THIEF IN THE NIGHT

I. GET READY - HE IS COMING LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT

1Th. 5:1-5 ¶ But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT

The recent solar eclipse caused me to start thinking about the return of Christ. I know what some of you are thinking, here we go again. “They have been saying that for two thousand years.” Yes ‘we’ have. The Bible predicted the first coming of Christ, ‘they’ talked about that for four thousand years; then He came. The solar eclipse reminded me about just how perfect His whole creation is. We can predict things like eclipses many years before they happen because creation is absolutely precise. So is history. The plans of God are advancing perfectly, nothing is out of place, nothing is out of timing. The Lord will return. What has to be asked; are you awake or asleep? Here are some thoughts from Barclay on the return of Christ.

“He (Paul) repeats that the coming of the day will be sudden. It will come like a thief in the night. But he also insists that that is no reason why a man should be caught unawares. It is only the man who lives in the dark and whose deeds are evil who will be caught unprepared. The Christian lives in the light and no matter when that day comes, if he is watchful and sober, it will find him ready. Waking or sleeping, the Christian is living already with Christ and is therefore always prepared. No man knows when God's call will come for him and there are certain things that cannot be left until the last moment. It is too late to prepare for an examination when the examination paper is before you. It is too late to make the house secure when the storm has burst.”

Two things jump out at me from this quote. First, there is no excuse to be caught unaware. If we live in the light of God’s word and His love we will be absolutely ready. As the day draws near an anticipation will grow in His children. The second thing is even more sobering; there are some things that cannot be left for the last moment. No man knows the day of His coming or the day of our death, that day approaches all of us. So respond to the signs of His coming, get ready! None of us want that day to come and not be ready.
II. DELIVERED FROM THE WRATH TO COME

1Th. 1:10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

1. LIKE THE DAYS OF NOAH

2. REDEMPTION AND WRATH

III. OUR CROWN AND REWARD AT HIS COMING

1Th. 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?

IV. BLAMELESS - PURE BRIDE

1Th. 3:13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.
V. TO BE WITH THE LORD

1Th. 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

1Th. 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th. 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1Th. 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

VI. GET READY

1Th. 5:6-10 ¶ Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

HIS COMING LIKE CLOCKWORK

Psa. 19:1,4,6 ¶ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.
The universe is beyond amazing. This week we saw just a tiny glimpse of His vast orchestration in a solar eclipse. Eclipses are predictable because of the precise perfection of God’s creation. Everything marches forward in perfect synchronization, all pointing to the great day that lies ahead. The dance of creation is called a groan by the Apostle Paul, the groan of anticipation of God’s coming kingdom. What Paul called a groan David referred to as the voice that goes out through all the earth. This voice of the Lord opens the hearts of the hungry and calls them to a place of restoration and healing in God’s glorious dance. You are not forgotten, you too are a part of His precise perfection. Here are some comments from Jonathan Edwards on God’s clock.

“As in a clock, all the motions of the whole system of wheels and movements, tend to the striking of the hammer at the appointed time. All the revolutions and restless motions of the sun and other heavenly bodies, from day to day, from year to year, and from age to age, are continually tending hither; as all the many turnings of the wheels of a chariot, in a journey, tend to the appointed journey’s end. The mighty struggles and conflicts of nations, and shakings of kingdoms, and those vast successive changes that are brought to pass, in the kingdoms and empires of the world, from one age to another, are as it were travail pangs of the creation, in order to bring forth this glorious event. And the Scriptures represent the last struggles and changes that shall immediately precede this event, as being the greatest of all; as the last pangs of a woman in travail are the most violent.”

To glimpse God’s glory in creation causes me to bow in awe before His majestic sovereignty. He rules all things. He is the God of well timed comets, solar flares, and eclipses. The mysteries of the universe are His. The mysteries of my life and your life are also hidden in Christ. Just as we passed through the moon’s shadow last Monday, hide yourself in Him who has no shadow of turning.