Are we in the End times? Yes, we are. But we need to understand what exactly the Bible means when it speaks about end times. We see in some of the epistles in the Bible how the apostles were already using terms like “ the last hour “, “ last times “ etc. Why is that? Were they confused? Definitely no. If they wrote that, it means that the last times were already there. Since Jesus died and resurrected, He marked the beginning of these last time, of this last opportunity that God gave the humanity through His Son. The parable of the barren fig tree in Luke 13 explains it. “But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it.“ These were the words of the keeper of the vine to the owner. This keeper was Jesus and He was pleading the Father to wait before cutting the tree. He was going to take a special care of it. And today we are living in this time of special care for us through His sacrifice. The only way that we can bear a fruit is through His sacrifice. So, it means that we are living in this “ last year “ figuratively speaking. Since He shed His blood, this last year started.

“He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these **last times** for you.“ 1 Peter 1:20

We see here by this verse that the times when Christ was manifested were called “ the last times “.Looking as well at the seven seals of which is written in Revelations chapters 5, 6, 7, which are considered as the judgment on this earth, we have to consider that probably some of them have been already opened time ago. Why not even a thousand years ago probably? I’m just saying this as an example, but why not. We are often used to think that if we see an end times sign, the end needs to come tomorrow, or in 5 years for example otherwise it’s not a sign. But have we considered that thousand years for God are not a long time and the signs can start showing long time ago before the end comes. I’m saying long time for us probably, because for Him it is not considered long. Then we need to know that there are signs accompanying the end times and others having to do with the Great tribulation. And these two I believe are different. Pestilences for example have always been there and of course Jesus spoke that they will be such in the last times. But the last times take a period of time that is much longer than what we think. “ Wars and rumors of wars “. There have been some crucial wars in these past centuries and one of them was the second world war for example. We hope no, but more like that will probably come. And when Jesus spoke of these wars in Matthew 24, He was probably also referring for these ones. So, the right question to ask is not “ Are we in the end times “, but are we close to the great tribulation for which the Bible speaks about? Because if we see the seven seals that the book of Revelations speaks about, we will see that the first 6 were hard, but the seventh ( which I believe, we haven’t experienced yet ) is the hardest. In that one it speaks about seven trumpets. Revelations 8:1-6

“When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. An I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.”

Here in this passage we probably see the Great tribulation and when this one starts, we will really have a short time.

There are two general movements or ideas about these end times. One is that the end is too far and probably all of these signs still need to happen and the other one thinks that the end is now and anything happens is taken as a sign that very soon the end will be here. I am not against to any one of them seeing that the gospel speaks clearly that no one knows the exact hour, not even the angels or the Son, but only the Father. The problem as well is that in general people have been a bit impatient with these End times prophesies. There was a time in the past when each sign, each natural disaster or war had been esteemed as a sign that the end was there already. This led people on setting up dates and periods of time when that was going to happen. This can be dangerous as we know that is not founded on a Biblical doctrine and when these predictions don’t happen may lead people to disappointment, to discouragement and a lost of faith. All of those things that happened were probably signs and things that God predicted about, but again we need to know that He measures and sees time differently than us and the very end times were still preserved for the future. It is exactly as the scripture says in 2 Peter 3:1-9

 “Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men.

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.“

The same was happening even at that time with those people. As they were seeing the prophesies of the end not to be accomplished, they were turning against God and becoming scoffers. But people with a solid foundation of faith know how to be patient regarding the prophesies and promises of God. And we need to understand that, if the end isn’t here yet, it is because God is patient toward people and want more of them to reach salvation.

On the other side we mustn’t despise the prophesies or discharge all of them, taking them as something futuristic. We need to consider the book of Revelation and its prophesies. Many people might not pay attention to the events happening now and won’t consider them, because in the past nothing significant occurred when similar disasters happened. But maybe all of these things are happening just to ring the alarm in our hearts that we need to be spiritually awaken. And again we are coming back to the fact that people measure the time of God’s promises and prophesies according to their own view of time. When we see that God is been faithfully accomplishing His promises and word throughout time.

 We also see another group of people that state that the prophesies have been already accomplished somewhere around the 1st century AD at the time of the Roman emperor Nero. Even though he might have accomplished some of them, we need to see that not all of them have been fulfilled at his time. There are things that still needs to take place.

“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.“ Matthew 24:32

Jesus spoke this short parable to take our attention on the events happening, so that we can know when His coming is approaching. He didn’t give us a date, but He told us to be in alert. And I think that Christians can read the signs, they can see more or less when the time is close, but to say the exact date is just too much. There is also disagreement in the Christian world regarding the rapture and when it will take place. Some people say it will happen before the great tribulation, and others say, it will be after it. But do you wonder why is this disagreement and why we can not know for sure? Some things are just not meant to be discovered by us now. It is because we need to be always ready, for we don’t know the hour. This is also the right attitude we can have in the faith. When the faith is still, it doesn’t grow.

It is always to consider as well that the end might come when many different prophesies fit together, meaning that the End times prophesied are going to be occurrences that probably some of them already happened before, but we will just see series of things happening at the same time and all of that is going to be just too much and more than the usual. And in these present times we have to admit that we notice things like planning the reconstruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem and the world starting to organize itself in a “ one world order “, we hear about a change in monetary system ( we wonder if this is going to be the mark of the Beast ), more natural disasters happening often and others. And it is to remember that we don’t know how long is going to take for the end to came, when these things start taking place.

 Maybe all of this happening now is just to prepare us for the times to come. Because even if this not the very end ( it might be, we don’t know it for sure ), it is just to ring an alarm in us to wake up. Because even if it doesn’t happen in this generation, then the worse will probably come in the next one or the one after it. But how are they going to be watchful, as Matthew 24:42 says, if they haven’t seen us doing it? How are they going to know about it. Somebody might say: “No, don’t worry, these things will come in a long time in the future. We are fine now. Nothing to worry about.” Even if sometimes we have said that, this is not a kind of reasoning that always needs to accompany us. The word of God says explicitly that we need to watch. It is an attitude that always needs to be in us. It is been said since that time already. Jesus commanded it for everyone. To be watchful is a condition in which our heart is found. It doesn’t consist just of start doing certain things more often than what we used to do.( even if this is also a part of it ). As it is written in the Song of Solomon 5:2 “I sleep, but my heart is **awake**…”. We see that this is a condition of the heart and it can be done in us only by faith. Think that in general most of us Christians have been living in a very comfortable way ( which is not always wrong ) and we started looking more to have a blessed and prosperous life, which the Lord obviously can give us, but what all of this have done with us is to let us forget certain principles and basics of the Christian life such as living by faith and being watchful.

“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.” Matthew 24:42

