

Being Divinely Warned

By T. Sean Sullivan

Some recent events have peaked people's curiosity about the end of the world. There are some people talking about a Mayan calendar being discovered—a calendar that supposedly ends in December of 2012; also, a recent prediction about the end from Mr. Harold Camping. Mr. Camping predicted the end to come on May 21—this, of course, failed. He has now has reset his prediction to October 21st of this year.

There are many-mixed messages being circulated and with this there is a distinct possibility of confusion—and certainly fear. Many claim some special insight to the end-date and we need to be careful not to get caught up in the swell. We need to put our confidence in God and not man; even with this being understood, some are looking for a Divine warning. We know that God has issued such warnings in the past. So let's consider some Divine warnings that have been issued. So we might know what to do, when we realize our warning. Let's go to the Scriptures to consider these points.

Noah was "Divinely Warned." The world surrounding Noah and his family was increasingly wicked. We find the world at a place where God was preparing to shun every one of them (Gen. 6:1-7). Every person was following the evil intents of their heart—except Noah (Gen. 6:8-12). Because of Noah's courage and determination we are told that Noah "found grace in the eyes of the eyes of the Lord" (v.8). Having found favor in God's sight, God provided Noah with a divine warning of the impending destruction and a plan for deliverance from that destruction (Gen. 6:13-21). This plan involved many specifics and required Noah's willingness to obey and to follow the God's plan.

What Noah did about this warning, made all the difference. We are told that Noah did all that God commanded (Gen. 6:22). Consider how the Hebrew writer records this in Hebrews 11:7, "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household". Noah moved with godly fear, and was delivered from destruction--what would you have done?

Joseph was "Divinely Warned." The time of the earthly birth of Jesus Christ, according to the scriptures, was the perfect time for His arrival (Gal. 4:4, it was, "the fullness of time"). There were great things happening in the world, which would allow for His message to spread.

The Greeks had established a common language and they had also contributed to an environment of philosophy that encouraged searching out, and discussing, new things. Then, also, those in power—the Romans—dominated most of the known world. They had established a time of relative peace (Pax Romana), away from military expansion against their areas. They had also constructed a system of roads that enabled easier travel.

There was, however, a great threat to the life of Jesus and our hope. Herod was determined to end the perceived threat of another "King of the Jews" that he had heard about from the wise men (Matt. 2:1-2). Based on dates determined by the wise men, Herod called for the death all male children 2 yrs and under--which would include Jesus, by age and location (Matt. 2:16). This great threat would have ended our hope by destroying Jesus.

Because of this threat, Joseph was divinely warned to get his family out of Bethlehem and flee to Egypt, for safety (Matt. 2:13). What Joseph did about this warning, made all the difference. According to Matthew 2:14, Joseph woke from the warning dream; gathered his family and fled. We know that Herod's threat was not empty—he called for, and saw, the slaughter of all male children in Bethlehem and the surrounding areas (Matt. 2:17-18). Joseph moved with godly fear, and delivered the Child-Jesus from destruction--what would you have done?

We have been "Divinely Warned." Life seems to be continuing on its normal trends—with its ups and downs. Many, in this world, have grown complacent toward God. We see

attitudes and actions that demonstrate that some people believe that they will either live forever, or this life is all there is. However, we have been divinely warned.

We have been told that this life is temporary and we are accountable (Ecc. 11:9; Matt. 12:33-37; 2Cor. 5:10-11). We have been made aware of the Day of Judgment—that is coming (Acts 17:30-31; Hebrews 9:27) and we now know that this day will be the end (2Peter 3:9-11). Thus God has issued a clear warning that this day will happen (Matt. 24:36).

What you and I will do about this warning will make all the difference. We must prepare ourselves by seeking salvation (John 3:16). God's word clearly teaches us to seek the doctrine of Christ (2John 9); to walk in His way (1Peter 2:21-23); to seek our relationship with God, through Him (John 14:6). Jesus instructs both belief and baptism for salvation (Mark 16:15-16). We know that people in the first century moved with godly fear and prepared themselves for salvation—what will you do?

From time-to-time, there is a lot of talk about the end of the world. The reality is that no one can, or will ever, accurately speculate the “when”—but all should know that it “will” happen. When the news media sensationalize some “prophet” with the next great prediction some react with great fear. What we all need to do is to trust God; move with godly fear, and be prepared.

God's plan saved Noah, delivered Jesus from Herod, and will effectively save you from condemnation. God has clearly warned you that the end is on its way. What you do now, is what will make all the difference. Won't you trust and obey today?

A Moments Wisdom

- It is better in prayer to have a heart without words, than words without a heart.
- People seldom notice old clothes if you wear a big smile.
- If you smile when no one else is around, you really mean it.
- In my day, we didn't have self-esteem, we had self-respect, and no more of it than we had earned.
- Self-respect cannot be hunted. It cannot be purchased. It is never for sale. It cannot be fabricated out of public relations. It comes to us when we are alone, in quiet moments, in quiet places, when we suddenly realize that, knowing the good, we have done it; knowing the beautiful, we have served it; knowing the truth we have spoken it.
- Hope is faith holding out its hand in the dark.
- Hope is the dream of a soul awake.
- While we are mourning the loss of our friend, others are rejoicing to meet him behind the veil.
- Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.
- A good garden is like a good book, you always enjoy starting it again.
- If you're feeling low, don't despair. The sun has a sinking spell every night, but it comes back up every morning.
- You may not be responsible for getting knocked down, but you're certainly responsible for getting back up.
- The train of brotherly love rides on the twin rails of concern and compassion.