' is the general period preceding Christ's return, including the signs (an unspecified length,) plus a final measurement as described. Unfortunately, the final part coincides with severe tribulation.

Read Daniel 7:24-25 and write down the sentence explaining this:

*"After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws.*

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Read Revelation 13:5-8 and fill in the missing words:

*"The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies*

*It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world."*

## CAN WE FIGURE THE DATE

Read what Jesus said in Matthew 24:35-36 taking special note of verse 36. Write it down, or better, learn it off by heart!

An apparent contradiction crops up however, because Daniel 12:7, 11 says the 'time, times and half a time' will count from when an abomination is set up. When that happens, people will be tempted to predict the date by adding 1290 days. (This measurement is variously called 1260 days, 1290 days, 42 months or time, times and half a time.) There are three possible alternatives to the mistake of trying to predict Christ's coming:

### View 1

The three and a half years has already happened between AD 67 - 70 when the temple was destroyed, hence will not happen again. This view is called Preterism.

### View 2

The three and a half years will come in the future but they are symbolic figures representing a time of trial. Although short, it will not be an exactly literal count.

### View 3

The rapture will happen first, so counting will not be an issue since believers won't be here. This is the pre-tribulational view.

Which view do you think best explains the final 'last-day' countdown? If possible, share these options in a moderated group discussion so that opinions can be expressed.

Answers here:

[www.5loaves2fishes.net/pdfs/answers2.pdf](http://www.5loaves2fishes.net/pdfs/answers2.pdf)