

Millions

Missing



fact... or fiction?

- Ray Brubaker

GOD'S NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS
RADIO BROADCAST

Multitudes Missing - that is how the newspaper headlines will read when Jesus comes. At least, that is what we are led to believe - that millions now living on this earth will one day suddenly disappear from off the earth.

Indeed, what a glorious day it will be when the saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air to forever be with Him. This should be the urgent desire and longing of every earnest and sincere believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In fact, the more we give prayerful study of the Scriptures the more we are led to believe many who anticipated rapture will not be ready and that rapture is the reward of readiness.

While on the one hand we would not want to rob anyone of the "blessed hope" of Christ's appearing; on the other hand, we would not want anyone to be found with a false hope, and after the rapture to point the finger and demand, "Why were we not told the facts?" So for this reason this book is written.

Of this we are convinced - that many who anticipate rapture will not be ready for this glorious event but will be swept into the tumultuous throes and travail of tribulation that follows. May the Lord open our eyes to this truth and then by His grace enable us to make such preparation so as to be ready and escape those judgments seen coming upon the earth. Indeed, be ye therefore ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

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fact... or fiction?

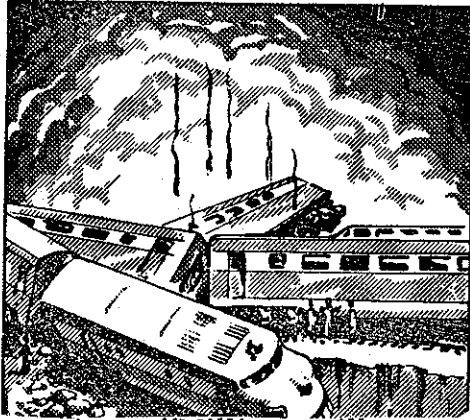
Robert Enstad, writing in the CHICAGO TRIBUNE, relates a problem for authorities in all types of communities: "People who, for no apparent reason, suddenly disappear."

For example, in suburban Arlington Heights, a couple, both 63, employed, living a normal life in their comfortable apartment, and happy...drove home from a cocktail party one night six years ago and disappeared into the dark. Neither they nor their Oldsmobile which they were driving were ever seen again, and to this day no one knows whether they are dead or alive.

Well, the Bible reminds us of a time when some will disappear from this earth in an event we call the "rapture" -- when those who have died who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, along with those who are now living, will suddenly disappear. Paul, in I Thess. 4:17, tells how we will be "caught up together....to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Quite a thrilling thought, isn't it...for those who are ready!

The question we would like to ask today is - How many will be ready when Christ comes? Will "multitudes" be missing?



One author writes: "Millions will turn up missing in a moment. Babies will disappear from their mothers' arms. Pilots will vanish from the cockpits of airplanes. Engineers will desert the throttles of railroad trains. Drivers will disappear from buses. Pallbearers will feel caskets lighten! Clerks will vanish from desks." (Raymond Cox - Church of God EVANGEL, June 23, '75)

The writer goes on to say: "Some will miss Christ's second coming who expected to participate in it." He notes: "Church members will confront Christ at the judgment, pleading, "Lord, Lord," and be dispatched with the verdict, "I never knew you."

Will "millions be missing" when Jesus comes? Or will multitudes hear the message of God's Word ringing in their ears when being left behind they recall His words, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

I read of a man from Indonesia who was invited to America to speak to the churches here. He asked the Lord what message he should preach and it was as though a voice said, "Preach repentance!"

Is that not the reason many will hear those words, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity -- ye that sin."

It's time we stop apologizing for our sin, seeking to cover it, explaining it as human weakness, and instead repent of it--turn from it.

Proverbs 30:12 warns: "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness."

The great G. Campbell Morgan was convinced that some who anticipated the rapture will miss it. He refers to the great multitude in Rev. 7:14 of whom it was said they "came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made

them white in the blood of the Lamb." Says Morgan: "Personally, I am convinced that not all Christian people will be taken to be with Christ on His return, but only those who by the attitude of their lives are ready for His appearing."

Now, think with me for a moment! We hear talk of "Millions Missing" when Christ returns for His own. But here the Scriptures speak of "multitudes" left behind to go through the tribulation who should have been raptured. It also declares that amidst fiery, awful, great persecution they repented--they came clean--"they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Some believe this "great multitude" seen going through the tribulation represents those who will be saved during this period. But does this not do injustice to the types of the Bible? For Scripture speaks of a person who is saved as "receiving a robe." All our righteousness is as filthy rags. So referring to the washing of our robes as bringing about our salvation would be teaching "reformation" as resulting in our "regeneration." This is not so.

Just how many will be ready for our Lord's return? Does Scripture give us any remote ideas? Will millions be missing when Jesus comes?

In Jude we're reminded of Enoch who prophesied, saying: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints..."

TEN THOUSANDS! Isn't that quite different from "millions?" you might ask. At least, it's a more limited amount than the "great multitude which no man could number" seen going through the great tribulation!

We're not told how many groups of ten thousand there are who will be included in the rapture. We would hope there would be ten thousand from each town or village, with many ten thousands from the major cities of the world. If so, it would have quite an effect upon the nations of the world.

Daniel speaks of the redeemed who will ultimately stand before the presence of God as "ten thousand times ten thousand." So we know the number of saints that will be saved will be in the millions, and in the billions, and trillions.

In view of Christ's coming we are warned time and again to be "ready" so as not to miss this event.

Enoch, mentioned a moment ago, is believed to be a type of the living saints in that he was translated and did not see death. But it is also said of him that he had a testimony that he pleased God.

Does the life we live please the Lord? Have we truly believed in Him as our Saviour and Lord, for "without faith it is impossible to please him;" (Heb. 11:6)

By inviting Jesus Christ into your heart and life and trusting Him completely for your salvation, you please Him.

However, when it comes to the rapture, it is not our experience of salvation alone that prepares us for that all-glorious event when instantaneously we stand in the presence of our Lord.

What if the king or the president were to suddenly come to your home and you appeared in the dirtiest, ugliest clothes you had? Would this be the way to welcome royalty? Indeed not, and neither is it expected of us who look for the soon return of our Blessed Lord to be living casually or carnally but rather consistently and continually ready.

As Sarah Foulkes Moore, co-editor of one of the greatest Christian periodicals, the HERALD OF HIS COMING, writes: "The unannounced hour of His imminent return makes imperative constant readiness."

She goes on to say: "Many Christians today are taking for granted they are ready." However, she observes: "How different is their slothful attitude from that of the Apostle Paul." For Paul wrote: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Or, as the notes in some Bibles suggest, Paul is saying that he is pressing on for the prize of being caught "upward."

Says Mrs. Moore of the great Apostle Paul: "He lived his daily Christian experience as a man running a race with the purpose in view of winning a prize. The prize Paul desired to win was Christ the Bridegroom! He already knew Christ as Lord and Saviour."

It is in view of our Lord's return that we are admonished: "Be sober." (I Thess. 5:6) Again we're told, "Be careful for nothing," reminded that many will be occupied with the cares of this life and not be ready. (Phil.4:5) (Luke 21:34) James reminds us to be patient - or to bear up under trial or persecution. (James 5:7-8) In I Thessalonians, in view of our Lord's coming, we're told to be loving, especially to our brothers and sisters in Christ. How different from the attitude many have today of having fellowship only with their group or clique. Incidentally, Paul writes of those who identify with their own sectarian name only as "carnal," who say, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos." Jude also warns of those who would arise in the last time-- "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." (I Cor. 3:4) (Jude 19)

Do you know how a believer can tell a fellow-believer? Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35)

That's why it's great to be a part of a campaign where Christians get together to sing, testify and evangelize. For as members of the body of Christ we are part of the family of redeemed for whom our Lord is coming one day soon. If we can't love each other here, it's doubtful that we have this love of the Spirit that unites us as one and gets us ready for the great reunion soon to take place in the sky.

It is in view of our Lord's coming that He encourages us to be ready! Rex Humbard says: "No true minister or Bible teacher can rightly divide the word of truth without seeing the serious implications which are involved in this term "ready" and the stern warnings which our precious Lord gave so frequently."



We agree and seek to sound forth this urgent message.

In Luke 21:36, we're told: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

When the great R.A. Torrey was asked what constitutes readiness for the coming of the Lord, he did not simply say, "Be saved." Yes, it is absolutely important to know Christ as your Saviour. Said Torrey, in response to the question asked of him, "Separation from the world's indulgence of the flesh, from the world's immersion in the affairs of this life, and intense daily earnestness in prayer is the first part of preparation for the Lord's return."

Remember the parable of the talents? Our Lord relates how talents were given to certain ones and depending on the investment of these they would be rewarded. To the servant who hid his lord's money, our Saviour said: "Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury." And the unfaithful servant was cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Whereas, to the faithful servants our Lord could say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

When Christ comes, will we hear the words "Well done" or "Depart from me"? As the late Dr. V. Raymond Edman once testified, "The imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ is a powerful scriptural incentive to watchfulness and preparation for His return."

Hell, as our Lord describes it, must be an awful place--where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. And yet, I find more warnings concerning the tribulation that's just ahead; when the devil is cast down upon the earth having great wrath; when antichrist rules with an iron fist and demands the world's worship under the penalty of death for those who refuse; and when judgments such as great earthquakes will level mountains and the sun becomes so hot as to scorch men with great heat befalls the world.

As John the Baptist warned men to "flee the wrath to come," so we take up the cry. Turn to Christ with all your heart, having repented of all your sin to live for Him.

If Christ's coming is your "blessed hope," you will be ready, for "he that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (I John 3:3)

Indeed, be ye therefore ready also for in such an hour that ye think not, the Son of man cometh!

Why Adults Suddenly Disappear

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT (Feb. 23, 1976) in a copyrighted article declares: "Increasingly, U.S. women are doing the unthinkable--deserting home and family. In some places, wives outnumber husbands as runaways."

For example, in Atlanta, a private investigator estimates 70% of his agency's missing-persons cases are women, against only 20% two years ago.

The Salvation Army, which operates one of the largest missing-persons bureaus in the world, says that disenchantment with family life is not an uncommon reason for disappearing acts by adults.

Sometimes wives are abducted. A young minister's bride of two months was working in the church office preparing the bulletin. Her husband found her glasses on the floor and the electric typewriter she was using, still running. What happened to her is not known.



Mrs. Dixie Arensen disappeared Aug 25, 1968 in California.

According to latest reports Mrs. Arensen is still missing. Anyone knowing of her whereabouts should call us - 813 area code - 347 2463.

FOR WHOM IS CHRIST COMING?

Remember the vanishing hitchhiker?

In the fall of 1971 it was reported that a couple, driving along the New York Thruway, picked up a young man. He sat in the back seat of the car and then began to ask questions. "Do you believe in the Second Coming?" he inquired.

When they turned to answer him, he had vanished, leaving his seat belt fastened. Upon arriving at the end of the Thruway, drivers related to the toll collector their story which he had already heard a dozen times before.

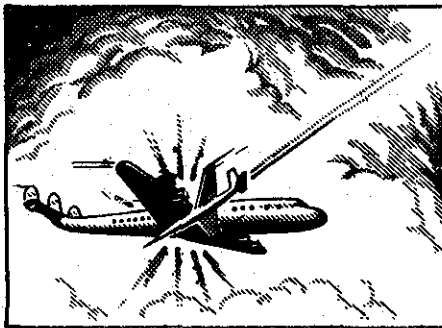
Dr. Lydia M. Fish of Buffalo State College has a collection of some sixty such reports.

Could these accounts be true? In Hebrews 13:2 we read, "Be careful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

Anyway, the case of the vanishing hitchhiker will serve to remind us of a day coming when many will disappear from off the earth.

Ian Macpherson writes in a prophetic magazine of an airline in the United States that positively refuses to permit two Christian pilots to be jointly responsible for the flight of any of their aircraft. Why?

Well, the reason is that they take seriously the biblical teaching of Christ's Second Coming to rapture the true church. At Christ's coming those who are truly His will suddenly dis-



appear and, if this were to take place when a plane was in the air with two Christian pilots at the controls, disaster could result.

Perhaps you've read tracts on the subject or have seen the Rapture Journal with the headline, "Multitudes Missing," relating the disappearance of millions of people from off the earth--showing express trains traveling at high speed and suddenly left driverless; of storm-buffed ships on the high seas without helmsmen; of airborne passenger-laden planes plunging to their destruction as Christian pilots are raptured.

Is this fact or fiction?

Will the number of missing persons make a tremendous impact upon the world, or will it all happen without headlines? It is reported that some newspapers have the headlines already made up, with the complete story from the Bible as to the meaning of the event we call "the rapture," to use when it occurs.

We read of one Bible teacher who expects that UFOs will be blamed for the disappearance of people from off the earth. He sees the antichrist rejoicing in the fact that all of the religious zealots are gone, for they would surely seek to hinder his program of a united world political-religious system.



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Today we would like to ask the question, "For whom is Christ coming?"

We fear lest many have the mistaken idea that our Lord will return for all believers regardless of their state or condition. Sarah Foulkes Moore, in *HERALD OF HIS COMING*, points out that our Lord gave exhortations to uninterrupted watchfulness. She notes: "He gave His disciples no reason to believe that their readiness for the Rapture rested on any experience of salvation they may have had. He made it pointed and plain that their conduct at the moment of the Rapture meant the winning of the prize." And she warns: "All teaching, all preaching, all activity, religious, secular or otherwise, that today ignores the Lord's solemn warning to His own to 'watch and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy' dissipates watchfulness and makes for sloth and carelessness."

For whom is Christ coming?

Will He take all of the babies when He comes?

One Bible expositor says: "Yes." He replies: "I believe that little children who have not reached a time of accountability will be caught up in the rapture." Another claims that all children under seven will be raptured and pictures a woman of the world screaming because her child is missing.

On the other hand, a well-known prophetic writer was sent this question: "Will children who are dedicated to Christ before the Rapture, even if both of the parents are not born again, be caught up with the Lord at that time?"

His answer: "No, they will not!" He further contends, "The Rapture is a special blessing for born again people." He goes on to explain: "The only way children under the age of accountability will be caught up in the Rapture, is if one or the other or both of the parents is a born again believer."

His reasoning is based on I Cor. 7:14 which states: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."

So the possibility does exist that if one or both of the parents are born-again Christians it would have its effect upon the children who are under the age of accountability. According to this interpretation, babies of believers who are raptured will also be gone when Jesus comes.

Who, then, will be raptured when Jesus comes?

The Rev. Basil C. Mowll, writing in the *PROPHETIC WITNESS* (May, 1975) says: "Some believe that all who profess to be Christians will be taken. But our Lord's parable of the wise and foolish virgins who all went out to meet the bridegroom contradicts such an opinion."

Continues Rev. Mowll, "Religion and church-going may mean Christian profession, but if we do not possess the oil of God's Holy Spirit, we shall not be taken to the marriage feast when our Lord comes, but will surely be left behind to face the day of God's wrath on the nations of the world."

Mowll goes on to explain from the Scriptures who will be taken when our Lord appears in the air.

1. Our Lord will come for those who belong to Him. In speaking of the order of the resurrection, Paul writes: "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." (I Cor. 15:23)

Thus, our Lord is coming for those who are redeemed by His precious blood and have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Only those who have been cleansed from sin will enter Heaven.

2. He is coming for those who are looking for Him. Hebrews 9:28 reminds us: "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

There seem to be many Christians who are not looking for our Lord to come. However, for those of us who are ready to meet our Saviour, the thought of rapture is our "blessed hope." In view of the fact of Christ's coming, we are told to comfort one another with these words." (I Thess. 4:18)

3. Jesus is coming for those who are living lives of watchfulness and perseverance.

How often our Lord commanded His disciples, saying: "Watch: for you know not when the Master of the house comes....lest coming suddenly He finds you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!" (Mark 13:35-37)

Again He urges, saying: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36)



Our Lord is very insistent that this should be our attitude of watchfulness in order to be ready for His coming.

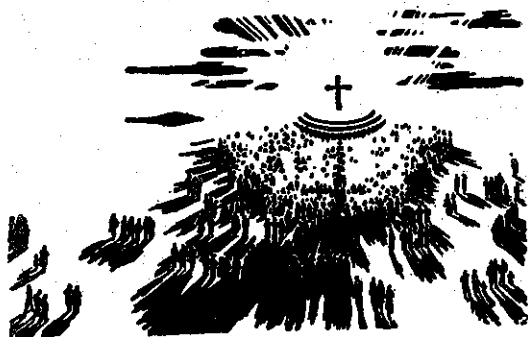
Billy Graham writes: "We do not know the exact time when Jesus Christ will come; but we are to be on the alert. You may be among the many thousands who at this moment are not ready. You have never received Christ. Your heart is not cleansed of sin. You're not ready to meet God. I beg of you to make ready now."

One young man related how when he was a boy he thought of Christ's Return as signaled by the sound of a heavenly trumpet and the voice of the archangel. At the time, he wasn't a Christian and he thought, "That will give me just enough time to pray the sinner's prayer and get saved." Later, however, he read where our Lord's coming will take place "in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye." He decided it would be too late then to get right with God, and made his decision at once for Christ.

Carl Richardson, in admonishing listeners of the "Forward in Faith" program, warns: "Don't wait until the Church disappears. Come now. Pray where you are. Make things right between you and God. Confess your sins. Believe on the Lord Jesus. Welcome Him into your heart and prepare to go with the Church."

Indeed, in the words of Jesus, we would declare: "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour that ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

WHO WILL GO WHEN THE LORD COMES?



In Canada, a showing of the TV program, **THE RAPTURE**, brought consternation to many who viewed it over CFCN.

The **CALGARY PRESS** reported that the show depicting the second coming of Christ, complete with worldwide catastrophes, resulted in hundreds of calls from frightened TV viewers.

The program was portrayed as originating from a New York television station's newsroom and reported such catastrophes as earthquakes, tidal waves and many other similar disasters.

Well, some day the return of our Lord will be a reality. It would almost be better never to have been born than to miss the event. Yet, if we understand the Scriptures correctly, there will be many who looked for our Lord's coming who will miss the event we call the "rapture."

As Basil Mowll writes: "Some believe that all who profess to be Christians will be taken. But our Lord's parable of the wise and foolish virgins who all went out to meet the bridegroom contradicts such an opinion." (PROPHETIC WITNESS - May '75.)

A booklet entitled, **MILLIONS MISSING**, relates what many believe will happen. We're told: "The sudden removal of millions from the earth will bring about a mysterious world crisis; confusion, chaos, and panic such as this world has never known will engulf the whole earth! Scores of driverless cars will rush pell-mell down the highways piling up in horrible wrecks. Big trucks carrying tens of thousands of gallons of explosive gasoline and chemicals will wreck and cause fires and explosions that cannot be described in words. Buses and trains loaded with passengers will pile up--wrecked. Many giant airliners will plunge to the ground when the born-again pilots are removed from the controls! Death, misery, and confusion will be everywhere!"

Our Lord declared concerning His coming: "The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it." (Luke 17:22)

Could it be that many who expect to be raptured will miss it? What saith the Scriptures?

The Apostle Paul speaks of our Lord's return in two aspects--His appearing and His kingdom. In 2 Tim. 4:1, we're reminded that when the Lord comes He will "judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." That is, our Lord is seen coming for His own who are ready in an event we call the "rapture" when He "appears" and quickly snatches away His own. This is when many expect all manner of catastrophes to happen as the saints are caught away to be with the Lord. Then upon this earth comes great tribulation, the wrath of God upon the sinner, after which our Lord is seen returning to this earth to establish His kingdom.

All we can say is, don't miss the day when Christ appears! It will be hell on earth to be left behind to go through that awful tribulation that is coming.

Recently, on television, the story of Charles Manson was shown, called "Helter Skelter." Many Christians have protested the showing of the film because Charles called himself "Jesus Christ" and led his hippy followers to enact cruel, bloody murders such as the killing of Hollywood actress, Sharon Tate, who was pregnant at the time. When asked what the word "Helter Skelter" meant, Manson related there is coming a time when the whole world will be at war with unrestrained violence, bloodshed, and mass killings such as they were doing.

Indeed, the Bible does forecast such a day when the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit will be lifted. If the thought were to occur in an evil man's mind to kill, he will kill. If he sees a woman coming down the street and the thought of rape comes into his mind, he will rape her there on the street.

As Dr. William F. Beirnes points out: "In this dispensation of the Holy Ghost, the devil is restrained or hindered in fulfilling all of his intentions against the Church and against individuals." However, he notes: "In the Tribulation, after the rapture of the Bride of Christ, that restraint of the Holy Spirit is to be lifted, or 'taken away.'"

Can you begin to imagine what it will be like? As Dr. Beirnes suggests: "Sin, violence, and bloodshed would be so rampant that it would soon exceed that of the Antediluvian world which God had to destroy."

And yet, the evidence is, my friends, that many who anticipated the rapture will be left behind to go through this awful period. That is why it is so very important to wake up to the realization that possibly instead of "millions missing" when

Jesus comes, there will be "millions left behind" when He returns.

Think with me for a moment how it was when Jesus came the first time. All of the religious leaders had believed in the coming of the Messiah but when Jesus came it was altogether different than what they had planned. They expected our Lord to come as a king when He came as a lowly babe in a manger. Although the Bible was filled with prophecies concerning His coming, they missed the true meaning of these prophecies and crucified the Christ they were expecting.

So we can't help but wonder if our Lord's second coming will not be similar to His first coming with many missing the event. Jesus testified, saying there would be those who desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it.

Take the parable of the Ten Virgins. All looked for the coming of the bridegroom but only half were ready when he actually came.

Perhaps you wonder what happened to the "foolish virgins." Did they not miss the marriage?

In a related passage, our Lord warns: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." (See Luke 12:35-40) Most people don't know this passage is in the Bible but it indicates the possibility of some who will miss the wedding who are told to be ready for our Lord when He returns from the wedding.

O, beloved, how important to be living for Christ so that when He comes, we will be ready!

Our Lord goes on to warn: "And this know, that if the good-man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not," (Luke 12:39-49)

We close nearly every broadcast with this warning: "Be ye therefore ready." We hope and pray that our audience will heed this message because we know what the Scripture says about the "house being broken through" with some who are ready, and others who will be left behind.

Now, should anyone doubt that a believer would be left behind with unbelievers, just continue reading in this same chapter where Jesus speaks of the servant who says in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming," and who begins to live carelessly.

What happens to such an one? Listen. We read, "The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder (cut him off), and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

I realize many will write to say we're teaching a partial rapture, or that we're preaching works for salvation, when all we are doing is to present the true picture of what it will be like when Jesus comes. How sad for vast multitudes who will be left behind at the rapture to go through the tribulation!

In Rev. 7:9, we read of a "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues...clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."

We readily recognize these people as being believers, for the "white robes" speak of the righteousness bestowed when we place faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ for our sins.

However, the question is asked: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?"

The answer is heard, "Sir, thou knowest...These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Did you notice, concerning this great multitude which came out of great tribulation, it is said that they "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Is it not apparent that at the coming of the Lord their robes were defiled? And in the midst of persecution, suffering and martyrdom, they repented of their defilement.

Concerning the church in Sardis, we read of a "few" that "have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." (Rev. 3:4)

What would the Lord say if He were to check our robes? What if He were to look at our churches? Would He find a "few" who have not defiled their garments?

As D. M. Panton observes: "These 'few' walking in sanctity, cannot be the only regenerate souls in Sardis; for the Lord accepts the whole church as an 'ecclesia.' However, in all of the Seven Churches of Revelation there are the select 'few' to be rewarded as 'overcomers'."

As Panton sees it: "The Holy Son of God cannot present unto Himself a trifling, indifferent, unsanctified body of nominal church members. His church must be made like unto Himself, the fairest and noblest expression of redeemed humanity that only His sufferings and death could ever produce."

Says Panton: "Our Lord's outburst from heaven to catch His bride away is either a comforting opiate for disobedient disciples, or else it is one of the most rousing of all truths--it cannot be both!"

Too long we have assumed that our readiness for rapture depends solely upon our being saved. But if this were true, then why all of the admonitions and warnings to believers to be ready for our Lord's return?

Again, to be left behind when Jesus comes wouldn't necessarily mean that we are lost, but rather that we must go through the purging fires of the tribulation, from which we would be expected to come through purified.

Peter speaks of the manifold testings believers were going through in his day, declaring: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 1:7)

Even Herman, believed to be an associate of the Apostle Paul, wrote of the trials of the early church as "a type of the great tribulation that is coming." He admonished believers, saying: "If ye then prepare yourselves, and repent with all your heart, and turn to the Lord, it will be possible for you to escape it, if your heart be pure and spotless, and ye spend the rest of your lives serving the Lord blamelessly." (From the Shepherd of Hermas)

Thus, our Lord has admonished us, saying: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36)

Are we watching and praying to escape the coming tribulation? Or, do we take for granted that we shall escape?

Paul relates how our Lord loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Is this our state--our position? Are we holy and without blemish?

Again, may we be reminded of the necessity of having on the white robes of Christ's righteousness and of having them kept clean. Our Lord admonishes, "Behold, I come as a thief, Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." (Rev. 16:15)

Notice, too, that when our Lord appears from Heaven on a white horse, we read: "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

How we need to see the importance of having on garments that are clean and white in order to be ready for our Lord's coming.

Of this we can be certain. If we want to be included in this entourage of saints to be caught upward when Christ comes, we can be ready. Concerning the marriage of the Lamb, we read, "His wife hath made herself ready."

A wedding is about to take place. If you are not aware of it, or are not preparing for it, the chances are that you are not ready and will be left behind when Jesus comes.

Concerning the Lamb's wife, we read, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Did you hear it?

Are you looking for Christ's coming? Is our Lord's return a "blessed hope"? If so, you will want to make preparation to be ready for this glorious event.

As John declares: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

How do we purify ourselves? Peter replies: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." (I Pet. 1:22)

So, dear one, come to Christ today. Repent of all your sins to trust the Saviour Who died for your sins. Then pray for the Holy Spirit's direction daily. Read the Word and fall in love with Him Who is the Living Word.

Indeed, be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

MISSING CHRISTIANS

Morris Cerullo, in a copyrighted article appearing in DEEPER LIFE magazine, relates a speaking engagement he had at a meeting of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship.

When he arrived, he heard a man giving this testimony: "Last night I had a vision of the rapture. I saw the rapture take place and 70% of the 'so-called church' was left behind."



Testifies Cerullo: "Now I couldn't believe that. I was shook. He bothered me so much I could hardly talk that night. And, when I can't talk, then I'm really bothered. I sputtered and stammered and couldn't wait until I got home to my room. I went right down on my face before God and said, "Lord, did you hear what that man said? He's a responsible man. He owns a million-dollar business. For a man to make a statement like that, he's either got to be irresponsible or you have actually spoken to him."

"Lord, I want to know," prayed Cerullo.

God spoke to his heart through the Word: "Is it not written that not everybody that cries 'Lord, Lord' will be received by Jesus when He comes?" He said: "Son, why do you err, not knowing my Scripture?"

One day the Lord spoke in a parable, saying: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."

We all know the story how all of the virgins slumbered and slept while waiting for the bridegroom. Finally, there came a lamp-trimming time as the hour of the returning bridegroom drew nearer.

"And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in to the marriage: and the door was shut."

In our broadcast we seek to emphasize this scriptural aspect of readiness. Remember, "they that were ready" went into the marriage.

As A.A. Ronshausen, writing in the CONVENTION HERALD, observes: "Half were ready and went in, eligible for rapture. Half were not ready and faced a shut door."

Dr. William F. Beirnes, writing in the MIDNIGHT CRY, says: "The parable of the wise and foolish virgins is a tragic illustration of the fact that many will not be ready when the Bridegroom comes in the air."

Indeed, how sad.

Norman B. Jerome, writing in the GOSPEL HERALD, refers to this parable as "one of the most powerful passages of the New Testament to urge the readers to be ready for the return of the Bridegroom from glory for His bride, the church."

Sarah Foulkes Moore of HERALD OF HIS COMING, writes: "Is it not solemn to contemplate that out of the ten expecting His coming, only five were ready..."

Mervin Chaplin, in a magazine article, notes that the question is not "Is Jesus coming back?" but "Will I be ready for His return?"

ARE YOU READY?

Lehman Strauss says: "It is sad, but true, that all saints will not be ready to meet Christ when He comes for His Church."

In Rev. 19:7 we read: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

Asks Strauss: "Why is it stated that she has made herself ready? Is not salvation entirely of grace apart from works?"

We proceed to read concerning the Lamb's wife: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." (v.8)

Strauss again points out that the "fine linen" mentioned here represents the "righteous deeds" in contrast to the imputed righteousness received at conversion.

Beloved, may we see the importance of being ready when Jesus comes. How sad to miss the rapture! And yet, the evidence of Scripture is that at a point and time in the future there will be a mass exodus from this earth of saints being raptured to Heaven. But the sad fact is, my friends, that half of those who expected to be included in the heavenly entourage of saints missed the event.

The late Dr. M. R. DeHaan warned: "The Bible speaks of those who will be ashamed at His appearing." This warning, incidentally, is found in I John 2:28 where we read, "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

What does it mean to "abide" in Christ? John goes on to explain, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." (I John 3:6a)

To be ashamed at Christ's coming is to literally shrink back--unprepared for this all-glorious event.

Stressed the late Dr. DeHaan, "Let me seriously warn you that God wants His people clean. The Lord Jesus will not tolerate a defiled bride....God help us to examine ourselves and make ourselves ready now."

Fred J. Meldau, in CHRISTIAN VICTORY magazine, says of the foolish virgins that they were "waiting" but not "watching." He goes on to mention that "Too many today believe that the Lord is coming but they are not "watching;" that is, 'watching for Him,' seeking His will in their daily lives, and looking to Him for daily strength."

Billy Graham has noted: "There is a shallowness, a surface-like quality to much of our Christianity today in America that cannot possibly delight the heart of God." He notes concerning these ten virgins: "Outwardly they were identical. They were the same to the eye but not in the heart." "Five of them had an inward supply of oil and five of them did not." He goes on to say, "There are thousands of professing Christians whose relationship to Christ is all external. They serve Christ with their lips but their hearts are far from him."

May we heed this message today and make such necessary preparation as to be ready when our Lord appears.

In I Cor. 15:23, we read of those for whom our Lord is coming. The verse says: "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

Let me ask this question, Are you Christ's? Do you belong to Him? Do you give evidence that you belong to Him by the things you do, by the life you live?

In Galatians 5:24, we read: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

Did you hear it?

We say we are Christ's--that we belong to Him. But have we evidenced this fact by dying to the lusts, the affections and appetites that defile the body and degrade the soul?

Again Billy Graham warns: "Unless you are emptied of self and filled with the Spirit, I fear for you when the coming world crisis begins."

I must admit there is something I admire about today's youth. Many place little value upon materialism. Whereas, we must have the latest of everything, many of these young people are satisfied to live apart from luxury. Yes, we may find fault with many of their crude ways of living, their blue denim clothing with shirttail hanging out, but as Pharisees who look on to criticize and point the finger of accusation, we are more guilty than they.

No wonder our Lord could say to the chief priests going through the ritual of the temple that "the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

"How can that be?" you might ask.

The fact is that when many have tried sex and suds (liquor) and sin and have found that it brings only heartache and headache, they are oftentimes ready for the only remedy that brings peace and comfort, and that is in knowing of the love of Jesus Christ Who was willing to die on the cross for our sins. So our Lord asks us to die to sin in order that we may live a full life for Him.

Have you crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts? Remember, the Apostle Paul says: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

The word "affections" used here is a Greek word meaning one's inner disposition. Our affections must needs be crucified. We cannot excuse our meanness, our selfishness, our carnality as traits of the old nature but must rather reckon it as dead and buried.

Then the word for "lust" here is the "outward expression of a desire or evil craving."

How much lust there is in the world today. Many who say they are in love are really victims of lust with evil passions taking over in their minds. If the situation presented itself, they would commit acts they know to be wrong because they have allowed their mind to dwell upon their evil cravings.

This is why we need the Holy Spirit--to give victory over our lower nature and to give preeminence to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. No wonder we are commanded to "be filled with the Spirit" which simply means to be under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Concerning the five wise virgins, they had oil in their vessels with their lamps. Instead of only making a profession, calling themselves Christians, belonging to a church, being baptized and all the rest, they also knew of a time when they died to the affections and lusts of life and surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

No wonder the Scripture exhorts us to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14) Again we read; "For God hath not called us to uncleanness but unto holiness." (I Thess. 4:7)

In a day of sensuality when every form of fleshly stimulation is seen--on billboards, on television, and even parading on our streets--how necessary to have the Holy Spirit abiding in His fulness.

Jude reminds us of those in the last times who are seen walking after their own ungodly lusts, sensual, having not the Spirit! (v. 18-19)

Did you hear it?

This represents the foolish virgins without oil in their vessels, their lamps going out!

Hear me, my friend. Now is the time to have your need met. As in the world around us there is an oil crisis, so in the spiritual realm there is this lack of oil--symbol of God's Holy Spirit.

Yet, these are the days of outpouring and God stands ready now to give you the best of Heaven's wealth in the outpouring of His Spirit.

But don't think for a moment that you can receive in your sinful, carnal state. God doesn't cast pearls before swine. You must humble yourself, admit your sinfulness, acknowledge your wretchedness, and accept Christ as both Saviour and Lord to live for Him, come what may!

A wedding is in preparation! The table is prepared with the best of everything. The bridal party is being formed. By coming out from the crowd and identifying yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ, you can be a part of that royal celebration.

The Bridegroom is coming. He is coming for a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing--a bride that is holy and pure.

With our hearts washed in the blood of Christ and our bodies temples of the indwelling Spirit of God, we can be in that wedding party.

Remember, concerning the wise virgins, it is said: "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

HOW MANY WILL BE RAPTURED WHEN JESUS COMES?



In a hotel in Southern Spain a crowd of young people gather around a juke-box as it blares forth the tune - "Jesus, Come Back to Your World."

Church leaders throughout history have believed in the doctrine of our Lord's Return. However, most of the early church fathers believed Christ would come back to this earth following the tribulation and the reign of Antichrist. As Jerome testified; "I told you that Christ would not come unless Antichrist had come before!" Likewise, Chrysostom believed that the appearance of Antichrist would be a "sign of the coming of Christ."

It was not until 1830 that the doctrine of the Second Coming came into clearer focus.

A young Scottish lassie by the name of Margaret MacDonald had a revelation that a select group of Christians would be caught up to meet the Lord in the air BEFORE the second advent.

This view was made popular by John Darby of the Plymouth Brethren who frequented the MacDonald home and later began to comment on the "rapture" as occurring before the tribulation. Articles appeared in his publication, THE MORNING WATCH.

Later others, including W. E. Blackstone, Dr. James M. Gray, A. C. Gaebelein, Dr. C. I. Scofield of the "Scofield Reference Bible," helped to popularize this view.

Not only were there questions as to WHEN our lord would appear for His own, but also for WHOM He was coming. Would He come for all believers regardless of their state of readiness?

As Oliver Boyt asks: "How can we distinguish between those who will be translated at the Rapture, and those who will be left behind for the tribulation?" (PROPHETIC WITNESS - Dec. '72)

He notes in the words of Jesus, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father." (Matt. 7:21)

Other Scriptures quoted by Jesus should cause us to examine our position as concerns the rapture question. May we not be taken in by any teaching that is simply recognized as the "popular" belief, for there are those who would tickle our ears by asserting all will be raptured when Jesus comes regardless of the life they are found to be living. As some prophetic writers assert - when Jesus comes, some will arise from the tavern and some from the theatre and we will proceed to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Knowing nothing enters Heaven that defiles, there are other Bible teachers who tell us the saints will stop midway to be judged and then will continue on their journey to the time of feasting with their Lord.

We are shocked with such interpretations of the Word, for they do grave injustice to the Scriptures and give many a false security.

Rather, we believe the Word of God teaches us that there is escape from coming events described as the Great Tribulation, providing we are found worthy by watchfulness and prayerfulness and conditioned upon our being children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

And as to the time of judgment, we are convinced that when our Lord suddenly appears at the rapture, He will judge immediately those who are ready to meet Him and ascend with Him back to Heaven. Any future judgment and time of rewards will await the setting up of the kingdom according to Rev. 11:18.

In seeking to answer the question - How many will be raptured when Jesus comes? - we would do well to review some of the types from the Old Testament.

First, let's consider the children of Israel as they cross the Red Sea and head toward the promised land. Of the two million who wandered in the wilderness, only two made it to Canaan - Joshua and Caleb. The writer of the Hebrews warns us that it was on account of sin that many died instead of achieving the promise. We read: "With whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?"

Again, during the days of the flood there were only seven saved as they rode above the waters in an ark, while the majority of that antediluvian civilization died in the flood.

The Scripture does not conclude that those who died were unbelievers but rather that they were "disobedient." We're also told that when Jesus died, He went and preached unto the spirits of those who died in the flood. And the reason given was that they "might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (I Pet. 3:19; 4:6)

What about Lot who was saved out of Sodom? Did not he and his family escape the holocaust of fire and brimstone that destroyed the city? While he obeyed the voice of God to flee to the mountains, his sons-in-law scoffed at him, and his wife looked back when commanded not to do so. Thus our Lord reminds us, "Remember Lot's wife" to indicate that it is possible to escape the wrath of God but to suffer physical death in the process.

What about Elijah? Could he be a type of the rapture? Why was he taken in a chariot of fire while there were at least 7,000 prophets who had not bowed the knee to Baal?

What about Enoch? Why was he selected to be taken and others left behind? Remember it was Enoch who prophesied the number of those who would be coming with our Lord when He is seen returning to this earth. He prophesied, saying: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints..." Jude 14. If "millions" are to be missing, why didn't Enoch write: "Behold the Lord cometh with millions of his saints"?

We don't want anyone to have a wrong conception concerning the rapture. We believe all can be ready for this glorious event. On the other hand, to assure sinful saints and disobedient disciples that they, too, will be included in the rapture would be giving a false hope for the blessed hope.

Did not our Lord remind us of the time when He will return, saying: "I tell you in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left." (Luke 17: 34-36)

As we understand it, these were two of the same kind. From outward observation both should have been taken. But our Lord, who knows the heart and sees with penetrating eyes of fire, discerns only one ready while the other is left behind.

To sum up our message, we would be reminded of our Lord's words, "Many are called, but few are chosen." (Matt. 20:16, 22:14)

Dwight Sylvester, Jr. writes: "The called and the chosen... there is a difference; but the distinction we make here is not between the saved and the unsaved but among the household of faith..." He notes: "To be chosen of God means not only to confess Jesus as Saviour, but to allow Him to become Lord and Master of our life."

When our Lord is seen coming from Heaven leading a procession on white horses, we read concerning these saints that they are "called, chosen and faithful." (Rev. 17:14)

We might ask - do we qualify to be in that army?

The "called" may very well represent all who are "invited"

to receive Christ as Saviour and Lord, for that is the meaning of the Greek word, "kletos."

The "chosen" are those whom God has selected to represent Him as was the Apostle Paul, described as a "chosen" vessel. (Acts 9:15) However, in a sense all believers are a "chosen" generation, and "chosen of God." (2 Pet. 2:4 & 9)

The "faithful" are those who are trustworthy and reliable when given responsibility. As in the case of the servants to whom were given talents depending on their investments, they were praised as "good and faithful" servants.

Again we ask - when the Lord comes, will we be among the "called, chosen and faithful"?

Peter writes: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure:" (2 Pet. 1:10) He speaks of the possibility of gaining an abundant entrance into the kingdom. He urges those recipients of the divine nature to add to their "faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." This is the abundant life that we can select or reject.

Paul also admonishes us to such spiritual goals as to be found worthy of our Lord's commendation and approval. Says Paul: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." (Philippians 3:14-15)

Beloved, whatever our calling, let us be at our best for Christ. It will surely be worth His commendation of "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Let us run the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Let us live for our Lord as if we alone were to come through crowned with victory, knowing we shall then have crowns to lay at His feet. If there are any regrets in Heaven, I believe it will be based on the fact that we could have done more to reach lost souls in telling them of Jesus; we could have been more faithful in our praying and in our devotion to our Blessed Lord. And we could have been more prepared for His coming by a life of love and sacrificial service.

Even now, let us establish goals and objectives, knowing we are saved by grace but rewarded for our faithfulness. May we watch and pray always that we may escape the things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man. And may we be ready, for in such an hour as we think not, the Son of man cometh.

WHEN OUR LORD COMES WILL HE FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH?

Spring is the time of year when many collegians are flocking to Florida, seeking sin and soaking sun on the crowded beaches during vacations.

But to organizations such as Campus Crusade for Christ and Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship it is a time of witness. "The kids are very receptive," testifies one leader, emphasizing that youth are "looking for something to hang onto--something that will last. Everything else they turn to--sex, beer, drugs--has disintegrated," he noted.



When our Lord was upon earth He asked the question: "When the Son of man cometh will he find faith on the earth?"

From all appearances you would have to conclude that faith is not dead. You might have to admit that even in Communist countries, in spite of persecution, there is a strong Christian witness although it may be underground.

As one western scholar has stated, "When the history of twentieth-century religion is written, the Russian church's witness of faith will rank as the greatest we have seen."

Karl Marx, who founded the communist philosophy, called religion the "opium of the people." Lenin also discounted faith as "a kind of spiritual gin."

Whatever the case, there is a thirst for that which satisfies. As one observer living in Moscow noted: "Young people are saying, in effect, that there is something lacking in their lives, some core of belief in something." He went on to say, "We cannot say they will find it in religion. But the fact that religion is where many of them are looking says something very significant about the Soviet Union today."

The evidence is, my friends, that there are unsatisfied thirsts everywhere...in this country and abroad.

Recall how a certain woman came to get water from a well in Samaria. Our Lord compared the spiritual life-giving water to the water in that well that she was about to put in her water-pot. "Whoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again," said Jesus. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Can you understand this woman saying: "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not"?

Lenin may call religion a "kind of spiritual gin," but the only satisfaction for the thirsts all around us comes from drinking the living water of the Word of God, or enjoying the wine of the Spirit. As Paul admonished, "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." (Eph.5:18)

In Russia, incidentally, all kinds of attempts have been made to hinder the young people from getting the Gospel. For instance, all religious instruction for youth is banned. Instead, in the schools there is the teaching of what is called "Scientific Atheism." This is a required subject even on the higher university level.

The Soviet Constitution says that anyone is free to follow whatever faith he desires yet this does not work out in practice.

U.S.NEWS & WORLD REPORT says: "Outwardly, the Soviet officials put considerable stress on the freedom of religion. Almost every day, propaganda to con-communist nations includes at least one item about Russian religious activity, or foreign travels of Soviet churchmen. Inside Russia, however, the authorities heavily stress 'freedom from' religion."

To show how this "religious freedom" works, it was recently reported that several persons were sent to prison simply for copying articles from a religious publication. It is reported that last March, eight Baptists were sentenced up to five years for printing Bibles on an underground press. Since the government owns all the printing plants, it can be understood how difficult it is to have a Bible in the Soviet Union today. On the black market, a Russian-language Bible sells for \$100 or more.

The most powerful means employed by the government to keep people away from attending church is to deny that person any job, or promotion at work, or to keep a young person from attending a technical school or from enrolling in the university.

Other forms of harassment are used to keep people from becoming believers. For instance, infant baptisms are condemned by the government for health reasons. While we are not condoning such baptisms, it points out how a government can destroy the faith of its people simply by ruling such practices to be illegal on the basis of being a health hazard.

A sign in the clinic of a shipyard in the Ukraine proclaimed that it had "come to the attention of the administration that a doctor and several nurses had baptized their children...." What a furor developed. The sign went on to say: "This undermines the discipline of the establishment and must not be repeated."

You see how subtle can be the activities of those who can limit religious freedom by denying zoning permits to build churches in residential areas, or by restricting use of buildings that do not meet certain inspections some of which may be most unreasonable.

There are those who loudly call for the separation of church and state as though this were a part of our own constitution. Thank God, it is not mentioned there but you will find it in the Soviet constitution--Article 124 which reads: "In order to ensure to citizens freedom of conscience, the church in the U.S.S.R. is separated from the state, and the school from the church."

Governor George Wallace, addressing a rally in Florida, declared it was possible to have separation of church and state - "which we all believe in" - and still be able to "thank Almighty God and teach about Him" in the school classrooms. America's founding fathers never intended a "separation of God and state," he noted.

There are instances of state legislatures and county school boards renewing the fight to have the Bible read in the schools and allowing for voluntary prayers.

For instance, in New Hampshire a state law was passed allowing for communities to decide whether to permit such praying on a voluntary basis. "It's about time," said parents who feel that too long God has been ruled out of the educational program.

In Florida, too, some schools continue the practice of reading the Scriptures and having silent prayer. School Superintendent Max Bruner warns of the communist infiltration sure to befall a Godless country. And he denounced what he called

“sick segments” of American society that contend that school prayer infringes on constitutional rights.

While we ban the Bible from the schools, word comes that in Bolivia the New Testament is being placed in all the public and private schools as an official textbook.

We see coming a wave of persecution that will befall the whole world. With the advance of atheistic domination in all parts of the globe, can't you see the freedoms we now enjoy disappearing one at a time?

In Revelation, chapter 13, we read of a time coming when the whole world will come under the rule of a godless sovereign who will demand the worship of everyone everywhere.

Listen to verse 7: “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”

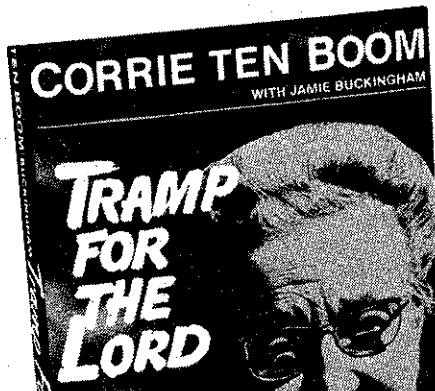
Did you hear it?

Do you mean there will be “saints” on the earth during the coming awful tribulation? - you might ask.

Who are these saints? Are they related to Israel only as some would have us believe - speaking of the remnant of believers that will be found during that period?

Or, is this a reference to those who will be left behind when Jesus comes - who thought they were ready for the rapture but missed it?

Of course, there are those who see Christians on earth during this time of the Antichrist. They see no possibility of escape from the cruel tortures that will be inflicted upon believers in days just ahead when lawlessness and godlessness reign supreme.



Corrie Ten Boom says: “There are some among us teaching that there will be no tribulation, that the Christians will be able to escape all this.” She goes on to warn: “These are the false teachers Jesus was warning us to expect in the latter days.”

That there will be great tribulation upon the earth, and that multitudes who called themselves Christians will go through it, is a clear teaching of the Scriptures. At least a dozen times you'll find reference to "saints" being on the earth during that period of time.

On the other hand, the Scriptures clearly teach the possibility of escape from this time just ahead. Jesus exhorted his followers not to live carelessly in surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life so that that day come upon us unawares. "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth," said Jesus.

Did you hear it?

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

Beloved, as long as the Bible teaches the possibility of escape from this coming awful period of tribulation, we are going to emphasize it.

Too many are living lukewarm, superficial lives, professing Christianity instead of actually possessing that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. It's time we realize what the Bible has to say and means when it tells us to "Watch.... and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things."

You can't be accounted worthy to be saved. You're saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, by accepting Him as your Saviour. But you can be accounted worthy by living a holy life.

It's time we learn that we can't divorce Bible prophecy from body purity. Speaking of our Lord's return we read, "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." That is, if you are really looking for our Lord to come you are not only going to know you have invited Jesus into your heart, but you are also going to be living for Him every day.

For remember He hath said, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

MISSIONARY CHRISTIANS OR MISSING CHRISTIANS AT OUR LORD'S RETURN?



An article in a French Communist newspaper (*Paix and Liberte'*) finds the writer declaring: "The Gospel is a much more powerful weapon for the renewal of society than is our Marxist philosophy. All the same, it is we who will finally beat you. We are only a handful, and you Christians are numbered by the millions. But if you remember the story of Gideon and his three hundred companions, you will understand why I am right. We communists do not play with words. We are realists and seeing that we are determined to achieve our object, we know how to obtain the means. Of our salaries and wages we keep only what is strictly necessary; and we give the rest for propaganda purposes. To this propaganda we also consecrate all our free time and part of our holidays. You, however, give only a little time and hardly any money for the spreading of the Gospel of Christ!"

This communist writer concludes this article by asking: "How can anyone believe in the supreme value of this Gospel if you do not practice it, if you do not spread it, and if you sacrifice neither time nor money for it?"

As David Livingstone once said: "I will place no value on anything I have, or may possess, except in relation to the Kingdom.... If anything will advance the interests of that Kingdom, it shall be given away, or kept, only as by giving or keeping of it I shall most promote the glory of Him to whom I owe all my hopes for time and eternity."

Beloved, if we truly loved Jesus, would we concentrate on ourselves, building nicer homes and lovelier church dwellings, or would we not seek to use every available means and method to send the Gospel to the ends of the earth, sharing our earthly possessions as well? For that is old-time Bible salvation.

You will remember how that when John the Baptist urged the people to repent, they demanded of him, "What shall we do?"

Hear this fiery Baptist preacher as he urges sacrifice - even the surrender of one's goods, saying: "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise."

Who would ever link denying ourselves of a needed garment or of necessary food to that of repentance?

Oh, that we in our day who have become so soft, so smug, so self-satisfied would repent and discover the life of sacrifice, surrender, self-denial, and service!

Jesus said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself..." This isn't popular preaching, but it is needed preaching. Particularly, in view of our Lord's soon return is there much in the Scriptures to indicate that according as to how we invest our money we can be READY or NOT READY for His coming.

That's right. Our Lord relates the parable of a man journeying into a far country, but who entrusts to his servants talents according to their several abilities.

We think of talents as representing our ability to sing, or teach a Sunday School class, but here in the parable it represents MONEY. On the basis of how each servant invests his lord's money entrusted to him, he is rewarded accordingly.

That servant who hid his lord's money - who buried it in the earth - who failed to invest it in his lord's work, he is told: "Thou wicked and slothful servant...thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury." And, the unprofitable servant is cast out into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

On the other hand, that servant who invested wisely the money entrusted to his care was commended by his lord, who said: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant....thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

Ah, beloved, that speaks to my heart today. We have only one life, 'twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last!

The Apostle James calls attention to those, who in the last days heap up treasure, saying: "Weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you." Stocks and bonds, bank accounts, social security, insurance will mean nothing in the day when Antichrist and his ruthless armies reign over the earth.

May God help us to invest in souls while there is still opportunity.

Returning to this matter of stewardship discussed today, we see where the servant in Matthew 25:18 "digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money" rather than invest his talents. He was cast into the outer darkness of tribulation and called an unprofitable servant.

Whereas, the profitable and faithful servants were told: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

So, this matter of stewardship is absolutely important. It is worthy of the believer's highest consideration. Remember, to be faithful in giving is to hear his "Well done."

I believe Jesus is coming soon...and He is going to reckon with His servants.

No less an authority than Dr. A. J. Gordon has said: "I warn you, it will go hard with you when our Lord comes, if He finds your wealth hoarded up in needless accumulations instead of being sacredly devoted to giving the Gospel to the lost."

Continues this saint of God: "He who is not a missionary Christian will be a missing Christian when the great day comes of bestowing the rewards of service."

Did you hear it?

I wonder, how strong is our love for Christ today? Isn't there something that stirs our heart and makes us want to show our love for Christ by sharing with others?

Jesus said concerning those who fed and clothed those of his brethren who were hungry and naked: "Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Today, may we heed the call of God.

Let us follow the example of the Corinthians of whom we read they first gave themselves to Christ, and then gave of their substance to Him.

The Lord doesn't force us to give against our will but does remind us: "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully. GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER." (2 Cor. 8:5&9:6-7)

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over," said Jesus. So may we give, and "Indeed, be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."