

What can we learn from 'May 21, 2011'?



For a number of months, Bible teachers at the 'Christian Family Radio' have been teaching that,

according to their calculations, the rapture of the church and the beginning of God's judgment will take place on Saturday, May 21, 2011. Many Christians around the world who are regular listeners to this radio network have taken this prediction very seriously. I have heard that some non-Christians, fearing God's possible imminent judgment, have surrendered their lives to the Lord Jesus. Others prepared their hearts just in case the prediction may turn out to be true. What was your reaction? What crossed your mind as you went to bed on Friday evening, May 20?

Secular news reporters and editorial writers have now found a new group to scorn and ridicule. And what is your reaction? It is easy to join such secular critics, but before you do so, it is worth taking a few moments to reflect: Unlike such secular critics, we Christians take the promises of the Lord Jesus seriously. He said, "In my Father's house are many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:2-3). They scorn and ridicule because they don't believe that Christ will return. But you and I believe Him and are looking forward to His return, aren't we?

The apostle Paul explains: "... who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God,

and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thes. 4:15-17). This promise, which some refer to as 'the rapture of the church,' is firmly based in God's Word. What would have happened to your soul if the Lord Jesus would have come last Saturday? The date will remain a surprise, but His return is certain. Are we ready?



For me there are a few lessons to be learnt from this sad 'May 21' hype: I should continue to resist any urge to place names and dates on future Biblical prophecies. That, if not careful, I can also be led astray by error. My favorite teacher, an international Christian organization or a large church movement may usually teach the Word of God for blessing, but this is no guarantee that the Lord God approves of everything they do or teach. However time consuming, I should follow the lead of our brotherhood at Berea, who, "examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11).

Last Sunday, in our local church, we prayed for our brothers and sisters around the world who had set their hope on 'May 21' and who must now feel confused and disappointed. That the Lord would protect their hearts. That with a sense of humility they may recognize their error and mature through this experience. The Lord's desire remains, that all true Christians around the world, as His bride, may continue to hear His voice saying "Yes, I am coming soon" and that with loving and expecting hearts we may continue to respond "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:17,20).

Philip Nunn, 25 May 2011
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