

*But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*

(Matthew 24:36, emphasis mine)

*In my father's house are many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you.*

(John 14: 2, 3)

## **Doomsday?**

Okay, I guess I have to address the recent brouhaha over yet *another* person who forgot about (or possibly ignored) the first passage of Scripture above, Jesus' own words from the Gospel of Matthew.

In the first place, Jesus is telling His Disciples, *Hey – even I don't know when it's coming; only My Father does.*” Now, some of you may be asking, “Wait a minute; I thought Jesus was God in Human form. He's telling me He doesn't know?” That's right; there are some things God doesn't know... or, should I say, *deliberately chooses* not to remember. Like a person's sins, once that person has accepted Jesus as Savior. In Psalms 103:12, we read,

*As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

In Micah 7:19, we get,

*You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*

And in Isaiah 43:25,

*I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.*

While there is no “sea of forgetfulness” mentioned in the Bible *per se*, I believe these passages are where the concept comes from. The bottom line is that God chooses to forget our sins once we have accepted Jesus as Savior and wholeheartedly sought His forgiveness. And not like we “forget” things, only to brood over them later; I mean *forget*; put completely out of His mind, never to be remembered again. He's God – He can do that. So, it's entirely possible for Jesus, the Son of God Himself, to not know when His return is scheduled.

The second reason for His not knowing is that in saying these things, Jesus is reassuring the Disciples that He is returning. Jesus is referring to the ancient Jewish marriage customs. Once a prospective groom and the prospective bride's family agreed upon the terms of the marriage contract, the man pours the woman a glass of wine. If she takes it and drinks it, she accepts the proposal of marriage and the man says, “I go to prepare a place for you.” He then goes to build a bridal chamber in his father's house for the bride. The betrothed may have full access to

the name and credit of the groom and his family, and could be parted only by going through death or divorce proceedings, but the groom's *father* had the final say about when it was ready, meaning the groom could go get his bride. This process could take as long as two years. Only *then*, at the father's okay, could the wedding ceremony take place, the marriage be consummated and the feasting could begin. (Yes, you read right – consummation came first, *then* the party.) The custom served a practical purpose as well; it gave the groom's family time to prepare for a feast. And not just a nice after-ceremony dinner at a fancy hotel or restaurant, where the guests tap on the glasses with their dinner knives encouraging the newly-hitched couple to kiss and smile (and get embarrassed) in front of everyone, who then go out on the dance floor for the "Chicken Dance" or the "Hokey Pokey" or whatever. *This party lasted for a week.*

In *Eschatology* (the study of the Last Days), there is an event coming known as the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, taken from Chapter 19 of the Book of Revelation. It is from this coming event that we get the concept of the "catching away" (some know it as the *Rapture*) of the Church, where believers are taken out of this world around the time the antichrist makes his appearance and the seven-year Great Tribulation period begins. The Church, known also as the *Bride of Christ*, will be united with Jesus during this period before His return to Earth to defeat the antichrist and set up His own Kingdom for a thousand years.

In their reporting of the supposed Rapture of May 21<sup>st</sup> (now corrected to some time in October... if anyone is still believing it), secular reporters used another phrase to describe it – *THE END OF THE WORLD*, or *Doomsday*. Does a party that lasts for seven years sound *anything* like "doomsday?"

Actually, it may be, for those not invited. Those who are "left behind" here on Earth will have to face a period where the influence of God and Godly people are withdrawn from this planet, and evil is left to run rampant before satan is finally defeated. People can still accept Jesus during this period, but things could be very tough, indeed for those who do so.

I don't know why people set dates for the return of the Lord Jesus when the Bible clearly warns against it. In fact, in the same passage where He says He does not know when that day is, Jesus plainly tells people to *keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come* (Matthew 24:42). Instead of devoting a great deal of energy to a fruitless enterprise, we should be doing what Jesus told us to do in the first place.

And for those of you "not invited," as it were, you can do better than merely getting an invitation to the wedding – you can be part of the Bride of Christ Himself by accepting His sacrifice as the payment for your sins and making Him *your* Lord and Savior. (We had to accept the same terms ourselves, because there isn't anyone – except for Jesus – who hasn't sinned.) Guests at the wedding eventually have to leave; the Bride remains with the Groom forever.