

Are You Ready? part 1

Over the ages and I think especially in the last 100 years or so there has been lots of speculation in regards to the end of the world and the second coming of Christ. The popular term scholars use to describe the subject is eschatology, which simply means the study of end-times or end-times prophecy.

Can you say Eschatology? [ˌeskəˈtäləjē]

Eschatology has been the subject of many books, movies and news stories over the last few decades. Some have even dared to put a date on Jesus' arrival. I find it ironic that the people who proclaim to know these details, the ones who seem to know all there is to know about what the Bible says regarding the end-times are the ones picking the dates when Jesus himself said this:

Matthew 24: 36 "However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.

Of course, these scholars would be able to make the best guess, but for anyone to try to pretend to know such information is being quite presumptuous, and that's putting it nicely. Here's something we do know:

37 "When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day. 38 In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. 39 People didn't realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes.

Some scholars say we'll be raptured prior to the tribulation period, some say during and some say after. Some don't believe we'll be raptured at all. I used to believe strongly that

we'll be raptured prior to the tribulation. The reason I believed it is because that's just what I was taught and it seemed like a really good idea to me. I want to make it clear that my prior belief was NOT because I knew the Bible really well; honestly, I didn't read it much at all back then.

We need to be ready!

Ironically, now that I've read through the Bible several times I have no opinion. Although I had a "pre-trib" bias, I am much less certain about the events at the end of this age. This is OK with me and I am much more comfortable with my agnostic position than I was comfortable with my beliefs in a pre-tribulation rapture. What I do have a firm belief in, as I've never had before is that the second coming will happen. We need to be ready, regardless of our eschatological viewpoints, and that God cares infinitely more about our heart for Him than He does our intellectual knowledge about the end-times.

By the way, the Great Tribulation as many people like to call it comes from Daniel chapter 12, here is an excerpt, read the full chapter for more details.

the Great Tribulation

Daniel 12: 8 I heard what he said, but I did not understand what he meant. So I asked, "How will all this finally end, my lord?"

9 But he said, "Go now, Daniel, for what I have said is kept secret and sealed until the time of the end. 10 Many will be purified, cleansed, and refined by these trials. But the wicked will continue in their wickedness, and none of them will understand. Only those who are wise will know what it means.

11 "From the time the daily sacrifice is stopped and the sacrilegious object that causes desecration is set up to be worshiped, there will be 1,290 days. 12 And blessed are those

who wait and remain until the end of the 1,335 days!

13 "As for you, go your way until the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days, you will rise again to receive the inheritance set aside for you."

I believe that the study of eschatology, for some at least, has become a distraction at best and at worst an obsession (idol), which is an absolute shame. Some teachers seem to have a greater concern about when their Lord is coming back rather than enjoying the blessing of knowing Him and spending time with Him now. When we really get to know Him these details become less and less important. I enjoy discussion of these events, but they no longer dominate my thoughts.

In part 2, I'll give further reasons why we need to be ready and where our focus should lie in the meantime.

God Bless!

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