



“No Man Knows the Day or Hour”

False prophets have time and again pronounced the imminent doom of the world, with little apparent concern for the track record of all those who came before them. From Y2K to the tragic mass suicide of the Heaven’s Gate cult and countless other fads and false alarms over the years, leaders arise proclaiming the end of the world is at hand, and usually there is a group that will follow them. Sometimes, not even the failure of their false prophecy can shake their followers: The Jehovah Witnesses allegedly [have been wrong over and over again](#), and yet the sect continues to find adherents.



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One of the most significant examples of the doomsday phenomena witnessed in the modern age is still in the process of playing out, as varying interpretations of a supposed Mayan prediction of the end of the world have left countless thousands breathlessly awaiting the end of the world on December 21, 2012. And yet, on December 22, the world will awaken to yet another dawn, and some people will face some teasing from their friends, while others will bemoan the loss of their lifesavings.

Holy Scripture testifies that the Lord speaks quite clearly when it comes to false prophets; thus one may read in Deuteronomy 18: “But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’ And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’— when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.” (NKJV)

Jesus declares in Matthew 24 concerning His return: “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.” (NKJV) Every person who comes along proclaiming to know the day ought to be greeted with these words — and might be, if more people had a degree of biblical literacy sufficient for the task.

Christians confidently believe that the Jesus will return in glory — but they also believe that no man knows the time when that will take place; the Lord has reserved that information for Himself alone. There are often elements of escapism and titillation involved in the urge to listen to prophecies of imminent doom such as Mr. Camping proclaimed. However, people should not allow themselves to be distracted by such fads precisely because they cause despair for those who are seduced by them, and distract the public from addressing the very real troubles that confront us in this age. When people allow themselves to be seduced by those individuals who predict an imminent end, they may very well despair when the prophecies of men prove false. At the very least, they will have neglected living out the faith in their lives day by day, and there are far too many problems in the world every day that cry out for a faithful response for Christians to be caught up in the prognostications of men who claim to



Written by [James Heiser](#) on May 22, 2011

know the day and the hour. Instead, they would do well to heed the words of St. Paul in Ephesians 5: "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (NKJV)

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