

HERE A SIGN, THERE A SIGN, EVERYWHERE A SIGN?

Some people tend to go a little “sign crazy”. Now indeed, the “trends” of the time are evident as we do “see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:25). But this is nothing new. All down through the Church Age ever since the inspired writings of Paul the coming of Christ has always been presented as being imminent.

**Titus 2:13 (NKJV)**

**13** looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Looking for the coming of Christ is not a novel idea! This has been the hope of believers down through the Church Age (1 Thess. 1:10). Paul himself said, “we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:15). Note that in the little word “we” Paul included himself – meaning that he expected to be alive when Christ returns. This is ever the imminent HOPE of God’s people down through the Church Age. Christ may well come in our lifetime, and yet He may not. We don’t know when He will come. We as the Church are not given a date or even a definitive SIGN. We are called to LIVE READY all the time!

“Sign hysteria” reminds me of spiritual warfare hysteria where some professing Christians think they see a demon behind every tree (so to speak). Instead of properly focusing on the Lord they are out of focus on demons. Likewise, some tend to be so focused on signs that they are not properly focused on Christ Himself.

The great thing about the coming of the Lord is CHRIST HIMSELF. It is indeed precious to God when His people love HIS appearing (2 Tim. 4:8). To those who “eagerly wait for HIM He will appear a second time” (Heb. 9:28 – emphasis mine).

Christ has promised to return for His Church (Jn. 14:1-3) and we are to be constantly looking for that wonderful event simply because we are longing to see Him and be with Him. As Peter says, “whom having not seen you love.” (1 Pet. 1:8)

But while we watch and wait we are not setting any dates! Rather our calling is to LIVE READY. Every day we should think “PERHAPS TODAY!”

However it seems that any time a significant event develops in relation to Israel some people who know just enough Bible to be dangerous suddenly say, "This is it, we are NOW in the last days."

In truth, we have been in the "last days" all down through the Church Age (Heb. 1:1-2). And the Church has been watching and waiting all this time.

After a while the world has grown weary of this routine where in relation to some latest development God's people then begin to clamor that "THE END IS NEAR"! They openly MOCK saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Pet. 3:4). And on top of this from time to time errant teachers rise up and claim to have figured out the code to the timing of the Lord's return which always proves to be a sham!

It is noted that God consistently sets specific dates for His program related to Israel (cf. Daniel 9:24-27). But in contrast the Church has no dates. It began suddenly and signlessly (Acts 2) and it will conclude the same way (1 Thess. 4:13-17). After the resurrection Jesus specifically told the disciples, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority." (Acts 1:7). This is VERY CLEAR! The Church is not given dates or signposts like Israel is.

In Matthew 24 Christ introduced a NEW aspect to His Second Coming that was previously unrevealed. The Old Testament contains much prophecy about the Second Coming of Christ when He will return to the earth. However, in addition to this in Matthew 24 Jesus introduced ANOTHER PHASE to His Second Coming. He showed us that not only are there TWO comings there are also TWO phases to His Second coming.

In Matthew 24 Jesus introduced the FIRST PHASE of His Second Coming (what we commonly call the Rapture) by saying it will come as a THIEF in the night (Matt. 24:42-44). That is significant! Never before had this been brought out. No Old Testament prophet ever spoke like this. And the reason for this is because the second phase comes with all manner of signs, but NOT the first phase.

The rest of the NT then builds on this coming as a thief analogy which was first introduced by Christ. Paul, John, and Peter all borrow from Jesus in this regard.

Thieves come without warning, without signs, without any heads up. This fits perfectly in illustrating how Christ will come before the Tribulation Period at the Rapture of the Church. It will come unexpectedly because there are no clear signposts to indicate its arrival. Yes, we see the day coming generally in that we see the last days trends (which I will deal with in my next post), but there are no definitive signposts (cf. Heb. 10:25; 1 Jn. 2:18).

Our calling throughout the WHOLE Church Age is to LIVE READY!  
Perhaps Today!  
Maranatha!