
That Dreadful Day No One Wants to Talk About

By David Wilkerson

February 5, 2007 “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Peter 3:10–14).

A noted TV evangelist stunned our country recently with a prophetic warning. He said God revealed to him that a sudden terrorist attack is coming soon to the United States, and that multitudes will be killed. A similar prophecy was given nationwide by another respected TV evangelist.

In recent weeks I have received prophecies from unknown but godly ministers who are crying out this same kind of message. These shepherds are warning, “A great disaster is coming upon us soon and suddenly. It will be so devastating, the world is going to shudder. Things will never be the same.”

News commentators have now joined this chorus. I repeatedly hear news broadcasters predicting the same thing: a terrible world crisis is about to happen. I believe these premonitions by the secular world are the Spirit of God’s way of warning nonbelievers. Now even the wickedest people on earth feel in their souls an inner nagging that an awful, fearful day is inevitable and fast approaching.

Right now, the world is in frightening disorder. I think of the horrible atrocity taking place in Darfur in Sudan. Over 300,000 people have died there, and 2 million others have become refugees. As the world looks on in horror, unable to stop the slaughter, a corrupt United Nations sits paralyzed. Much of the food aid goes to support insurgent military forces.

Terrorism is escalating, and world powers are confused. The U.N. is being called “Mission Impossible,” with its Security Council hopelessly divided. Meanwhile, Iran and North Korea are racing to build nuclear arsenals, with Iran threatening to wipe Israel off the map. To these renegade nations, any threat of U.N. sanctions is a joke. They openly scoff at that body’s solemn resolutions.

All this time, China is fast rising in global power, determined to replace America as the world’s sole superpower. The Chinese government is pouring billions of dollars into Africa, South America, the Far East and Latin America, buying the influence of nations. Now it seems that everything is being made in or by China.

Who is listening to all of these prophetic warnings and heeding them? The nations of the world and their leaders aren’t listening to all the alarms that are sounding. Most will not likely even hear the warnings. Like the stiff-necked kings in the Bible who tore up the prophets’ warnings, they scoffed at what was being prophesied to them.

Indeed, all haters of Christ are scoffing. The secular world mocks the preachers who speak these dire warnings, calling them doomsayers, saying they’re out of their minds. Just as Scripture predicts, these

present-day mockers claim, “All things continue as they have from the beginning of time. Nothing is going to stop the world’s prosperity from continuing. All is well.”

The fact is, those who love the things of this world are going to shrug off every such warning and prophecy. This is true also of numbers of Christians. If a believer is given to the pursuit of wealth and success — if he wants an easy religion, one of cheap grace — he’ll turn his ear from a hard-sounding message.

Personally, I am shocked by the many ministers of God who openly despise those who warn of perilous times ahead. I don’t understand how they can dismiss every prophetic message being sounded. Think of it:

- Right now, national security leaders are sending out alerts in the U.S. — yellow, orange and red alerts including aviation warnings.
- Top security people are warning of a possible dirty bomb to be set off by terrorists, with multitudes at risk.
- In New York City, every security agency has been running drills for when an attack occurs. News reports continually state that this attack is not a matter of “if” but “when.” Its occurrence is but a matter of time.
- Health experts are warning of worldwide pandemics, predicting that millions upon millions will die. HIV/AIDS is already ravaging the world, engulfing most of Africa.

How is the body of Christ responding to these warnings? In many churches, there is no mention of atrocities, of terrorism, of tragic pandemics. Instead, the messages being brought forth from those pulpits are comprised of motivational pep talks, jokes, entertainment. It’s all spiritual baby food, with no word spoken about coming judgments.

Yet the handwriting is on the wall, declared by Scripture and echoed by the world: a dreadful day is ahead.

What, exactly, are religious people being told during this crucial time of warning? More and more preachers are urging their people, “God wants you to get rich. He wants you to go first class. So, get in on it now.” They are falling into the same money-focused gospel that Jesus drove from the temple in his day.

I believe God loves to bless his people, and there are promises of increase to those who give to the needs of the poor, widows and fatherless. It is not a sin to be prosperous. Many financially blessed believers support missions and charitable works around the world.

Still, the Holy Spirit is right now pleading with the world, through many prophetic voices, as well as through the world’s own voices. A dreadful day of reckoning is at the door, yet most people — including multitudes of Christians — don’t want to talk or even think about it.

If so few are listening, then who are these prophecies meant for? Why would the Lord deliver them, if so few will give heed? Who in the world is going to hear these warnings?

I think of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and other Old Testament prophets who warned about the fall of Babylon, the world power at the time. Prophets also spoke of coming destruction upon the Chaldeans, the

Medes, the Persians, Tyre. Yet these prophecies never reached those heathen nations or their leaders.

Even backslidden Israel scoffed at the voices crying in the wilderness. So, why did God bring these warnings at all? Who would believe such reports? And to whom is God speaking?

The Lord is always speaking to his faithful remnant. Throughout history, God has always sent prophets with a warning to wake up his sleeping bride. He reveals the lateness of the hour in such warnings in order to wake up a slumbering ministry and church.

While God speaks through men with national pulpits, many times the Lord has to find humble, unknown, hidden watchmen to deliver his warnings. He's picked preachers who have no personal agenda, men who are shut up with God in prayer. These ministers are despised and ridiculed as ignorant and unlearned. Yet they are unafraid of reproach. Indeed, they are the "weak" sent by God to confound the wise.

And only those listeners who aren't in love with the world will hear the prophetic warnings these prophets bring. Only those who yearn for the coming of the Lord will have this message ring true in their hearts.

Here is why God warns his faithful ones: *it is so that when sudden disaster strikes, they are not swept away with fear.* When that dreadful event comes, God's people must know that what has happened is not an accident or a random act of ruthless nations. They are to have the peace of Christ in their hearts, knowing that our God is still master of the universe.

In this way, the Lord's people will have been warned. And they won't panic when other men's hearts fail them for fear at all the frightful things they see coming on the earth.

The apostle Peter tells us that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," or suddenly (2 Peter 3:10). Peter says the day of the Lord won't be one of joy, but of dread. It promises the sudden, unexpected "*dissolving of all things, with fervent heat.*"

According to Peter, the day will come suddenly, "as a thief in the night." And it will be accompanied by a great noise. Imagine it: the very elements will melt with fervent heat, as a great fire consumes and dissolves all in its path.

What are we to make of such an event? One respected theologian has written, "This sounds like a nuclear holocaust." Regardless of whether this man is right, it is clear that Peter is speaking of a cataclysmic, global event.

So, to whom is the apostle addressing these words? To whom is he prophesying? Peter has written this epistle to "the beloved," the faithful remnant of believers: "Beloved, I now write unto you to stir up your minds by way of a reminder" (2 Peter 3:1).

In short, Peter is telling his readers that he's about to prophesy a message no one would want to hear — no one, that is, but the beloved remnant. And, according to Peter, it would be a word so awesome, it would be widely mocked and scoffed at. He tells these believers, in effect, "The mockers are going to come. And they'll scoff at the prophecies of both Old Testament prophets and present-day apostles."

Note what Peter says next: “The present heavens and earth, by his same word, are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (3:7, my paraphrase).

Here is the same word that God gave about Noah’s generation, which he judged by sending a flood. It is also the same word that God gave about Sodom and Gomorrah, a society that was judged with fire. Now, Peter says, this same word comes from God, who holds “in reserve a great dissolving fire for this present day” (3:7, my paraphrase).

When we hear a message like this, something in us rises up and says, “It’s all too much to bear.” Whenever we hear words like Peter’s, our first response is to recoil. We think, “There’s so much bad news today, so much that brings stress into our lives. So many tragedies are coming at us from all over the world. Why do we have to hear this message now?”

Indeed, many Christians might cringe at the message Peter delivers here. Inside they would wonder, “Why do we have to be reminded of this? Why not just let it happen?”

But Peter gives us the reason why this message must be heard: “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” (2 Peter 3:11).

Here is the heart of Peter’s prophecy. In light of the sudden dissolving of all things, God’s beloved ought to check their own behavior. Those who look for the fulfillment of Bible prophecy ought to be conformed to the image of Christ, in conduct, conversation and thought.

Peter said the Lord is not slack about his promise, as some men count slackness. In other words, God hasn’t yet released the fire that’s in store, and for one reason. It isn’t just to allow the cup of iniquity to overflow. No, the Lord withholds judgment because of his everlasting patience toward sinful men, “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (3:9).

However, make no mistake: the fire is coming. And for that reason, we are to “be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (3:14).

Tragically, multitudes today are conforming to this world rather than to Christ. Many churches look more and more like the secular world, proclaiming nothing more than a message of self-help. You can’t tell the difference between such churches and most secular motivational programs.

What a tragedy, to be going the wrong way in such a time as this. Yet, despite all these things, Christ is calling his beloved to draw closer to him, and to examine their walk in the light of his Word.

Paul and Peter — and even Jesus himself — delivered hard prophetic messages during troubled times. When Christ walked the earth, he too warned of a great disaster to come upon Jerusalem and Israel. In fact, during the times of the apostles — especially in Paul’s day — there was much “Jesus bashing” because of his difficult warnings.

When Paul came on the scene, flesh-driven doctrines of devils were sweeping through the church. False prophets had risen up and developed followings in the Pentecostal churches. Ungodly preachers appeared, pretending to be angels of light and bringing doctrines of demons.

Meanwhile, in the outside world, homosexuality was rampant. Throughout the Roman Empire, sexual

perversions and sensual pursuits were the rule of the day. The self was exalted, flesh was worshipped, and pride held reign. Even the temple in Jerusalem had become a den of thieves, its shepherds focused solely on money.

Paul said of his society, "Evil men are suppressing God's Word, given over to reprobate minds. They are envious, greedy, fornicators, full of strife and covetousness, gossipers, insolent, arrogant, inventors of wickedness, unloving, unmerciful" (see Romans 1:28-31).

It sounds to me as if Paul were describing our own times. He was aware of the Lord's prophecy about the total destruction coming. The day was coming when Jerusalem would be on fire. The temple and the city would be razed to the ground.

That holocaust struck in 70 A.D., just as Paul and Jesus had prophesied. It was a scene so horrible, a tragedy of such epic proportions, no one could have imagined it beforehand.

What was the apostles' message at the brink of the coming dreadful day before them? Here is the message that Peter preached:

"Seeing ye know these things before, beware [be on your guard] lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:17-18).

Here is the message that Paul preached:

"Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10).

Considering the apostles' messages, what might we expect the word to be for a society about to be judged in our own time?

We find that word coming from Paul, and it's directed to Christ's beloved: "My prayer for you is that you pursue intimacy, grow in spiritual understanding, and walk worthy of Christ" (Colossians 1:9-10, my paraphrase).

So, what is required for such a pleasing walk? Paul tells us:

"Put on therefore, as the chosen of God, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, whoever has a complaint against another; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you" (3:12-13, my paraphrase).

Paul is telling us in so many words: "Here is my word to you in these critical times. In light of the hard times you know are coming, you are to measure your walk with the Lord."

In other words, we are to ask ourselves: "Am I becoming more like Christ? Am I growing more patient, or more quick-tempered? More kind and gentle, or more mean and argumentative? More tender and forgiving, or more bitter, holding onto grudges? Do I 'bear with others'? Do I put up with the weaknesses and faults of those near to me, or do I have to be always right?"

Paul is suggesting that, in light of such a coming day, it doesn't matter what works you accomplish or what charitable deeds you do. No matter how kind you are to strangers, no matter how many souls you save, this question remains: Are you becoming more loving, patient, forgiving, forbearing?

Examining your walk with Christ means looking not so much at what you are doing, as at what you are becoming.

How can we conform to this kind of Christ-like walk? Such a walk cannot be achieved by human effort alone. It won't happen by self-determination, merely saying, "I am going to become that kind of believer." Rather, it happens by the work of the Holy Spirit, through faith in his Word.

First, we read these words and believe them to be God's call to us, to examine ourselves. So we ask the Spirit to show us who we truly are, and measure ourselves by his Word. Then we ask the Holy Spirit to help us change.

You see, we all are being conformed, whether it is to Christ or to the world. And the older any Christian gets, the more he or she should be like Christ. Our marriages should not be hell on earth. We need to be taking on our spouses' hurt, becoming servants to one another. Children in Christian homes should see their parents changing, becoming more understanding, loving and kind. That is what defines maturity in Christ.

Now I understand what Peter and Paul are saying, which is: "Don't fear what is ahead. Keep God's Word in remembrance at all times, through all things. And meanwhile, let the Holy Spirit make you into a different, more Christ-like person."

God has ordained that all our suffering, all our afflictions, all our severe testings draw us closer to himself. Indeed, pain and suffering will either harden you or bring you to a place of total dependence on the Father's love. You'll either quit praying and trusting, or you'll cast all your cares and future on him.

We have been given the inner strength to be able to say, "None of those things moves me." That is God's message to us in these times. Hallelujah! ☐

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