

How Are Your Preparations Coming Along for the Apocalypse?

A Reflection on Readiness for Christ's Return

Reflections Prayer, Repentance and the Spiritual Life The Scroll, September 2019, Editorial

Revelation 3:15-21

Luke 17:31-33

Not that I am an end-times alarmist, but the signs prophesied in the Bible are here. Public morals are degenerating with each passing day. The human race has become increasingly evil, intolerant and depraved. Inherently evil people seem to triumph with their nefarious designs. Rumours and threats of wars, using nuclear weaponry, are on the rise. Disasters, natural and man-made, are occurring frequently around the world. Rarely seen astronomical phenomena are also appearing. The ecological balance of creation seems to have been tilted. The Bible's prophecies regarding the return of the Lord have been fulfilled. The day of the Lord's return is here. It may happen before I finish writing this, before you complete reading it, or it may happen a month later, a year later, or even several millennia later. No one knows, and it is better that way; a divine mystery that Jesus chose not to reveal to us.

But the question is, are you prepared? Or have you decided that it may not happen in your time, or that you have plenty of time left for the preparations? If you are convinced that it is time for preparations to begin, the next question is what, in your view, the preparations should be.

Before you hasten to answer the question, you need to decide what type of Christian you are. Are you on the fringe, like the Laodiceans? If so, you have many preparations to catch up on. The Lord said:

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Revelation 3:15–21)

There have always been Christians who have prepared themselves for apocalypses, revolutions or major disasters. Some have taken what they thought were reasonable measures to stockpile food, weapons, medicine and other essentials. Others have indulged in elaborate concrete bunkers, with every material comfort thrown in. 'Prepper suppliers', as they are known, have thrived by capitalising on these niche

markets, fuelled by the fear of societal disaster scenarios. Christians who think that is how they should prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus are on the fringe, and utterly foolish. Jesus had cautioned:

"In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." (Luke 17:31–33; a parallel account may also be found in Matthew 24:17–25.)

Most Christians know this text well enough not to be as foolish as those described above. I am sure you are not one of them. You go to church services regularly, you sing along with the choir, you read the prayers alongside the pastors, you are liberal with your giving on Sundays and other days, you grieve with those who have lost a dear one and walk with them to the grave, you serve as a member on church committees, and you are in the forefront on all important church events. You have done well in all things Christians are expected to do. But you could still be on the fringe!

Have you been able to shed the animosity you harboured towards a fellow Christian, or someone from another faith? Have you walked that extra mile with someone in need without being asked? Have you engaged with the society around you with the Gospel of Christ? Have you ever been a good Samaritan to your neighbour — neighbour, as defined by Jesus? Have you grieved with someone sincerely? Have you clothed someone naked; have you visited a 'neighbour' who was sick; have you visited someone in prison? More importantly, have you been in communion with Jesus perpetually?

If your answer to any of the above questions is 'no', you are on the fringe, and have many preparations to make. You can begin such preparations only if you shun positions in the Church and stop fighting your way through to committees and the like — if you think it will take you closer to Jesus, you are mistaken — and stop playing one-upmanship with your fellow Christian. In the days of Christ, none of these things will have any relevance; therefore, you labour in vain. There is no hierarchy in the Kingdom of Jesus. All Christians stand at the same distance from the Cross of Jesus.

If you still think you have time to mend your ways, you could be drastically wrong. As I said at the beginning, the signs are visible; Jesus is knocking at your door. Open the door for Him, stop being on the fringe, and be with Him in His inner circle, as a true disciple of Christ, doing what He has appointed you to do. Amen.