

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:

Today we continue reading Jesus' response to His disciples' question about the signs that will precede His return and the end of the world. After a time of terrible, worldwide tribulation, there will be some unmistakable signs that Jesus is just about to return. The sun will be darkened, and the moon, because it only reflects the sun's light, will not shine. The stars will fall from the sky. Can you imagine seeing that? It will terrorize those who are unprepared. Isaiah predicted this almost three thousand years ago, writing, "The land will be destroyed and all the sinners with it. The heavens will be black above them. No light will shine from stars or sun or moon....The heavens above will melt away and disappear like a rolled-up scroll. The stars will fall from the sky, just as withered leaves and fruit fall from a tree" (Isaiah 13:9-10; 34:4).

Then Jesus will return, shining brightly in a black sky, in clouds of God's radiant glory. All who are alive on earth will see Him and mourn, for they will have no doubts then that their eternal fate is sealed because they rejected Him. A great trumpet will sound, and God's angels will gather His people from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven.

That will mark the beginning of Jesus' reign over all the earth, and people would be foolish to be unprepared for such a momentous event. Jesus therefore admonished us to be ready by watching for the signs He predicted and by living obedient lives. Although no one knows the exact day or hour of His return, everyone should be able to recognize when the time is near. The signs He described will not be spread out over centuries of time.

Unfortunately, multitudes will be caught unprepared, living their normal lives right up until the day when Jesus comes back. In spite of the distress that will exist during the time just prior to Jesus' return, people will be working, eating and partying right up until the end. In some cases, they will be working right alongside people who have come to believe in Jesus, and will see them disappear when Jesus sends His angels to gather His people. The unsaved will be completely caught off guard.

Those who are ready for Christ's return will be those who believe in Him, and naturally, their faith will be evident by their lifestyles. When Jesus comes back, they will be doing His will. Those who are selfishly living for themselves, always partying and getting drunk, prove that they don't believe in Jesus or His promise to return. And, as Jesus said, they will be banished to hell.

Are you ready?

Q. We read today about some major changes that will one day occur to some things most people think are permanent: the sun, moon and stars. Jesus also mentioned a major change in something else people consider permanent. What is it?

A. Jesus said that one day the earth would disappear (see Matthew 24:35). Don't be alarmed, however, because God will create a new one right after He destroys the present one (see Revelation 21:1)!

Application: In today's reading and throughout Scripture, we are told that every material thing we presently own will one day disappear. For that reason we should view material things from a spiritual perspective. We should, as much as possible, use material things for spiritual purposes, to serve God and others. Our use of material things is a test of our Christlikeness, and one day we'll be rewarded for every unselfish act.