

# The Bulwark

NOVEMBER 20, 2022

## POMPEII: FROZEN IN TIME

August 24th, AD 79 is frozen in time for the ancient city of Pompeii. Buried under volcanic ash, and pumice ranging in depth from twelve to twenty feet is a snap shot of life at the moment it was overwhelmed. People in this somewhat prosperous city were going about their business, in the port, in their homes and market places. At eight in the morning, small emissions from nearby Mount Vesuvius began. This was followed by a cataclysmic eruption in the afternoon. In a time span of less than twenty-four hours the population and buildings of Pompeii were unexpectedly buried. Unexpected. Frozen in time.



For those living in California there is the very real and present danger of a major earthquake happening at any given moment. April 18, 1906 a massive earthquake hit San Francisco killing over 2,000 residents. In 1989 another quake hit the bay area killing sixty-three and causing \$10 billion in damages. Then January 17, 1994 the Northridge quake occurred bringing about fifty-seven deaths, nine thousand injuries and damages of \$40 billion. These are just a few of the scores of earthquakes that have rattled California over the years. All reminders of what Solomon noted in Proverbs 27:1, *“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day will bring forth.”*

In the second epistle that Peter writes he pays considerable attention to the pending return of Christ. Reminding all that no one knows when that day will occur; but rest assured it will come. Notice his words, in verse one of chapter three, *“in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder.”* He then goes on to bring to their remembrance that indeed the day of the Lord will come, *“like a thief”*. (see also verses three through thirteen of chapter three)

In the 24th chapter of Matthew, Jesus speaks openly about the need for vigilance which would include the state of preparedness. *“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.”* (v. 42) *“For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.”* What is interesting to consider is that as Jesus lays out the backdrop of His coming in judgment at the end of times (part of Matthew 24-26 with the pending destruction of Jerusalem...but also issues dealing with end times) He shows how people will be going about their business seemingly oblivious about what was going to happen. Sort of like what was seen with respect to Vesuvius and Pompeii. Unexpected.

Going back to Peter’s second epistle and the third chapter, as he lays

out what will happen at a certain point in time, *“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”* (v 9) In verse ten what will happen on that day is powerfully laid out. Therefore, the question is presented in verse eleven, *“what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?”* Now factor in the following. *“But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. There, beloved since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.”* Children of God should live with a state of anticipation (see James 5:8-9) (wbe)

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