

## ~ The End of the World? ~

Recently the Christian community contemplated and debated the predictions that May 21, 2011, would be the end of the world. Some expected that this would be the day of Jesus' return and their rapture to heaven. Others stated that no one can know the hour (Mark 13:32) and that they must always be ready. A majority of both groups believe that there are many worldwide events pointing to the nearness of the Lord's promised return. What has been the outcome? Whether it's a new date—October 21, 2011—or simply listening to the world news, many Christians are drawn to reading the Scriptures and to asking questions.

For your consideration we wish to share with you a brief Bible study on this topic. The following is a March 2011 newsletter reprint from the Bible Students Congregation of New Brunswick.

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### ***"Are We Coming to... The End of the World?"***

"And there shall be...upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity;... Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke 21: 25-26)

Certainly, in all of man's history, there has always been trouble. But today's distress upon the nations seems unprecedented "as never

was since there was a nation" (Daniel 12:1).

Besides nuclear proliferation there is international terror—when "the weak say, I am strong" (Joel 3:10). The global financial crisis has swelled the ranks of the unemployed not only in the United States, but also in Europe and elsewhere in the developing world. "Covered" corruption in high places is being "revealed" everywhere (Luke 12:2). Instead of moving toward "a better world," according to UNICEF, 22,000 children die each day due to poverty. Record high food prices caused by greed, corruption in government, wars and poor weather have created social unrest already resulting in food riots across the globe even destabilizing some governments.

### **The May 21, 2011, Prediction is Baseless**

No wonder many are worried about predictions of dates for the end of the world! One "prophet" of end time dates predicts May 21, 2011, as the date for Jesus' return and the "rapture" of the saved—and the destruction of the earth October 21, 2011. First of all, this producer of a popular Christian radio program bases his mysterious calculations on very arbitrary premises.

This "prophet" uses a "day" to represent 1,000 years when he calculates 7,000 years from Noah's day based on the seven days Noah

waited in the finished ark for the rain to start! In fact, a “day” in Scripture can represent 1,000 years. But Apostle Peter was referring specifically to the “Day of Judgment” as being 1,000 years in length. This “prophet” has totally missed the Apostle’s point—the Day of Judgment is itself a thousand years.

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (2 Peter 3:7-8)

### **The Day of Judgment, a Thousand Years**

Actually, the Day of Judgment is something the world of mankind needs to look forward to! It is the same time that Satan will be bound a thousand years “to deceive the nations no more” (Revelation 20:1-3). It is the same thousand years that Christ and his Bride, the Church, will rule over and bless the “poor groaning creation.” Humanity is waiting—even though it doesn’t know for what! “For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19 NAS). In the “Day” of God’s Kingdom when finally fully set up, mankind will gratefully say:

“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is

the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” (Isaiah 25:9)

### **Judgment Day— Opportunity for All**

The “Day of Judgment” (Greek, *krisis*) does not denote a sentencing for what people have done under the present reign of Satan, the “god of this world.” He has “blinded” earth’s billions through the centuries (2 Corinthians 4:4). A crisis can go either way—as *krisis* is defined in Strong’s Concordance #2920: “Decision for or against, by extension, a tribunal.” Rather, the Day of Judgment will allow a time for earth’s ransomed billions to “learn righteousness” (Isaiah 26:9) during the time of the “healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:1, 2).

Under very favorable conditions—with Satan out of the way—and a sympathetic royal Priesthood of Jesus and his Church (Revelation 1:6; 5:10), people will be rewarded for each step in the right direction. In other words, all will have a wonderful opportunity to recover from their weaknesses and depravity resulting from inherited and environmental causes.

### **A “Highway of Holiness” for Mankind to Return**

Instead of a Narrow Way that the Christian now walks in an unfriendly world with Satan ruling (Matthew 7:14), the world of mankind will walk on a Highway of Holiness (Isaiah 35:8). The earth also will be abundantly environmentally welcoming: Isaiah 35:1-10, “The wilderness and the solitary place

shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing... Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.... And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Although this "Highway" will be for the "unclean" and "wayfaring," they will not continue always as unclean. The morally and physically "blind" and "lame," in fact, will be healed. The "lion" Satan will not influence and tempt (1 Peter 5:8). Neither will any beastly government be an oppressive issue any

more for mankind. Mankind will "return" to God in the sense that all were condemned and alienated because of father Adam's sin. But because of Jesus providing a "ransom" for Adam, all will have the opportunity to return to fellowship with God. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22). Yes, the "ransomed of the LORD shall return."

True, not every single human being will respond and develop perfect love for God and fellow man on this Highway of Holiness. Some will only give "feigned [outward] obedience" (Psalm 66:3). But their true heart condition will be revealed in the "Little Season" after the Millennium when Satan is loosed. They will not gain eternal life, but neither will they have an eternity of torture. But they will be mercifully destroyed in "the lake of fire" which the Bible tells us is the "Second Death." Revelation 20:14-15, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire [annihilation, not torture]."

### **Days of Noah—**

#### **Like the Days of the Son of Man**

The return of Jesus is not to be 7,000 years after Noah's Flood. But the Scriptures actually do link the whole time Noah was building the Ark—more than one hundred years—to the time when Jesus would return. People were oblivious to what was happening in Noah's

Day, just as they are now oblivious during the presence (Greek, *parousia*) of Jesus the Son of Man.

“And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.” (Luke 17:25-28 NAS)

Not until the actual flood came were the people able to believe what was happening! Then although all society was destroyed, the same earth was repopulated. That first “world” or era of time ended: “...the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water” (2 Peter 3:6 NAS).

### **The Ending of the “Present Evil World”**

Prophecy watchers today recognize the signs that, “this present evil world” will be ending soon (Galatians 1:4). This whole social order—both the ecclesiastical religious “heavens” and the society and governments of “earth”—will be replaced. So Jesus encouraged his followers that when upon the earth there is great “dismay among the nations...perplexity...men fainting from fear and expectation of the things which are coming upon the world” that we should “lift up” our heads “because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:25-28).

Is it because only Christians will be saved? No, the closing of the Christian Age will mean the dawn-

ing of a new Age of Blessing for all people in a Millennium, a thousand years, the “World to Come” (Hebrews 2:5;6:5).

### **Age of Blessing Opening for World**

The ending of this old world means the opening of the “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13). “Earth” and “Heavens” are symbolic. When the Church as the heavenly “Seed” of Abraham is completed, it will then be ready to “bless all the families of the earth.”

Galatians 3:29, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Genesis 28:14, “In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

Thus after being blessed themselves, the Church as the “firstfruits” (James 1:18) will be able to bless the whole world as the rest of the fruits of salvation!

### **The Earth Will Remain Forever**

But the same radio program “prophet,” (using Revelation 9:5, 10) has also predicted the destruction of the Earth on October 21, 2011, “five months” after his “rapture date.” But what he has quoted is summarized in the Bible as only the first of three “woes.” Two more woes are to follow, then “plagues.” What could possibly follow the destruction of Earth? No, his interpretation and predictions are not only baseless, but also completely out of context. Besides, when the Bride of Christ is glori-

fied, completed and “ready,” she with Jesus will offer life to all mankind. “The Spirit and the Bride say, come...and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 19:7; 22:17).

The Bible assures us that the physical earth will never be destroyed! Neither should one fear the ominous predictions based on the “Mayan calendar” ending in 2012. (The astronomically wise Mayans had a four-sided pyramid each with 91 steps leading to a platform:  $91 \times 4 + 1 = 365$ .) Just because the 365-day year was known by the Mayans, one cannot predict “the end of the world” based on the limits of their calendar. God’s calendar, His Plan for Mankind, is forever! In fact, the Bible chronology and time prophecies have already been verified by visible fulfillments—which validate our

faith.† Our Earth, in fact, will be a Paradise home restored for mankind which was lost with Eden.

“A generation goes and a generation comes, But the earth remains forever.” (Ecclesiastes 1:4 NAS)

That is why Jesus taught us to pray for the Kingdom on Earth! “...Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven...” But first the Day of Wrath will come upon the world to soften and mellow and humble and prepare all to cry out from the heart—Hosanna in the Highest!

† See Studies in the Scriptures - *The Time is at Hand & Thy Kingdom Come*.

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For expanded reading material on our Lord’s return, click [“I Will Come Again”](#). ♦

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