

There's no place like home by Terri Reinhart

(Originally written last May when Rev. Harold Camping predicted the Apocalypse would happen on May 21, 2011, then the world would end. That date came and went quietly so he has now revised his prediction for October 21, 2011.)



The old guy got it wrong. If there's something I can be sure of, it's that figuring out when the rapture is going to happen can not require math. In fact, all those people in California had it wrong, too.

You don't analyze the Bible to figure out when God's going to call all the worthy people to His heavenly banquet, you just wait for an invitation. Mine came in the mail. The California dude missed it by a few weeks. I won't give out the exact date. I mean, really, if you didn't get your own invitation, it's not my fault.

I was honestly surprised to learn I was one of the worthy ones. Looking back at my life, I didn't think I'd done anything that special; however, the letter I received left no room for doubt. It was impressive. It was written on real vellum for starters, and the capital letters were decorated with colored inks and gold leaf. I suspect God had plenty of medieval monks in heaven who needed to be kept busy. It read as follows: (. . . although more beautifully. I don't have medieval monk font on my computer.)

***You are cordially invited
to be a permanent guest at God's Banquet
if you accept this invitation,
you will be expected to be ready
at exactly 10 am today.
An angel will be sent to escort you to your new abode.
Congratulations on being one of the worthy!***

It was two minutes to ten and I had two minutes to decide what I was going to do. To my great relief, all of my family had received invitations, even our grandson. We gathered together in the kitchen to discuss the matter. All important conversations happen in the kitchen.

We had barely begun, however, when our escort appeared, also in the kitchen. It was getting crowded.

The angel seemed disappointed that we were not more impressed with his entrance. We greeted him politely and invited him to join in our discussion. Nothing had been decided yet, we told him. The angel stood with his wings spread across the room, bumping into the cabinets on either side.

My son started by asking a question.

“So, what does this mean for the earth?” He posed the question for anyone to answer, but he was looking at the angel.

“There will be plagues and earthquakes and the earth will fall into a fiery chaos,” the angel intoned.

“That's nothing new,” said my husband cynically. He'd just read the op/ed page in the newspaper.

“You are among the worthy. You can escape all this and live in eternal bliss in God's Heavenly Kingdom.” The angel looked confused. He wasn't used to people questioning him.

My other son asked, “If all the worthy people are taken from the earth, what will happen to the people here?”

“They will suffer and die. The world will come to an end.”

The angel reached out his arms in a grand gesture. I think he was trying to look powerful. Our kitchen is small. We have learned not to use grand gestures in our kitchen. Our daughter fished the broken bits out of the sink from the dinner glasses that had been accidentally knocked over, and threw them in the trash. The angel looked sheepish, “sorry,” he said, in a small voice.

It was my daughter-in-law's turn, “I don't know. I think I'd feel selfish if I'd choose to leave the earth just when people need the most help.”

“But if you stay, you will suffer with them and die anyway.” The angel was losing his momentum.

“Ah yes,” said our daughter, “that's true, but at least then we'd feel useful.”

“But don't you want to see the Glory of God? ”

There was a yell from the floor. Our grandson had finished rearranging the pots and pans in the cupboard and began talking to the angel. Obviously the angel understood the little guy's baby talk and knew that he was saying,

“I don't know about the rest of you, but I just got here. I'm not the least bit ready to leave yet. Didn't God create this place? Isn't the earth part of God's glory?” He blew a raspberry in the direction of the angel and went back to the pots and pans.

The angel looked around to each of us in turn. “You're all going to stay?” The angel was sounding almost normal now.

We all looked at each other and smiled. With another grandchild arriving in a few months, the garden ready for harvesting, and vacation just about to start, where else would we rather be?

“YES!” We all replied, in unison.

“I guess that's that, then. I'll have to tell the Almighty about this.”

Our grandson looked at the angel again and said, in his own baby language, “Don't bother. God already knows and says it's okay. God says for you to go back home.”

The angel said goodbye and shook our hands. We thanked him for coming to discuss things with us. Then he left in a puff of smoke. My husband went back out into the garden. My son and daughter-in-law started making a salad for dinner. My daughter finished her homework. My other son went out to the studio to continue working on his marionette. Our grandson took all the plastic containers out of the cabinet and exchanged them for the pots and pans . . . and I took a nap.

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