

Did the World End Yesterday?

Thomas Robinson, *Living in Hope 4*, May 22, 2011

1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11

¹³ Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you **do not grieve like the rest, who have no hope.** ¹⁴ If we **believe that Jesus died and rose again,** thus also we believe that **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.** ¹⁵ According to the Lord's word, we tell you that **we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord,** will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first.** ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to **meet the Lord** in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

5:¹ Now, brothers and sisters, **about times and dates we do not need to write to you,** ² for you know very well that **the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.** ³ While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ **You are all children of the light and children of the day.** We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but **let us be awake** and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but **to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.** ¹⁰ He died for us so that, **whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.**

¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Genesis 5:6-11

⁶ When **Seth** had lived 105 years, he fathered **Enosh.** ⁷ Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁸ Thus all the days of **Seth** were 912 years, and he died.

⁹ When **Enosh** had lived 90 years, he fathered **Kenan.** ¹⁰ Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹ Thus all the days of **Enosh** were 905 years, and he died.

Genesis 7:1, 4-5, 11

¹ Then the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, ... ⁴ For **in seven days I will send rain on the earth** forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." ⁵ And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.... ¹¹ **In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month,** on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened..

2 Peter 3:8

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that **with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.**

Christian Hope and Predictions of the End

We are in a series on Living in Hope and have just passed a date widely advertised as “Judgment Day” – May 21, 2011. Sobering to watch people making great sacrifices because they trusted a prediction from Harold Camping of Family Radio. He called people to leave all churches: Satan reigns in all churches from 1988: follow F.R.

This is the latest in a long tendency to desire to predict the end of the world, to know the future in advance, to get control over the great uncertainty of our human life.

William Miller, Oct 22, 1844, became Seventh Day Adventists. Charles Russell, Oct. 1914, became Jehovah’s Witnesses. John Darby, Dispensationalism, (rapture, tribulation, millennium). Scofield Bible. Church is plan B. 1948. Prophecy conferences.

In popular culture “apocalyptic” themes are major movie themes: asteroids strike earth, ice age returns, computer/machine takeover; nuclear war; invasion by aliens; Mayan calendar for 2012: the human battle against destruction. Sometimes positive vision.

“Scripture Guarantees It” – Reading the Bible

Judgment day prediction was supposedly “guaranteed” by the Bible. Camping is attractive for his Bible knowledge shown in “Open Forum.” But how you use the Bible is crucial. Camping’s use of the Bible focuses in his distinct framework of numerological puzzles.

He put together the patriarch lists in Genesis in his own way (not used in scripture); calculated his day of creation (11,013 b.c.) and the flood (4,990 b.c.). Decided the 7-day warning before the flood was 7,000 years before rapture: 2nd month, 17th day.

It sounds impressive, but is based on nothing except his own clever puzzle making. Certainly not Scripture’s Guarantee. But he assures people that it’s only the Bible.

We want “to study and follow the Bible” because through it we come to know Jesus the Messiah and the grace of God. But it is important to let the Bible set the agenda.

Beware snippet citations of scripture that an interpreter pulls together to prove a point.

Hope with Assurance and Boldness

Paul in 1 Thess shows the distinct character of Christian Hope. It is the understanding of our life and future based on realizing the meaning of the event of Jesus’ death and resurrection. It is applying that core event, center of faith, to our struggles with grief. Jesus conquered death in his resurrection. That victory applies to all who die in Christ.

That victory also will one day be complete. The images of the *parousia*/second coming give our minds images to work with drawn from human experience. The Lord descends to bring the power and reality of God’s realm to earth. Earth and Heaven will be one.

The image is not of the saved being raptured and leaving earth; just the opposite.

The light of that future victory embodied in Jesus’ resurrection shines now to illumine life.

Believers don’t escape from life but live to the full, thinking, working with love & hope.

Living Expectantly Without Knowing a Date

The future belongs ultimately to God. He alone has the power to intervene radically, to bring an old world to an end by creating a new creation. Defeating sin and death.

He invites us into making that future. He does everything necessary in Jesus – Grace. He tells us and shows us enough for us to know his heart, values, purpose, his ultimate goal. But he also leaves us with real options, uncertainty, real choice. This is about us coming to real adulthood as creative, moral, and loving people. We choose how we will live our lives in relation to God’s grace: rejecting, ignoring, enjoying, growing. We act and our lives and actions matter. We receive His Spirit and his eternal life begins in us.

He urges us to live watchfully, expectantly, knowing we are only assured of the present moment. Paul: “*We who are alive...*” We never know where we are in God’s own time.