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## Is Jesus Returning on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011?

**Matthew 24:27:** (NASB) *For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

The time draws near - May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011 is fast approaching along with the bold predictions of a rapture and the world beginning to come to an end. Last week we talked about the reasons WHY Jesus returns and looked at his return as an unfolding process rather than a singular and dramatic event. We will focus on HOW Jesus returns and in the light of these predictions for this coming Saturday, I would say that this is a pretty relevant subject. Is Jesus returning this coming Saturday, or are the predictions all wrong?

Let's start with a word picture from one Christian group describing Jesus' return:



**The return as lightning from the east, 3angelsDVD.com**

- *The Bible texts speak of Jesus approaching in the clouds, but as these clouds come closer, the reality that they are masses of angels will become evident...*

First of all, the narrative combines two different texts:

Luke 21:27: (KJV) *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.* Matthew 24:27: (KJV) *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.* What if these two scriptures are talking about different aspects of the return, two different parts?

Secondly, clouds are generally a symbol of gathering trouble, not angels:

Zephaniah 1:15: (NASB) *A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness.*



**We are that very last generation, May 21, 2011 Warning**

- *We are living right at the very end of time. We are that last generation.*
- *Every time that God has brought judgment on the earth, he has always warned the believers.*

Thirdly, we need to examine the lightning:

**Lightning:** Strong's #796, astrape (as-trap-ay'); lightning; by analogy, glare: KJV-- lightning, bright shining.

Luke 11:36: *If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the **bright shining <796>** of a candle doth give thee light.*

Luke 17:24: *For as the **lightning <796>**, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.*

Every time this word for lightning is used in the New Testament (outside of Revelation) it always carries a meaning of a glare, as from a bright light or the sun. So it seems that our theme scripture is actually describing a sunrise, and not a flash of lightning. Malachi 4:1-2: This talks about the coming of the Lord, using the brightness of the sun as a literal example. This means to us that the return of Jesus is a process that can be likened to the sunrise.

**Does Jesus return with a lot of noise or as a "thief in the night"?**

Matthew 24:36: (NASB) *But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.*

1 Thessalonians 5:1: It seems that these early Christians were given a good sense of the stages that God's plan had gone through and would continue to go through. They understood there was a process. 1 Thessalonians 5:2: To paraphrase: "It is already obvious to you that the day of the Lord comes unexpectedly; your expectation is correct." Matthew 24:3: They knew he would be returning. 1 Thessalonians 5:3 Luke 17:25-28: Suddenly...but how fast is "suddenly?" To us it would be an instant because our lives are so short. But to the God of the Universe, "suddenly" could be several years - consider that there are 86,400 seconds in a day. If the "day" of man on this earth as a creation is 6,000+ years, then 15 seconds would about equal one year. 1 Thessalonians 5:4



**End May 21 intro, Ed Shaffery AP News from Claymont Delaware**

- This group is convinced this is the beginning of the end of the world,
- Believers say it is exactly 7,000 years since the Flood in the Biblical story of Noah.

We want to rightly divide the word of truth as described in 2 Timothy 2:15-16  
Malachi 4:1-2: So is this using literal or symbolic language? If one were to take the first part literally (*the day shall burn as an oven*), then one would need to take the next part literally as well: *But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.* Since when does the literal sun have "wings that heal" - and are we to become like calves? We need to recognize that there is a lot of symbolism in describing the coming of Jesus. We have to be careful that we don't take the symbolisms as literal and the literal as symbolic. It can be difficult!

**Is there a difference between Jesus' "coming" and Jesus' "presence?"**

**Jesus Returns as he left, 3angelsDVD.com**

- Just as Jesus left physically, so he will return physically.

What if, based on what we have seen thus far, the Day of the Lord comes in stages - like the sun: 1. Faint and imperceptible at first, 2. then growing to a point of being obviously manifest, 3. then rising to the full revelation of its power!

Matthew 24:27: (NRSV) *For as the lightning (brightness) comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. The brightness of the sun, Jesus' return, burn off the clouds of trouble. Let's review and see if this concept fits with the Scriptures we have already read: Matthew 24:3: (NASB) *As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?**

**Coming:** Strongs #3952 parousia (par-oo-see'-ah); a being near KJV-- coming, presence.  
 From this word: Strongs #3918 pareimi (par'-i-mee); to be near, i.e. at hand;  
 KJV-- come, be here, + lack, (be here) present.

This word is most times translated, "to be present," or "to be near."

Some examples of "coming:"  
2 Corinthians 10:10: *For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence <3952> is weak, and his speech contemptible.*  
Philippians 2:12: *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence <3952> only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

So if in fact Matthew 24:3 should have been translated "presence," it would mean that we should be looking for signs that *he is already here*, or of his *presence*.

**Returning as he left: Acts 1:3-11: How did Jesus ascend?**

- Only his close followers were there;
- A cloud took him out of their sight;
- They were looking and only seeing the cloud when the angel explained his return. The cloud takes him out of their sight, and he returns with clouds (trouble).

**What scriptural reasoning does the May 21st, 2011 scenario use?**

**Noah's Flood 4990 BC, May 21 Warning**

- The flood occurred 4990 B.C. on the 17th day of the second month, in the 600th year of Noah's life.

The spokesperson for this idea is a man named Harold Camping. The problem is that Bible chronology does not agree with that date. He is about 2,500 years off.

**God's 1,000 year-for-a-day formula, May 21 Warning**

- 2 Peter 3:8: *One day with the Lord is 1,000 years; God is giving us a formula.*

Genesis 7:6-12



Here is where we believe Mr. Camping and his followers go terribly wrong:

1. They assume (and I don't know how) that the great flood was 7,000 years ago. While there are different understandings of Bible chronology from different scholars, all of those scholars conclude that the Great Flood was about 2,500 years CLOSER to our time. *Please refer to the bonus material at the end of the Full Edition Rewind for a more comprehensive look at this.*
2. They apply the 1,000 years-to-a-day formula to the seven days before the flood saying that God is giving a warning for a time 7,000 years in the future of the world's total destruction.

However, we don't believe they are taking into account this very important promise:

Genesis 8:21

Isaiah 33:15-16: *He who practices virtue and speaks honestly, he shall dwell on the heights. His stronghold should be the rocky fastness. His food and drink in steady supply.*

If the world ends next week, it will just be a coincidence. God calls us every day, not just on the last day, to live in virtue and trust Him alone as our stronghold.

Romans 14:8: *For if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord: so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.*

3. They say the "judgment day" is for 153 days following May 21<sup>st</sup> followed by total annihilation. 2 Peter 3:7-8: This scripture says in context that the Day of Judgment is over a period of 1,000 years. The thousand-year concept is not being applied by Mr. Camping to the Day of Judgment like the scripture actually does.

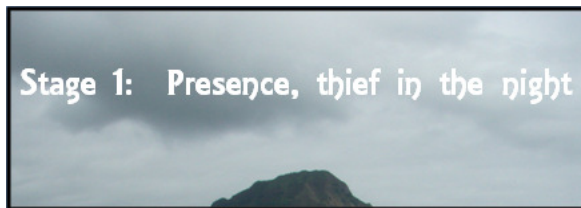
**So, If Jesus' return is like the sunrise, what are the signs the sun is coming up?**



**Millions will die that day, Harold Camping Radio Call In**

- *It will be a horror story...millions of people will die on that die and every day thereafter.*

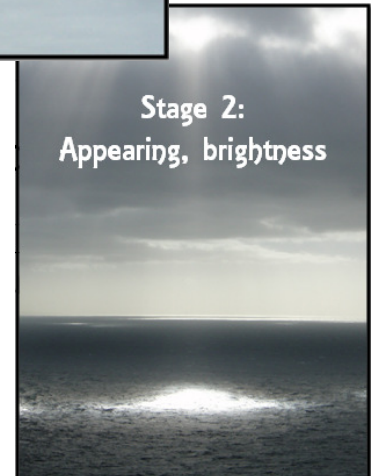
Although we do not subscribe to Camping's suggestion, we *are* suggesting that the Lord's return comes in three basic stages, as there are three different words used to describe it. The first was the word for "presence" which we saw was translated coming in Matthew 24 and other New Testament prophecies of Jesus' return, but translated "presence" multiple times elsewhere.



The second stage is built upon the first - the return is growing to a point of being obviously manifest. Think of a sunrise on a very cloudy day - you can see the light of the sun, but you cannot see the sun itself. Several hours after the dawn, the dark and stormy sky lightens, so the sun has obviously risen even though you still cannot see it.

**Coming:** Strongs #2015 epiphaneia (ep-if-an'-i-ah); a manifestation, i.e. (specially) the advent of Christ (past or future): KJV-- appearing, brightness.

2 Timothy 4:1 ...at his *appearing* <2015> 2 Thessalonians 2:8: ...with the *brightness* <2015> of his coming: Titus 2:13: ... and the *glorious appearing* <2015>



When something is made manifest, you don't necessarily see it clearly but you know it is there.



**Daughters will not have kids, Ed Shaffery AP Claymont Delaware**

- *The end of the world means her daughters will not have children of their own.*
- *All 200 million people who are saved will be taken into heaven May 21st - the world to be consumed by a fireball on October 21st.*

One of the greatest manifestations of Jesus' return, of his presence, of his being here, is the re-establishment of Israel. Matthew 24:32-34: When someone is "at the gates," they have arrived. In 1878, the first legal settlement of Jews back in their homeland was established, named Petah Tikvah. ("Gateway of Hope") In 1948 after World War II, the Jews were finally given a homeland. This is a sign of the presence of Jesus.



Like a sunrise behind the clouds, you can see the faint manifestation of the light that grows and grows. So, some manifestations of Jesus' return are clouds, wars, and Israel...

There is a process involved. Jesus comes quietly at first, and he is wrestling away the governments of this world from Satan's hands. Then there is a manifestation with evidences, including trouble, that we all recognize. Then there is the bright shining of revelation.

**So, what does the final stage of Jesus' return look like?**



**No reason it won't happen, Ed Shaffery AP, Claymont Delaware**

- *Camping is now 89-years old...and not willing to entertain the notion that the sun may rise on May 21st without worldwide destruction.*



The third stage of Jesus' return is the bright shining - the disclosure stage. Now the sun is high in the sky and will begin to burn off those clouds of trouble so that its rays can begin the healing process.

**Coming:** Strongs #602 apokalupsis (ap-ok-al'-oop-sis); disclosure: KJV-- appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation.

**Coming:** Strongs #601 apokalupto (ap-ok-al'-oop'-to); to take off the cover, i.e. disclose: KJV-- reveal.

The stages are secret return, manifestation, then full disclosure.

**The Judgment Day will be a day of trial and eventually judgment for the world:**

Romans 2:5: It's getting brighter, but not all at the same time. The return of Jesus is not bringing the burning up of the world. God promised us many times that this would not happen. His plan of salvation is much bigger. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9

Jesus is revealed as a future part of what is already happening - another stage down the road. The Day of Judgment clearly reveals and gives full disclosure to the presence of Jesus and the fact that he is in control. Judgment brings accountability and shame, but also opportunity. **The "sons of God" (the true followers of Christ) will also be revealed like Jesus:** Romans 8:19: For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the *manifestation <602>* of the sons of God. The groaning creation is waiting for the true followers of Christ to be revealed to them. They are awaiting with expectation, not to be burned up. 1 Peter 1:5: Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be *revealed <601>* in the last time.

Here is another sense of a revealing process, not only for Jesus and his return, but also the true followers of Christ will be disclosed, revealed, as to who they are and it will be a good time for the world.

Bottom Line: Jesus, having returned, is already in the process of taking down the kingdoms of this world and setting up his kingdom of righteousness.

Daniel 2:44: God will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. We are seeing the preparations for this.

Zephaniah 3:8-9: This is not literal fire - it is a purifying fire. The result of the return of Jesus is that all will serve Him "shoulder to shoulder." That is the result of all of this difficulty.

May 21st is going to come and it is going to go. God's plan is for everyone's good and not for their destruction.

**So, is Jesus returning on May 21, 2011? (no!)  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!**