

Like a Thief in the Night

Well, another deadline has come and gone. When May 21 ended up not being the end of the world, we were told some miscalculations had been made and October 21 would be. Yet, you're reading this on October 30. Of course, we all know these dates were wrong because the Mayans or Aztecs or someone said the end of the world will be in 2012. So, some people are running scared, wondering what might happen within the next year. There are two things we need to understand about this.

First, we need to recognize that date-setters are wrong. There is no way to search the Bible to discover when the end of the world is going to be. God has said over and over and over again it will come like a thief in the night. Consider just a handful of passages:

“Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘There is peace and security,’ then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape” –**I Thessalonians 5:1-3**

“But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” –**Luke 12:39-40**

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed” –**II Peter 3:9-10**

God has not revealed to us the day or the hour in which judgment will come upon us. Therefore, we do not need to pay date-setters and apocalyptic prognosticators any heed. However, there is a second thing we need to remember from all of this.

Second, **II Peter 3:11-12** goes on to give us some good advice:

“Since all of these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!”

I know that the date-setters are typically trying to get people to get ready right now. But in reality, all they accomplish is a feeling that we are safe until the established date. If judgment is coming on December 21, 2012, then I'm good for now and can start getting ready on December 20. But that is just not how it works.

I need to understand that the day of the Lord is coming like a thief in the night. It will come unannounced and without fanfare. There will be no herald to proclaim the day. That means it could very well be today, tomorrow, the next day. Sure, it may not be for another thousand years. But what is the best way to deal with this? Be ready right now.

Paul went on to tell the Thessalonians:

“But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober” –**I Thessalonians 5:4-6**

Paul was not telling the Thessalonian Christians that they would actually know the day and the hour ahead of time as some try to suggest. He was simply telling them that they won't be surprised by it when it happens. Why? Because they are children of light. They are walking in the light. Because they are submitting to God and surrendering to Him, they would be ready whenever it happens.

That is how we need to live. We need to surrender to God right now. We need to walk in the light right now. We need to be prepared right now. Then, while we don't know the day and hour, whenever the day and hour comes, we won't be surprised by it.

Get ready. The Lord is coming. Be prepared for Him today and you won't suffer a surprise.

--Edwin L. Crozier