

What Kind of People We Ought to Be

✖ There has been a lot of speculation about the end times lately, especially in light of recent storms. I saw firsthand the devastation and carnage that accompanied the fierce, deadly tornadoes that swept across the South and the Midwest this spring.

I've seen lots of disasters in my lifetime, but the scenes that I witnessed in Alabama and Missouri were among the most horrific I've encountered anywhere.

Many are asking if the seemingly growing numbers of such catastrophes could be an indication that the return of Christ is drawing nearer. Jesus said that such tragedies—in addition to wars and persecution—are indeed the “beginning of birth pains” (Matthew 24:8), and these certainly appear to be increasing in frequency and intensity.

Just a few months ago, the owner of a Christian radio network forecast that May 21 would be “Judgment Day” for the world. I was amazed at the extensive national coverage given to this prediction, even though the Bible says that only the Father in Heaven knows the exact date of the Savior's

return. It was
hard to view a news program or read a newspaper without a
prominent
reference to this event.

While I'm grateful that there has been
some renewed discussion given to the return of the King, I'm
afraid that
such a superficial focus can divert our attention from the
primary
thrust of Scripture regarding His coming—are we living holy,
godly lives
on earth, diligently waiting and working until He comes?

As
Peter described the day of the Lord when the “heavens will
disappear
with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire” (2 Peter
3:10, NIV), he
wrote what kind of impact such news should have on us now.
“Since
everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people
ought you
to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look
forward to the
day of God” (2 Peter 3:11-12).

One day—and I hope it will be
soon—Christ will return and establish a new heaven and a new
earth. He
will come in the fullness of His glory, to execute His wrath
on those
who have rejected Him and to receive into His glorious
presence those
who have believed in Him. It will be a moment in time like no
other—the
final moment for the world as it now.

Since we will be made fully
like Christ at His coming, our lives on earth should be a
constant
process of allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us into His
likeness.

“But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him,
for we
shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him
purifies himself, just as he is pure” (1 John 3:2-3).

We don't know when Christ
will return, but we do know that He will come again. Are we
ready to
meet Him? Have our sins been washed away by the blood of the
Lamb? If
not, our names are not written in the Book of Life, and we
will be cast
forever into the lake of fire.

If we have trusted in His atoning
work on the cross, are we cultivating a deep, abiding
relationship with
Him so that we may be “confident and unashamed before him at
his coming” (1 John
2:28)? If so, then we may echo with the saints, “Amen. Come,
Lord Jesus”
(Revelation 22:20).

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