

WHEN WILL



CHRIST COME

- Ray Brubaker

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WHEN WILL CHRIST COME?

Illustration by
Norman DUKE
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From Buenos Aires comes a report of a man taken aboard a flying saucer by aliens from another galaxy.

According to this newspaper account, an Argentine trucker claims to have been carried aboard a space ship for an hour and a half and told that the earth was about to suffer grave events in the future.

Under a truth drug, a team of six doctors reportedly interrogated this man who was suffering from a nervous shock that he could not explain. The man, Dionisio Yanca, reported that last October he was abducted and taken aboard this UFO. He said the space ship connected a hose to high tension wires and another to a small lagoon, apparently to take on electric power. The newspaper said a local electric company reported a sharp and unexplained rise in power consumption at the time. It also stated that a UFO was reported in the area on the day Yanca claimed he was abducted.

Yanca testified that these visitors from other worlds were trying to determine whether man could survive in this galaxy were the earth to be destroyed.

Manmade predictions are not always accurate. Take, for instance, the Kohoutek Comet which was believed to be the "spectacle of the century" for brightness. While the Skylab astronauts observed the comet in its brilliance, glowing "yellow and orange, just like a flame," its appearance as it neared the sun caused it to fade out and disappear from view. So the comet was declared to be a disappointment--the "dud of the decade," as one reporter called it.

Pope Paul, upon witnessing the comet from the terrace of his palace, using a small telescope, declared: "Once again we have felt the sense of the cosmic mystery: the boundless space, the endless time, the incalculable sidereal scenery, its perfect movement." He then cited a Psalm which says: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament declares the work of His hands."

While the Kohoutek Comet was a disappointment to many, and declared to be a fizzle, yet we would not fail to be reminded of its possible significance. Though it was not seen with the eye, we must recognize that in God's vast universe there is much we cannot see. Yet, the sudden and unexpected appearance of a comet can be important. As the star of Bethlehem heralded Christ's first coming, so the comet could be a sign of His soon return.

Though the Kohoutek Comet has come and gone, it may still have a message for us today, letting us know that its appearance may be a forerunner of ominous events to follow. Whether we want to accept it or not, past comets have been harbingers of doom. So, who knows what's ahead, apart from the revelation of the Word of God which does acknowledge the significance of signs in the heavens.

While we think of the star of Bethlehem appearing at the time of Jesus' birth, is it not interesting to note that the star was still around when Jesus was a young child of two, and the wisemen who were led by the star found him--not in a manger, but in a house.

So, could it be that the comet's appearance continues as a reminder that Christ is yet to come. Although we know not the day nor the hour when He will return, the recent comet may have been a sign reminding us to continue our upward watch, waiting for the coming of our Blessed Lord.

In previous broadcasts we once discussed the subject, HOW WILL CHRIST COME? We noted Matthew 24:27, which says: "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." One writer observed that the comet, too, came out of the east and shined to the west, declaring that it, also, was a sign of the coming of the Son of man.

Today, we would like to talk about WHEN will Christ come?

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, notes: "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh" Here we are reminded how Christ will come! We are told it will be as a "thief in the night."

While we believe that His coming is near, and each day hastens the event, yet no one knows the time when He shall actually appear. This is a certainty of Scripture. The reason our Lord has not informed us of the day of His coming is in order that we be ever watchful. As Sarah Foulkes Moore once wrote in HERALD OF HIS COMING, "The unannounced hour of His imminent return makes imperative--constant readiness!"

So our Lord is coming as a thief--when we least expect Him to come. Sometimes it is in the midst of a crisis such as the threatened invasion of the Middle East that we suddenly wake up to the fact that Armageddon may be approaching, and we think that Christ may soon appear. We should be alerted and awakened by these signs of coming judgment.

Nevertheless, when our Lord does actually appear, it may be a time of relaxed calm when the nations are enjoying release from world tensions of war and strife.

Isn't this exactly what Paul writes: "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh."

In the President's State of the Union address, he called attention several times to the peace that presently exists in the world for the first time in many decades. But is this not a sign that the Apostle Paul gave as to when destruction will come?

It's interesting to read the predictions of various prognosticators concerning the future, and it's amazing how closely some of their forecasts line up with the Scriptures.

In making his forecast, one of these seers sees "Tensions and fighting in the Middle East leading to World War Three with nuclear weapons."

Another psychic predicts: "The Middle East crisis will trigger worldwide, nuclear war."

Another says: "We will see the groundwork being laid for the greatest war mankind has ever had to face."

Observing our peace conferences, and diplomats sitting around peace tables, are we not to expect a lasting peace?

Apparently not, according to these forecasters who claim to foresee the future. The Scriptures likewise assert that the endtime sign determining when sudden destruction strikes, is when men say, "What peace! What security."

In the second place, our Lord will appear at a time of usual business activity and general prosperity.

After our Lord reminded His disciples that no man knows the day and hour that He will come, He reminded them, "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matthew 24:37-38)

Luke also gives us a description of how it will be when the Son of man will be revealed, saying: "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded." (Luke 17:28)

These scriptures would lead us to believe that a time of general prosperity will be in evidence when our Lord returns.

One well-known evangelist has predicted for this year a world recession, starting in Germany and spreading to Europe, Japan, and eventually, the United States. There is no question as to the economic chaos that already exists and is now sweeping certain parts of the world leaving confusion, misery and hardship in its path.

Already in some countries they have had to force a shut down of certain industries, or have had to reduce the work-week to three or four days, largely because of the fuel crisis. In Great Britain, the Electricity Council has urged the people to eat more cold meals and use less hot water.

Another evangelist, in his publication which comes to my desk, writes: "America will not survive the energy crisis, neither will the other nations, for this is the beginning of the fall of the nations that the Kingdom of God might be set up. All kingdoms and nations shall be dashed to pieces, and Jesus and His anointed shall rule them with a rod of iron."

No doubt, the present crisis is the beginning of endtime problems seen facing the world. While it is hoped that the fuel crisis will pass, nevertheless, there will be many other shortages including that of food, that will force millions of people to adjust to a new way of life. Higher prices will keep certain foods from off our table because we can't afford to pay for these commodities. Also, there may come a time when even bread is too expensive for some poor families to buy, much less, meat, which is completely out of reach of their pocketbooks.

Yet, in the midst of world calamities including floods, famines and earthquakes, we see men buying and selling, planting and building, eating and drinking. It may be a time of adjustment for many, but it will also be a time of continued normal activity when Christ suddenly appears.

When will Christ come? In the third place, He will come when we pray for Him to come. With our standard of living, many have grown comfortable. Like the foolish rich man in the Scripture, we have said: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be

merry.”

Isn't this the way many of us live today with sufficient money in the bank, and social security checks coming each month, so that we can relax a bit, and maybe retire to Florida or some other state?

But, in the Scriptural account, our Lord said to this rich man, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.”

We're convinced that in the midst of our prosperity that has found us enjoying plenty, God has permitted us to face a food and fuel shortage which reminds us that we're not going to be here forever. Some day, regardless of careful planning, we're going to exhaust earth's resources; and there won't be enough land left to grow our food, nor enough food to feed the hungry world. In fact, we have approached that stage already in various parts of the globe. So that, already, we have those in India and China, and Russia, and Africa, praying: “Come quickly, Lord Jesus.”

We're convinced! Get enough people praying for the Lord to come and He will come!

On the other hand, enjoy the pleasures of life and live carelessly, and show no concern for our Lord's return, and we will be found left behind when He does appear.

Read the account in Luke's Gospel of the man who says, “My lord delayeth his coming,” and is found living carelessly. Jesus goes on to comment: “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, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.” (Luke 12:45-46)

Did you hear it?

Here's a man who should have been prepared for His lord's coming, but he lives carelessly and recklessly; and so when our Lord does appear, we're told, his portion is with unbelievers.

When will Christ appear? We don't know. But we do know there are admonitions and warnings to be ready at all times of the day lest, coming suddenly, our Lord finds us sleeping the sleep of indifference, lukewarmness, and spiritual laziness.

Listen again to His Words when He urges us, saying: “Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 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: 34-36)

These are Scriptures we seldom hear preached.

Friend, I believe the Lord is saying that we are not to think that we are automatically ready for His coming simply because sometime, somewhere, we made a profession of faith. Regardless of how sincere and how genuine was our

decision, we are called upon to live for Christ daily, love Him sincerely, serve Him devoutly, read His Word devotedly, and pray always that we may be accounted worthy to escape the coming great tribulation that is just ahead. That is exactly what the Scriptures tell us.

Let me say, in all due respect to those who evaluate being left behind as relating to the loss of one's salvation, that we do not believe that. Rather, we believe the Bible teaches that the rapture is the result of readiness. Concerning all ten virgins that awaited the coming bridegroom, we read: "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut." (Matt. 25:10)

That's why on this broadcast we urge "Be ye ready," for it is not only our decision for Christ that prepares us for the coming of Jesus, it is also our day-to-day walk that keeps us ready for that unannounced event.

May I ask you--if receiving Christ as your Saviour automatically made you ready for the rapture, then why did our Lord suggest that His coming may be at four different times of the day, warning us in these words: "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

In other words, it's possible that our Lord may come at four different times of the day and He wants us to Watch... or as the word implies....be alert and awake, and not careless, lukewarm or indifferent to His coming.

We would note further that our Lord's message was meant not only for His disciples but also recorded for us today when it is most urgent. For He says: "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch!"

Although we know not the day nor the hour when Christ will come, He is urging us to WATCH and to BE READY. By knowing Him as our Saviour and found living for Him daily, we can be ready. On the other hand, if we are lying and cheating and stealing and we call ourselves Christians, it gives evidence to the fact that we are not ready. Readiness involves not only knowing Christ but living for Him, not only trusting His forgiveness but repenting from sin, not only asking Jesus to save us but then walking in paths of purity. For it is in view of Christ's coming that we read, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (I John 3:3)

This verse says, if you are looking for Christ's coming, you're not going to be out with someone else's wife, or living with someone else's husband in an impure relationship. If you have the hope of Christ's coming, you will purify yourself even as he is pure.

Hear me, it's time for Christians to come clean....to turn from sin, having trusted the Saviour, and prepare to be ready for our Lord's unannounced return. For remember, He hath said: "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

THE RAPTURE **WHEN?**

Today, we continue our series entitled, WHEN WILL CHRIST COME!

In the first place, we have already asserted that our Lord will appear when men are saying, "What peace! What security!" In I Thess. 5:2-3, we read: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." In his State of the Union message, the President reported achievements of peace which mark this decade as the result of successful diplomacy. However, it is in the midst of an atmosphere of "peace" that we can expect our Lord to appear.

In the second place, as previously noted, our Lord will return at a time of usual business activity and general prosperity. We quoted His words that His coming would be as it was in the days of Lot and Noah, "They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded..." also "marrying and giving in marriage"...events characteristic of times of general prosperity and normal business activity.

In the third place, we suggested our Lord will come when we pray for Him to come. In the Lord's prayer, we are taught to pray for His kingdom to come. The last promise in the Bible finds our Lord saying, "Surely, I come quickly." This is followed by the last prayer in the Bible, "Even so come, Lord Jesus." It is when circumstances become so desperate that Christians around the world are praying for Christ to come, that He will surely return. In Russia and China there is already this kind of desperate praying. In America, it may take some hardships such as the energy crisis and persecution before Christians really cry out for the coming of our Lord.

In the fourth place, we would observe that Christ will come when God determines that the time is right for Him to come.

In Matthew 24:36, our Lord declared: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." So the final decision as to when Christ will come is left up to the Father.

Someone might ask, did not our Lord know of the time of His coming? He said, "I and the Father are one," therefore He should have known of that day and hour of His appearing! One theological commentary stated as concerns our Lord-- as man, He did not know; and as God, He knew but would not declare Himself. This perhaps is a reference to the humiliation of our Lord Who, when becoming man, laid aside the vesture of total knowledge which He possessed, and thus was limited in determining the time of His coming.

You would suppose the angels which surround the throne of God would have some kind of knowledge concerning Christ's coming, but even they are limited likewise, and are not able to tell us the time of Christ's return.

Remember, at the building of the tower of Babel, we read that the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which was being built. Even so, today, we have evidence that our earth is under some kind of surveillance from beings from other worlds. Particularly, it is in view of possessing nuclear weapons capable of bringing global destruction that we are believed to be under the scrutiny of angels. At least, this may be the explanation of the UFO's being seen in our skies today. Maybe we are being watched by angels desirous of determining how close man is coming to the brink of endtime destruction.

This, then, presents another observation concerning the coming of Christ. Could it be that Christ is seen returning to this earth just prior to mass destruction which is coming upon the earth? As Noah was preserved in an ark before the flood, will the saints be raptured before the coming holocaust we call the Great Tribulation?

Today, a nuclear war ever remains a possibility; and a surprise attack is an increasing threat. Could it happen that Christ would appear just moments before such an atomic holocaust hits the earth?

The book of the Revelation describes the four horsemen of the Apocalypse who are seen suddenly to appear with power over a fourth of the earth to destroy men with sword, hunger and death. Particularly, we would note the rider on the red horse who had power to take peace from the earth. We read, "Unto him was given a great sword." (Rev. 6:4)

Who is the rider on the red horse seen with a great sword? Will he strike in a surprise attack using nuclear power?

In 1962, a book was published entitled, SOVIET MILITARY STRATEGY. The main emphasis of this book was that an all-out nuclear attack will be launched once the time is ripe.

We live in the constant threat of atomic destruction from satellites overhead that could be detonated by the throw of a switch in Moscow, or from giant rockets that could be hurled upon our cities.

Do we have evidence that our Lord would appear to rapture the saints before such a catastrophe would be launched?

Again we refer to Christ's parallel of Lot's day to the day of His coming. In Luke 17:29, we read: "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

Did you hear it?

When will Christ come? If we understand this Scripture correctly, our Lord will return before this fiery holocaust of death and destruction is rained down upon our cities. For as Lot was pulled out of Sodom before the destruction of fire and brimstone, even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. We see the saints caught up to meet our Lord before this endtime destruction.

Beloved, it behoves us to be ready for we know not when that will be. The hour is growing late, and each passing day brings us closer to our Lord's return!

We would be reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul who writes: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."

Again in I John 2:28, 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."

Do you see that there is danger and death in delay? We are urged to come to Christ now; for today is still a day of salvation when you can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

Then, after we are saved, we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That is, we need to yield our all to God so that He can control our actions and motivate our lives, so that we are living in constant readiness for the return of our blessed Lord. This is the teaching of Scripture which says: "Be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

Rex Humbard, in one of his sermons, declared: "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." He goes on to say that our Lord's command for us to be ready, to watch, to wait, or to look for His coming, denotes momentary expectancy.

Today, are you ready should Jesus come to rapture the saints--to remove from off the earth those who are ready to meet Him? Then there would follow upon this earth the cataclysmic judgment of God's wrath preceded by the awful fiery destruction of man's anger.

In view of this coming calamity, we are instructed by Jesus, who said, "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."

Are we praying for escape as Jesus commanded us, or do we foolishly take for granted that we will escape simply because we have never before suffered the destruction of our cities, or because we are such good Christians?

May God forgive us. May He help us to see that we need to be ready for the event we call the rapture--when the Lord comes and the saints are caught up from this earth to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

It would seem that the Lord is opening the eyes of His servants to see that many who think they are ready for Christ's return will be left behind because they are not really ready.

An evangelist related attending a meeting where a testimony was given by an outstanding businessman who related a vision wherein he saw the rapture take place and 70% of the "so-called church" was left behind. Think of it!

This noted evangelist wrote: "I couldn't believe that. I was 'shook'. He bothered me so much I could hardly talk that night." (He was the scheduled speaker.)

When he asked the Lord about it, the voice of God spoke to his heart, saying: "Son, why do you err, not knowing the Scripture." And he began to weep.

The parable of the ten virgins came to his mind...and he recalled all ten looked for the bridegroom, but five would be left behind for the simple reason that they were not ready.

Then he read the parable of the talents, and read how the unprofitable servant--the man who did not invest his lord's money--was cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Could it be that on account of unfaithfulness, a man would be left behind at the rapture?

Well, the Bible tells us that those who will be raptured--who are seen in the Heavenly train of our Lord Jesus Christ, are "called, chosen and faithful."

Could the rapture be the reward of readiness?

It's true that no man knoweth the day nor the hour. But it is also true--in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh! **BE YE THEREFORE READY!**

CHRIST'S RETURN WHEN?

Our Lord gave many signs which would reveal that His coming is imminent. In fact, He chided the Pharisees and Sadducees, saying: "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (Matt. 16:3)

When asked by His disciples concerning the sign of His coming, our Lord first gave some general predictions as to how it would be with wars and deception characterizing the age leading up until He returns. Then, more specific predictions were given: "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places."

Lastly, there is a final prediction of the Endtime preaching of the Gospel which will characterize the day of His appearing. For our Lord declared: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt 24:3-14)

Much time could be spent in commenting on these signs but we would quote Dr. Alva J. McClain of Grace Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana, who has observed: "These signs today are so numerous and persistent that we have actually gotten used to seeing them. Even some Christians regard them with growing indifference." Says McClain: "The emergence of all of these signs at the same time is the greatest sign revealing that the coming of the Lord is near."

Today, we'd like to comment on these signs given by our Lord, and other signs, which might reveal that His return is imminent.

Speaking of deception, I see where Dr. Howard Estep in his prophetic newsletter calls attention to the imposters and religious deceivers appearing on the world stage today. One poses as the "perfect-master" while another comes as a "peace-maker." In some communities, Dr. Estep noted, approximately one half of the church page is made up of ads pertaining to cults, false religious organizations, and spiritual deceivers. Quite an indictment.

At Babel, you may recall, Nimrod founded a civilization based on a false religious premise--one that exalts man's rule above the divinely-established authority as witnessed in the Word of God. The end of this age will find a similar religious conglomeration--an amalgamation of religious belief merged into a single ecclesiastical union. It, too, is described in the Scriptures as Babylon. Many will be deceived into joining what they consider to be a universal fellowship organized to achieve a man-made unity. But this is described in the Bible as MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, doomed to fall, for it fails to exalt the person of our Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour and Redeemer of mankind. For

our Lord declared: "I am the way, the truth and the life," saying: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Thus, deception characterizes the endtime with many being deceived.

Then, our Lord declared that wars and rumors of wars would characterize this age with nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Some point to 1914 as introducing the fulfilment of this prediction because it inaugurated the series of world wars with which we are all familiar.

The late Konrad Adenauer, former chancellor of West Germany, once commented that "before 1914 there was real peace, quiet and security on this earth--a time when we didn't know fear."

World War I was described in LIFE magazine as killing more men than any previous war--the first war to suck in whole nations. (March 13, 1964)

Justice Jackson, at the Nuremberg trials, described the plight of the nations of our time in these words, declaring: "Two World Wars have left a legacy of dead which number more than all the armies engaged in any war that made ancient or medieval history."

Wars bring famine. The ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA comments that "during and after the 1914-1918 war," there developed "famine conditions...widespread in many parts of Europe. Millions died in the Russian famine alone."

Then, the WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA notes: "After World War II, there occurred the greatest world-wide shortage of food in history."

This brings us to where we are today--facing world famine. As B.R. Sen, Director General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, said in 1966, "The world food situation is now more precarious than at any time since the period of acute shortage immediately after the Second World War."

Along with wars and famine comes pestilence, just as Jesus said would happen. The SATURDAY EVENING POST commented on tragedies resulting from the first World War, stating: "No recorded pestilence before or since has equaled the 1918-1919 death toll in numbers. In those two years an estimated 21 million died of influenza-pneumonia throughout the world, some 850,000 in the United States alone."

Then, referring to earthquakes which would characterize this age, we have an item from CHANGING TIMES reminding us, "In this century, earthquakes have killed more than 900,000 people..." (May, 1968 issue)

So you see the rapid fulfilment of these prophecies about which Jesus spoke, with His final observation being that the Gospel of the Kingdom would be preached into all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.

That the gospel is being proclaimed into all the world, who can deny? In particular, radio has penetrated both the iron curtain and the bamboo curtain to reach countries where there is not the freedom of religion which some countries enjoy.

In the United States a recent radio survey found 92% of all persons eighteen and older listening to the radio. So radio is known to be an effective tool for communicating the Gospel message.

In the Soviet Union, the newspaper TRUD complains about the great number of people listening to religious broadcasts in that country. An Associated Press dispatch from Moscow notes: "The voices of religious radio advocates cease neither day nor night...Western radio broadcasts with religious themes are having some effect on Soviet citizens," notes this newspaper.

The late Dr. M. R. DeHaan believed that the last great sign of Christ's coming as given by our Lord was the "Universal preaching of the Gospel by radio."

When will Christ come?

We believe the time is ripe for His return. Should the doors of opportunity for the Gospel suddenly close, then we believe our Lord must surely come. America is one nation that God has given a responsibility to get the Gospel to the ends of the earth; and should the doors finally close, then we believe the church age will end.

Did not our Lord urge us, saying, "The night cometh when no man can work." (John 9:4)

We hear there are several tax bills pending in Congress which could deny income tax deductions for contributions given to churches, missions and Bible colleges after January 1, 1976. (House Resolution 636, and Senate Resolution 3657).

On the other hand, we understand the need of our government to finance its program, but to deny citizens the tax-exempt privileges that they have enjoyed for so long would seriously hurt the work of the Lord.

Nevertheless, we believe the doors of opportunity for the Gospel will remain open until the Lord comes. We know they are closed in certain areas of the world, but we are reminded of our Lord's words to the Church of Philadelphia when He said, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

You'll remember in the parable of the ten virgins, it wasn't until the five wise virgins entered into the marriage feast that the door closed! God, Who is sovereign, keeps the door open!

We may grow ever anxious for the coming of the Lord, but God wants us to be busy, winning souls to Him, and warning those who are not ready, to repent and get right with Him.

James writes: "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." He reminds us that as the farmer waits for the fruit to ripen, so the Lord hath long patience. He is not willing that any should perish but that all might be saved.

When will Christ come?

Some say - "When the last soul is saved, He will come."

While we believe we should be winning souls now, we recognize that God will be seeking by His grace to bring men to Himself even amidst the great tribulation. Peter at Pentecost linked the promise of salvation even to the day when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, saying: "It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Acts 2:20-21.

This should not be interpreted to mean that God is giving men another chance so that they can postpone their salvation. If a man does not heed the love and mercy of God now, it is doubtful that he will turn to Christ in the midst of persecution and adversity. We emphasize as do the Scriptures, that today is the day of salvation. Harden not your heart!

Reflecting on Noah's day, we think of him and his family as the only ones who were saved from the flood. While this is true, and the rest of the populace drowned, there is evidence that many in their dying gasp called upon the name of the Lord. As the waters were rising upon the earth, can you not visualize men fleeing to the hills while praying to Almighty God for salvation!

Isn't it true that when men face death they call upon the Lord? Thomas Edison neglected spiritual things until the last two years of his life. As he lay dying, and the doctor and family were anxiously waiting around his bedside, he suddenly opened his eyes and said: "Doctor, it's beautiful over there," and smiled as he said it.

Henry Ford, Sr., when approached by an Associated Press reporter and asked concerning Edison's greatest discovery, bowed his head and thought of his old friend. Then, looking squarely into the eyes of the reporter, he said: "Sir, I consider Mr. Edison's greatest discovery...to be his discovery of the fact that there is a God, and that the soul is immortal."

Darwin, we understand, similarly turned to the Lord during his dying days.

Again, this is not meant to indicate that we should delay our turning to Christ, because for many it is too late when on their death beds. We should turn to the Lord when we have a lifetime to serve Him.

Evidence that men turned to the Lord during the flood in the days of Noah is seen in Peter's description of the event, wherein it is stated that Christ "went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." (I Pet. 3:19-20)

What does Peter tell us?

Are we not clearly informed that when our Lord died he visited those who had previously perished. In particular, mention is made of the spirits of those who had disobeyed the preaching of Noah, but who were found in Paradise, for they called upon the Lord for pardon and forgiveness as the flood waters poured over them in death. Peter goes on to say: "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (I Pet. 4:6)

As we would understand it, Noah was more successful in his preaching than that for which we give him credit. We believe the people knew about God from Noah's preaching, along with the testimony of his building the ark. But they paid no heed to his warning of a coming flood. In fact, it had probably never rained before and they were not going to be frightened over his talk of a flood. So, when the flood came, only his family was spared judgment, while the remainder of mankind perished.

So will it be in the end of this age. The call of God goes forth to men everywhere to "Watch...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)

How few there are who heed this message. In fact, this is said to be for the Jews, or that such warnings are not for us today. May God help us. The sweeping tide of tribulation will find many, as in Noah's day, without making proper preparation so as to escape coming judgment.

In Revelation 7:9-17, we see a great multitude of whom it is said they "came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," (v.14)

The indication is, my friends, that when the Lord came this great multitude, which no man could number, represents those who were defiled, unprepared, and not ready for the coming Bridegroom. So, in the midst of tribulation they are found repenting in the greatest worldwide revival ever seen-- a revival that takes place after the rapture.

Thus, our message is to encourage such preparation now so that many will heed the warnings and admonitions relating to Christ's return to watch and pray to escape this coming tribulation.

Does not the Scripture remind us that if we have the hope of Christ's return, we will get ready? Indeed, we read: "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (I John 3:3)

How are we purified? Peter says we are purified by "obeying the truth through the Spirit." (I Pet. 1:22)

When Christ comes will we be found walking in obedience to His Word, doing His will, following after holiness in this life of purity that He demands? We are going to a wedding and all of the participants are required to prepare for this event. Has not our Lord determined that He should present to Himself a "glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Does this characterize your life today? Are you "holy and without blemish?"

You reply: "We sin every day in thought, word and deed, but we're covered by the blood of Christ and will be automatically ready whenever Christ comes for He doesn't see our sin."

While not in any way limiting the blood of Christ, believing it atones for all of our sins, yet we see the call of God leading us to a life of purity and holiness. Thus, every man who has the hope of His coming will seek to walk in that close relationship, "purifying himself even as he is pure."

Are we making the standard too high? Is not salvation a gift?

Yes, it is a wonderful gift which comes through simple faith in Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord. Yet, to be ready for Christ's appearing demands that we heed such verses as Hebrews 12:14 which remind us to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Like Enoch, will we be found walking with God and taken from off this earth when the rapture occurs?

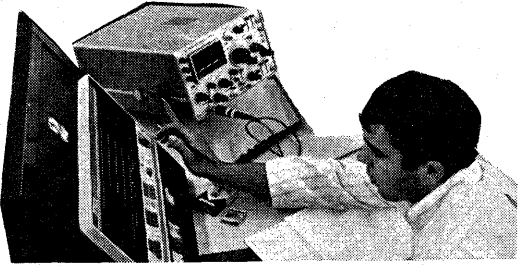
Like Paul, do we strive for crowns to be given those who love our Lord's appearing? Do we press toward the mark for the prize to be caught upward at Christ's coming (which is implied in this text!)

Like Noah, do we make absolutely certain that we are heeding the invitation of God to escape coming judgment by our living in momentary expectancy for His coming?

By trusting Christ as Saviour and Lord, and found living for Him daily, doing His will, we believe we can be ready for His coming.

When our Lord will come is a secret which has not been divulged to man. Rather, we are admonished, "Be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

The COMPUTER



--- When Will Christ Come (#4)

Upon their return from space, SKYLAB III astronauts disclosed the failure of their jet steering engines to fire as they sought to return to earth following their 84-day mission.

"Our hearts fell and our eyeballs popped," testified Commander Gerald P. Carr who told how the crew inadvertently caused the trouble by pushing a wrong set of circuit breakers. The situation was potentially serious, he noted, but they quickly overcame the problem and made a safe landing.



SKYLAB SPLASHDOWN:

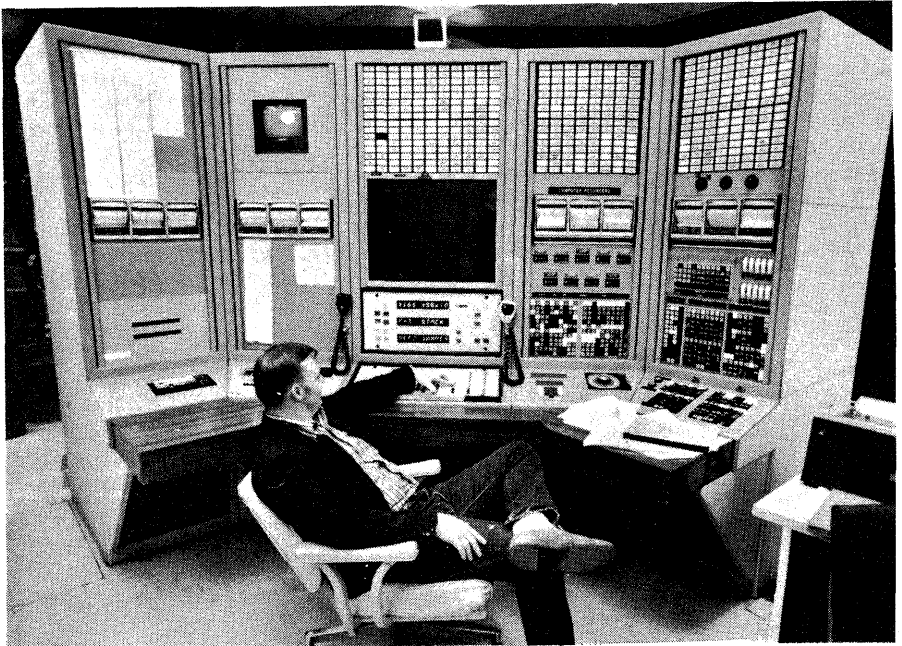
Without the computer, our astronauts would never have been able to perform their space missions.

For example, in April of 1970, the U.S. Apollo XIII mission was suddenly aborted and the decision made to bring the crippled ship back to earth. It took scientists working with computers only 84 minutes to figure the correct return path to earth.

How long do you suppose it would have taken a mathematical brain to do this? Well, NASA figures it would have taken one man using just pencil and paper more than a million years to perform the task. With a desk calculator, a man could have performed this service in only 60,000 years. And NASA states: "Had all the people in the mission planning and analysis division at the time--a total of 220--been assigned the task. But with the modern computer, the task was performed in only 1 1/2 hours."

Now computers are being designed to carry our spacecraft billions of miles from earth to the very edge of the solar system. But it's admitted that even the most reliable of contemporary computers would surely suffer a failure of some of its components long before the end of such missions.

In our broadcast series, we are asking the question--When will Christ come?



COMPUTER MONITORING EXXON REFINERY

We understand that the computer can do about anything. But we doubt if it can tell us when Christ will come. "No man knoweth the day nor the hour." We hear there's a computer which can make 3-million calculations a second. Think of it. The electronic computer has completely revolutionized the scientific world. The computer appears to be a lifeless hunk of metal and circuitry, but feed into it the right information and it will come up with the right answers.

No doubt, it will be the one single device used by the Antichrist who is seen erecting an image that can both speak and also single out those who are not loyal followers of his program. We read in Rev. 13:15, "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

Doesn't that sound like the work of a giant computer?

A popular magazine once carried an article on "SHAKY, the first electronic person." Computer Scientist Charles Rosen built a complex machine that could think with the intelligence of the average person.

For example, fed into Shaky's computer brains was the instruction: PUSH THE BLOCK OFF THE PLATFORM.

Immediately, the mind in this machine began to work and Shaky seemed to look around the room and then slowly turned to the exit and down the corridor at about four miles an hour. At every open door Shaky stopped, turned his head, inspected the room, turned away and rolled on to the next open door. In the fourth room he finally saw what he was looking for--a platform one foot high and eight feet long with a large wooden block sitting on it.

For about five seconds, the mechanical man stared at the platform. He realized he could not climb aboard the platform for his wheels were too small. Looking about the room, his head rotating slowly, he saw a shallow ramp lying on the floor on the other side of the room. Briskly he turned, crossed to the ramp, semi-circled it and then pushed it straight across the floor till the high end of the ramp hit the platform. Then Shaky rolled back a few feet, casing the situation again, discovering that only one corner of the ramp was touching the platform. Rolling quickly to the far side of the ramp, he nudged it till the gap closed. Then he swung around, charged up the slope, located the block and gently pushed it off the platform.

Amazing, isn't it?

Shaky, the computer, is called the "fascinating and fear-some reality of a machine with a mind of its own."

What will happen when the Antichrist erects a computer with the ability to answer any question in a fraction of time? With the computer he can always come up with the right answers with which to rule the world.

Or, can he?

Computers have been known to make mistakes, or shall we say "errors in judgment." A computer accurately handles information fed into its brain, but it may come up with some wrong information occasionally.

Take the computer with a four-thousand word vocabulary, such as was developed and used by Lieut. Col. Vernon Walters, U.S. interpreter for many international conferences. While Col. Walters watched, this computer-brain was fed the phrase from the Bible where our Lord said to His disciples: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Now, understand, this electronic brain could translate into another language. So when these words were fed into this computer, the machine translated: "The liquor is good but the meat has gone bad."

Certainly no translator of the Bible would be satisfied with such a translation.

Computers are being used in a study of the Scriptures; and according to a Scottish clergyman, A.Q. Morton, the computer claims the Apostle Paul wrote only Galatians, Romans, the Corinthians and Philemon--which is just five of the 14 New Testament books traditionally attributed to him. The two tests given to Paul's epistles to determine whether he wrote them are the length of sentences and the use of certain words.

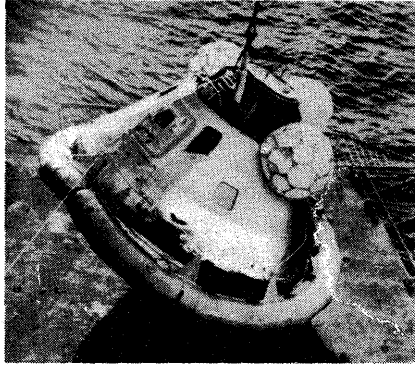
The Bible tells us in 2 Tim. 3:16, that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Do you believe it?

Computers may be reliable when it comes to mathematical formulas and solving some complex problems, but we doubt the reliability of any theological interpretation that may result from its study of the Word. As the natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can know or understand them apart from the Holy Spirit, so a computer cannot truly determine such things as the author or authenticity of the books of the Bible.

Several years ago, in Seattle, Washington, a computer programmer became angry over the computations produced by his computer and promptly pumped four .38 caliber bullets into the machine.

There have been cases of misuse of computers that are classics in showing the wrong use of these machines. In Los Angeles, a 21-year-old businessman bilked the Telephone and Telegraph company out of more than a million dollars in equipment by cracking the computerized ordering code and having equipment shipped to his own firm instead. In Georgia, a banker was convicted of using the services of a computer to embezzle over four-million dollars.



NASA figured that the calculations involved to bring the space astronauts back would have taken one man using just pencil and paper more than a million years to perform! But with our scientists working with computers, it took only 84 minutes--less than 1 1/2 hours, to design a correct path.

That's why I believe the antichrist will make use of a giant computer to determine actions necessary in the government of the world; and in order to operate the computer he will require all citizens to be identified with a mark or number.

Listen to what we read in the Book of Revelation that will one day take place. Rev. 13:16 says: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

How close might we be to that day when this will happen?

Rev. David Webber comments on the verses we have just read, saying: "Modern computers are hastening the fulfillment of the mark of the beast."

Rex Humbard, likewise, has stated: "I feel that today through our own government, as in the governments of the world, that everybody is becoming a number. Man will be known by a number in his forehead, and I think you will have to memorize this number if they ask you who you are. To buy or sell, or to do anything you will have to have a number." Humbard also observes: "I believe you're going to have to memorize your Social Security number some day as you do your name, and that's the way you're going to live. You are going to be a number. That's what the Bible says."

A newspaper article announced the unveiling of a giant computer in Brussels, capital of the Common Market countries.

Dr. Handrick Eldeman, Chief Analyst of the Common Market Confederacy, announced from Brussels that a computerized restoration plan is underway and scientists, advisors, and CMC leaders were on hand for the unveiling of the 'Beast.' The "Beast" is a gigantic computer that takes up three floors of the Administration Building at Market headquarters.

This giant computer is said to be a self-programming unit that has over 100 sensing input sources. According to this news article, the computer would make use of a master plan involving a digital numbering system for every human on earth. The computer would assign each citizen of the world a number to use for all buying and selling to avoid the problems of ordinary credit cards. The number would be invisibly "laser-tattooed" on the forehead or the back of the hand. It would provide a walking credit card system. The number would then show up under infra-red scanners to be placed at all check-out counters and places of business.

We have no confirmation as to the accuracy of this report, but if true, THIS article is most significant, and we may be closer to the coming of the Lord than we realize.

When will Christ come? No man knows the day nor the hour; and as we set out in this broadcast to explain, neither can any giant computer tell us exactly when our Lord will come.

Concerning our Lord's first coming, we know He came right on schedule. In Gal. 4:4, we read: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son..."

Concerning Christ's second coming, we're told that in the "dispensation of the fulness of times," God will gather together in one all things in Christ.

My friends, Jesus is soon to come. The fulness of times has come. As someone has observed, the same amount of time allotted to the Jews has now been allowed the Gentiles. The time of the Gentiles is about up, and Christ must come to restore the kingdom to Israel, and fulfil His promise to David to reign upon His throne.

What tremendous days in which to live, and how important to be ready for our Lord could come at any time.

Are you saved and living for Christ? Are you looking for His return? Indeed, His promise is, "To those who look for Him shall He appear..." (Heb. 9:28)

While today is still a day of salvation, we would urge you to turn to Christ and be found living for Him, praying that we may escape the coming tribulation judgment, reading His precious Word, and watching with longing and expectancy for His return.

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

Oil Crisis?

What about the oil crisis? Is there really an oil shortage?

“It may take a couple of cold winters to make most Americans fully aware that the nation’s energy crisis is no joke,” so declared Interior Secretary Rogers C.B.Morton.

Is there similarly a spiritual oil crisis that may find many unprepared for the second coming of our Lord?



CAR LINES STRETCHING BACK FOR BLOCKS FROM GASOLINE PUMPS IN CHICAGO

Our Lord described the event in these words--There were ten virgins which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five were wise, and five were foolish.

Now the foolish virgins took their lamps but took no oil with them. On the other hand, the wise also took lamps but in addition kept a ready supply of oil in a second container with which to replenish the oil supply when it was low.

This reminds us of our fuel crisis. If you're traveling any distance by car, you might not make it unless you have an ample supply of gas in an extra safe container.

So with these wise virgins. In addition to having their lamps, they had oil in vessels which they carried along with them.

Then our Lord relates: "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps."

Could it be that we are living in the lamp-trimming time? There has been an acceleration of interest in our Lord's return. The mass revivals which have been held in our country and abroad have seen thousands coming out to hear the Word of the Lord with many decisions made for Jesus Christ.

In addition, we could relate the growth of evangelical churches in various parts of the world. Whereas there has not been the growth among some of the older denominations, there has been an evidence of tremendous growth in churches or various denominations where the true witness of the Word of God is proclaimed backed by an emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit.

We're reminded of the ministry of the world-famous evangelist, Dwight L. Moody. As an evangelist he presented the claims of Christ to large audiences both in America and Britain. He was a promoter of the Sunday School, and out of his labors there came the Bible conferences and the school that bears his name. Yet, as Dr. V. Raymond Edman relates concerning Moody, there was an evident lack in his early ministry. He notes that it wasn't until an elderly man, whose name history has not recorded, called attention to Moody's lack of the Holy Spirit's emphasis in his meetings, that Moody realized there was something lacking in his life.

As Dr. Edman relates the episode, "It happened when Moody had gone down from Boston to New York to speak.... Moody was getting into his carriage....when he was touched on the shoulder. On turning, he saw an old man with his white hair blowing in the wind. He pointed his finger at Moody and said, "Young man, when you speak again, honor the Holy Ghost."

Says Dr. Edman, "The voice rang in Moody's ears," yet it was six months before Moody came to realize the meaning of that message--to be entirely dependent on the Holy Spirit."

Could it be that we are in the midnight hour? The emphasis on the return of Christ, along with the emphasis on the Holy Spirit's ministry, provides the atmosphere we see here in Matthew 25. We are witnessing a lamp-trimming time.

But we would be reminded that by the time the bridegroom actually comes there descends a drowsiness. Amidst events like the Mid-East crisis, it would appear believers everywhere who know their Bible are saying, "This is it!" But remember, it is not at that time that the bridegroom appears. Rather, events which follow cause a shallow, easy-believism to prevail. Various Christian movements, so popular that they capture the pages of news magazines, begin to wane. Those looking for signs, wonders and miracles begin to lose interest.

As Dave Wilkerson so boldly predicted, these various movements which we have seen in evidence are going to wane. There is coming a "great falling away." Particularly, he notes, the constant barrage of sex and nudity by the media will vex the minds and souls of the most devout children of Christ. It will cause the love of many to grow cold. It will lead to carelessness and faithlessness." The founder of the Teen Challenge ministry goes on to predict persecution which will greatly reduce the ranks of those who once rallied for Christ.

According to the parable as Jesus relates it, all ten virgins claimed to be his followers. Is not a virgin a pure person ...one who has not been defiled? So these were apparently devoted disciples of our Lord.

What happened?

Our Lord declares it was during a period when the wise virgins had procured a good supply of oil that the bridegroom came and they were ready. On the other hand, the foolish virgins were told to go to them that sell and buy oil for themselves, yet they were found without the needed supply at the time of the coming bridegroom. Apparently, there is a price to be paid to be ready for our Lord's return.

Oh, hear me, today. I wonder how many there are who think they are ready for the coming of the Lord. They make a bold profession. At least, they make a loud noise openly confessing faith in Christ. Yet, how often you read of activities and conduct which do not indicate their profession to be real and genuine.

It is into such a world of religious profession that Christ will come. Not only will it be discovered who is real, but also who is ready. The evidence is that the foolish virgins thought they, too, would be included in the wedding party; but they were left behind.

Why? Because of a lack of oil. Oil is symbolic of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Again, may we relate something about the ministry of this great evangelist, Dwight L. Moody. Moody built up a Sunday School and had the largest church in the city of Chicago. Think of it. Yet there was a lack of the Holy Spirit's power in his life. Moody says so himself.

Moody relates how two godly women, Mrs. Sarah A. Booke and her friend, a Mrs. Hawshurst, attended his services. At the close of his Sunday night meetings, they would say to Mr. Moody, "We have been praying for you." This bothered Moody and he would say, "Why don't you pray for the people?"

These sisters told Moody that he needed the power of the Holy Spirit. Moody thought to himself, "Why I have the power. I have the largest congregation in Chicago." There were souls saved in his meetings, and he was doing a great work.

Then Moody humbled himself and began to pray for this power of the Holy Spirit. He called these two godly saints to come and pray with him. Such a hunger came into his soul that he began to cry to God as never before asking Him to fill him with the Holy Spirit.

It was while in New York City, Moody relates, that he was baptized with the Holy Spirit. Afterward, his sermons were no different, but the servant was. He boldly preached the same messages, but instead of a few conversions, there were hundreds coming to Christ. Moody also had a new message in which he emphasized the need of believers to be filled or baptized with the Holy Spirit.

In his day, Moody estimated that 19 out of 20 professing Christians had life but never sought for power. He emphasized that the Holy Ghost's coming upon a believer in divine anointing was separate from conversion. He referred to those in the third chapter of John who came to Christ and had life. They believed on the Son and were saved, and there they rested satisfied.

Then Moody refers to those in the fourth chapter of John who not only took a drink of the water of life, but also they got the fountain within through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit--the "well of water bubbling up." Moody said there were only a few of these, but they are not a hundredth part of the first class. Think of it.

Then in the seventh chapter of John, you will discover the best class, said Moody, where we read: "Out of his belly (inner being) shall flow rivers of living water! That's the kind of Christians we ought to be," declared the great evangelist.

What about us today? What kind of Christians are we? Yes, we know we have life. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." But we're living lukewarm, defeated lives, and were the Lord to come today, we might surely wonder whether or not we were ready. Like the foolish virgins, could it be that we had a testimony, represented by the burning lamp, but truly void of the Holy Spirit's presence and power in our lives?

Jude declares how there would come in the last times those who should walk after their own ungodly lust. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." (Jude 18-19)

Did you hear it?

You mention the baptism of the Holy Spirit and you'll find those believers who will have nothing to do with you. Yet Dr. Scofield, editor of the Scofield Reference Bible, said at Moody's funeral service, that certain secrets characterized the life of this great evangelist. "First, he had a definite experience of Christ's saving grace. He had passed out of death into life, and he knew it. Secondly, he believed in the divine authority of the Scriptures. The Bible was to him the voice of God. And thirdly, (said Dr. Scofield of Moody) he was baptized with the Holy Spirit, and he knew it. It was to him as definite an experience as his conversion."

In view of the coming of the Lord, we are finding in various groups and among all denominations, an upsurge of interest in the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. People are finding that when they seek the face of God, something happens which is as different as day and night in their Christian experience.

As Moody himself testified, saying: "I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience, if you should give me all the world--it would be as the small dust of the balance," says this great evangelist.

Hear me, today. This is what you need. You are saved and know it. The Bible is filled with verses of assurance. But are you filled with the Holy Spirit? To be "filled" with the Holy Spirit simply means to be controlled by Him.

Who is controlling your life? Do you make your own decisions without consulting the Lord?

You know, from the moment you awaken in the morning you should immediately turn your life over to the Lord, praying for Him to lead you and guide you, protect you and help you to live for Him. Why are you defeated? Could it be that you have never surrendered your life to the Lord, and asked the Holy Spirit to take over in your life? That's what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We might add that we are commanded in Scripture to "be filled with the Spirit."

You see, we are saved by faith. Ephesians 2:8 says: "By grace are ye saved through faith." But concerning the Holy Spirit, we read that He is not only received by faith, but through obedience. Acts 5:32 says that the Holy Ghost is given by God to those who obey Him.

Are you obeying God? Have you repented of all your sins? Have you made restitution where possible with those whom you may have harmed or wronged? What about obedience? Here is where many lack of the Holy Spirit's fullness. They can't get along with their family, their wife or husband, and can't stand some in the church, let alone fellowship with some believer of another congregation or group. That would

be unthinkable. Yet they expect to be included at the rapture and to spend all eternity together with these people. May God help us.

Beloved, the Holy Spirit in our lives will melt us together, make us love one another, and use us as a team to evangelize the world. The evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives is the fruit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, etc.

Isn't this what we need? As Moody declared: "The only way any church can get a blessing is to lay aside all difference, all criticism, all coldness and party feeling, and come to the Lord as one man." He further suggested that the church should read the 13th chapter of I Corinthians on its knees....which speaks of the love of God wrought in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

WHEN WILL CHRIST COME?

We would reply--when believers are ready to meet Him. Concerning the wise virgins, we read: "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage and the door was shut.

Would you be ready were our Lord to come today?

Dr. Norman B. Jerome, writing in the GOSPEL HERALD, says this parable of the ten virgins is "one of the most powerful messages in the New Testament to urge the readers to be ready for the return of the Bridegroom from glory for His bride the Church." He goes on to say that our lights should be kept burning brightly. No matter how long the delay, we should remain faithful until He comes. Indeed, be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

The Fate of Israel

Professor Hans Morgenthau, the political scientist, says it is his belief that Israel will be forced by the U.S. and other international pressure to return to its pre-June, 1967, borders in order to achieve peace with the Arab nations.

Morgenthau believes the U.S. has exerted much pressure upon Israel to withdraw from these captured territories because of the Arab oil embargo and because Americans, he noted, are "blinded by detente."

The professor says that when the United States demanded that Israel open a supply route to the encircled Egyptian Third Army during the Yom Kippur War, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan telephoned Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger. Dayan is said to have told Kissinger that such a move was unprecedented in the history of warfare. Dayan was then told by Kissinger that if Israel failed to accede, "You will fight your next war by yourselves."

Morgenthau also stated that the American global alert declared by the President during the Middle East crisis was precipitated not by evidence that the Russians planned to send paratroops to the Middle East, but because a Soviet ship was loaded with nuclear warheads and had already arrived in Alexandria. When President Nixon bravely called for the alert, the ship turned back!

Professor Morgenthau sees a grim future for Israel declaring it is a matter of time before her existence is terminated. But according to the Word of God, if all nations turn against Israel, we find the Lord Himself coming to the defense of this tiny nation.

In Zechariah 14 we see it is the Lord's decree that eventually all nations shall come against Jerusalem to battle. We read, "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations...And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem....and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."

(Zech. 14:2-5)

When will this happen? When will Christ come with His saints? Must He not come first for His saints?

A question being raised in political circles is, Will Israel be requested to return conquered territories in an effort to appease Arab nations and provide for peace in the Middle East? We also might ask, Would such a peace be a lasting peace?

Billy Graham has commented that "Egypt and Israel have been at war many times. Broken treaties, broken alliances and broken promises between them date back to Pharaoh who broke his pledge to Israel and pursued them to the Red Sea where his armed chariots were swallowed up by the flood that God sent."

Whatever arrangement is made for co-existence between Arabs and Israel, you can be sure it will be only the temporary lull before the Middle East breaks out into another full-fledged war. According to the Bible, the final wars of this age will be fought in the Middle East. So we believe that the struggle we are witnessing in Palestine is an indication that Christ's coming is near.

For instance, Zechariah links the Day of the Lord to soldiers being sent from all nations to guard the land of Israel. Only, instead of fulfilling this role of watchdog, we see the nations eventually turning against Israel. In this battle we find the city of Jerusalem will be taken. This is what Zechariah writes: "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken..."

What will happen when Jerusalem falls?

Again we read: "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." (Zech. 14:3)

How many times in the Old Testament do you read of the Lord fighting for Israel? Well, there is evidence from recent wars that God has been on the side of Israel, outnumbered 50 to 1 considering all of the nations that have sought to destroy her. But even if Israel is outnumbered 100 to 1, we have evidence pointing to divine intervention on her behalf particularly in this coming day when all the nations of earth gather against Jerusalem to battle. As we have stated many times on this broadcast, the Battle of Armageddon will find the Lord Himself coming from Heaven with His holy angels and the retinue of saints. It is at His coming we read: "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he shall smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron."

The idea of Christ ruling with a rod of iron frightens some people who think of our Lord as a tyrant like Hitler or Stalin. Rather, when you consider our Lord ruling in righteousness over those willing to subject themselves to His authority, you can understand how it will be. His government will be based on justice for all. There will be no double standards, no political deals, but all will be subject to His righteous rule and authority.

Again, Zechariah declares: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." (Zech. 14:6)

An indication as to how it will be when the Lord rules, is evidenced in the edict that will go forth requiring all the inhabitants of earth to go to Jerusalem every year. How would you like that? Some get to go to the Holy Land once during their lifetime, but most never have such opportunity at all. However, when Christ rules the earth, we read how the nations will go up from year to year to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Then we read, "And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain."

This, my friends, is an indication as to how it will be when our Lord shall reign in days that are just ahead.

Isaiah, too, describes how it will be when Christ rules the earth. We read, "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."

Yes, this is the day we sing about in the "Hallelujah Chorus" when our Lord shall reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords, and His Word will go forth in wisdom and authority. All shall be subject unto Him.

Isaiah goes on to say: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together: and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:2-9 excerpts.)

What a glorious day that will be! Surely, this is the day for which mankind waits! Violence will end, wars will cease, and peace shall be upon the earth when Christ, the prince of peace, appears.

However, we should like to point out that before our Lord returns to reign upon the earth, we see Him coming for His saints to remove them from off the earth during the days when Satan rules the world through his tyrant, the Antichrist! The devil is a counterfeiter who tries to make men believe that the utopia Christ promises he, too, can provide. His work is to lead men to believe that he can bring peace. His plans for peace fail in reality; it is a false peace.

His plans for peace fail and Armageddon follows!

We've been discussing the theme, WHEN WILL CHRIST COME? It is our opinion that our Lord could come anytime for His saints who will be caught up from the earth to meet Him in the air. Then upon this earth we find the Antichrist appearing who leads all men to unite and brings them to Jerusalem for the final battle of Armageddon to fight against Christ and His host seen returning from Heaven after a time of glorious feasting. This may sound like a dream but one day soon we believe it will be a reality.

At our Lord's return, we read what will happen. The Apostle Paul writes: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye..."

Are you ready for this event? Are you looking for the rapture to take place when saints who are watching and waiting shall be caught up to meet our Lord in the air?

It would seem that this is the climactic day of all history when the redemptive plan of God will be consummated in the coming again of Christ, to catch away His bride and then to return to rule the earth.

There are many signs to reveal this event is near. The greatest sign of Christ's return is Israel's return to her land and the revival we are witnessing today.

Listen to this verse in Psalm 102:16, "When the Lord shall build up ZION he shall appear in his glory." When will Christ come? It is following Israel's restoration to her land and to her God that He will appear!

The return of Jews to their homeland, and the turning of those in Israel to their Messiah, is the greatest sign to indicate that events described in today's broadcast are near and hastening.

The time, we believe, is ripe for Him to come. Again we ask, ARE YOU READY?

Do you know Christ? Have you turned from your sin to trust Jesus as your Saviour and Lord? Right now, trust Him! Believe on Him without delay! Confess your sins to Him for He died to save you! Commit your future to Him for He lives to keep you! Commit your all to Him for He's coming for those who are dedicated to the doing of His will. Indeed, Be ye ready for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh!

In a book dated back in 1627, we read: "Jews expected Christ to come when He did come, and yet knew Him not when He was come, because they fancied the manner and quality of His coming like some temporal monarch with armed power to subdue the earth before Him." (Mede's works - 1627, London).

This is a reference to what we read concerning those who lived in the days of John the Baptist of whom it was said, "The people were in expectation." In other words, they were expecting the Messiah and they wondered if John was the one they were looking for. (Luke 3:15)

The trouble with these people was that they were looking for a sovereign to come, whereas a Saviour came. They expected Him to be born in a palace, but He was born in a stable.

Thus, we read in John 1:11, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Now we read where certain ones in Israel are again looking for the coming of the promised Messiah. Having returned to their land, we find Orthodox Jews who believe the Torah teaches the coming of Messiah after a return from exile.

Rabbi Moses Maimonides has asserted that the Messiah will come forward to return the glory of King David as it was originally. He will build the Holy Temple and will gather all the exiles from all over the world.

The Talmud Jerusalem states: "The Beth Hamikdosh (holy temple) will be built first, before the advent of David," or before Messiah comes.

Now there are some who have attempted to figure out the time of Messiah's appearance. Incidentally, we understand there are those such as Rabbi Meir Laibush who have figured out the date of the Messiah as no later than 1977. The Rabbi was asked by his students: "Isn't it prohibited to figure the date of the Messiah? The Talmud says, "May his bone rot he who figures the redemption!"

The Rabbi replies with a parable, saying, "After the destruction of our Temple when we first entered our exile, our Rabbis prohibited us from analyzing this question. They feared we would become discouraged at the thought of such a long exile. But now that we are nearing the end of our exile, we are permitted to analyze and ask these questions."

Indeed, it is thrilling to read of those awaiting the Messiah of Israel. However, in San Francisco, we see some young people marching. There are four who are wearing skull-caps, who are passing out leaflets. One of these converted Jewish lads is carrying a placard which reads, "JESUS THE MESSIAH HAS COME!"

While Christ has come, and there are those who have recognized Him and received Him, yet there are those still waiting for Him to come.

The MOUNT ZION REPORTER relates how Yahshua (Jesus) is the big topic of discussion in some of the schools of Israel. One leading Hebrew paper has expressed surprise over how much the children know about Jesus and the New Testament. While some missionaries have been blamed for those in Israel who are turning to Christ, it is in some of the schools where boys and girls are learning about the Jewish Messiah. (March, 1973 issue)

It has been reported that songs like "Amazing Grace" and "O Happy Day, When Jesus Washed My Sins Away" have been played frequently on Israeli radio stations. Having been in Israel, we noted the intense interest in which people enjoyed American music. So when these songs were popular they were played and enjoyed by the Israeli people.

Thus, a new day is dawning. Since the Six Day War and the capture of Jerusalem, we find a new sense of Messianic awareness. As General Shlomo Gorin, the chief Rabbi stated during the taking of Jerusalem, "We have taken the city of God. We are entering the Messianic era for the Jewish people."

In Russia, it was the capture of Jerusalem that likewise brought on the Messianic spirit that finds many Jews wanting to return to Israel. At first, the news in Russia seemed unfavorable. It was even reported that Israel had been wiped out. Rumors had the Egyptians in Tel Aviv. Then the news leaked out that Israel had actually won the war. The capture of Jerusalem brought the Messianic spirit to Jews in the Soviet Union who suddenly were found dancing in the streets. Now thousands of Russian Jews are waiting with longing and expectancy for the day when they can return to their homeland. A new sense of Messianic awareness finds many already leaving from Russia to go to Israel.

What about this date of 1977 that finds some in Israel anticipating their Messiah by then?

It's interesting to read of others who believe Christ must come by 1977. This is based on the seven-year cycles of Messiah.

For instance, William Branham in his book, THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL, declared: "God called a Jubilee every forty-ninth year; the fiftieth year was the Jubilee." Then, notes Branham: "In 1977 will be the Seventieth Jubilee!" He further points out: "Jubilee means the going up, the release."

Branham further asserted that God is giving to the gentiles an equal time as He gave the Jews. He again suggests, "1977 will be the seventieth Jubilee since the beginning of Jubilees. What will it be? Oh, brother! Watch close now," says Branham, "Don't miss it. It'll be the Jubilee of the going up with the Gentile Bride and the return of Christ to the Jews, when they go out of bondage."

Many will assert that Branham has always been right in his predictions. Will Christ come in 1977? An interesting observation that bears watching!

We reported how in the days of John the Baptist, the people were in expectation. Beloved, that's where we are today. Messages on the radio and television, along with signs in evidence everywhere speak forth one message, JESUS IS COMING SOON.

However, if we understand the Scriptures correctly, there will be those who talk about Christ's coming, and sing the songs about His return, who will miss this glorious day of rapture.

In Luke 17:22, we read where our Lord is saying to His disciples, "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."

How sad for anyone who is looking for Jesus to come, to be left behind to go through the awful great tribulation seen coming upon the world!

We couldn't begin to describe the woes, the plagues, the judgments seen coming upon the world in that day.

Here in Florida we have seen again the evidence of the red tide with fish lining the beaches. Actually hundreds of tons of dead fish have been removed from the beach and coastal areas, and the stench of dead, rotting fish is unbelievable. Could it be we are already seeing evidence of one of the plagues described in the book of the Revelation when judgment was poured out upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea." (Rev. 16: 3)

As concerns the Ten Virgins who waited for the Bridegroom, we read how "they that were ready went into the marriage; and the door was shut." What tragedy for those who were not ready, who were left behind.

Regardless of theological interpretation, we would know they were not ready when the Bridegroom came although they were looking for Him, and living in expectancy for His coming.

As at the first coming of Jesus the people were in expectation, yet they missed Him, so we believe a parallel picture will reveal a vast group found looking for our Lord's coming who will miss the event.

In no way do we want to be pessimistic in our outlook as it relates to the rapture; but in all fairness, we voice our concern for anyone who is looking for Jesus to come, and yet you're living in sin--you're in love with the world system--you're bogged down with the cares of this life and deceived by riches--and that day is seen coming upon you unawares.

God help you to wake up!

The Bible speaks of those who anticipate Christ's appearing as doing something about their lukewarm condition. To be Laodicean in our profession is to be spued out at the coming of our Lord. Whereas, we believe, to be ready for Christ's coming demands action on the part of everyone of us. John says of those looking for Christ's return, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure!"

Did you hear it!

Thus, we can't help but extend a warning today to those who are living carelessly--hoping to escape the coming great tribulation which is described as a time of trouble such as the world has never seen nor ever shall see again. May God help us to live daily in constant prayer that we may be ready for our Lord's coming, and through the help of the Holy Spirit we can escape this hell on earth that's just ahead.

All you have to do is to read the news headlines of world crisis with its threatened destruction from wars, famines and pestilences, and you'll get an idea of what the coming tribulation will be like. No wonder our Lord then cautions us to watch and pray always in order to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

We don't know when Christ will come....in 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977....we do know it pays to be ready so at the trumpet blast, when the saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, we shall be included in that vast army of believers on their way to the heavenly wedding reception.

We would be reminded again of the encouragement to be ready for this glorious event. John writes: "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." We read: "For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

Christ is the Lamb of God who came to die as a sacrifice for sins--"The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." We are invited to be united with Him in an eternal relationship symbolized as a "marriage." And the rapture is that event that takes us to a time of feasting and celebration, while on this earth there comes the heart-breaking time of trouble known as the Great Tribulation.

Now, do you know why we urge readiness for rapture? No man knoweth the day nor the hour, but events transpiring in Israel and elsewhere reveal that our Lord's coming must be near.

To all, the word of warning goes forth--"Be ye therefore ready!" By receiving Christ as your Saviour, having repented of sin, you can be ready, and found living for Jesus when He comes.

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

CAN JESUS REALLY COME NOW?

C. S. Lovett has written an article in which he asks the question - CAN JESUS REALLY COME NOW?

Lovett, inspiring director of PERSONAL CHRISTIANITY, writes: "The Apostle Peter wouldn't be popular today. He said, 'Jesus can't come back now.'" Then he quotes the Paraphrased New Testament where Peter is reminding his listeners that if they will heed his message and repent, "then God will send Jesus back to you, for He is your appointed Messiah. However, He must remain in heaven until the final restoration of all things, even as God announced through His prophets long ago." (Acts 3:20-21) PNT

"That's not the popular view," says Lovett. "A host of Christians feel Jesus can come at any time."

Lovett writes: "You wonder if I believe in the rapture of the church? Indeed. We'd have to delete Thessalonians from the New Testament otherwise."

Lovett then explains the three popular views by pointing out: "The Pre-Tribs are those who believe the church will be raptured BEFORE the tribulation. The Mid-Tribs believe the church will go through PART of the tribulation. And the Post-Tribs believe we will not be raptured until AFTER the tribulation. In the latter case," he notes, "we would be raptured to join the descending host in the air which the Lord will bring with Him upon His return." (I Thes. 4:15-17)

Today we continue our series - WHEN WILL CHRIST COME?

Without actually setting dates, there are many Scriptures which might indicate that our Lord's Coming is at hand.

Let's review some of them today....

First, we would quote Psalms 102:16 which says: "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." Is this not a firm declaration as to when our Lord will come?

One writer for the American Messianic Fellowship has noted: "Israel's statehood is NOT a sign of the Church's Rapture. It IS preparation for God's renewed dealings with Israel nationally, in anticipation of the glorious Messianic kingdom. How much nearer, then, must be the rapture?" asks this writer who goes on to declare: "Devout students of prophecy may well join with pious Jews in exclaiming, 'These are the days of Messiah!'"

In Matthew, chapter 23, we have the account of our Lord weeping over the city of Jerusalem. He laments their refusal to heed His love, saying: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Then our Lord went on to say: "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23:37-39)

Soon after Israel became a nation, we heard of those arriving at the airport in Tel Aviv and who were officially greeted with these words - "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" According to our Lord's declaration, it is when this greeting is extended that He will come.

Again in Luke, chapter 21, our Lord would indicate that we can know of the day of His coming because of signs that are given. In verse 20 He says: "And when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then KNOW that the desolation thereof is nigh." Again in verse 30, referring to the blossoming of the fig tree which we believe is symbolic of the rebirth of the nation of Israel, we read: "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and KNOW of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, KNOW ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

Did you hear it?

There are certain evidences and indications whereby we can KNOW that God will soon send Christ back to this earth to rapture the saints, and then to reign upon the earth.

The re-establishment of Israel in her land, and the rise of nations in Europe seen uniting economically and politically are among the great signs to indicate our Lord's Return is very near.

I. R. Deane, noted Bible expositor, wrote back in 1918: "I have always been an advocate of the doctrine that Christ might come for the church at any moment. However, upon closer study of the Word, I am led to believe: first, that the Jews must be established in their nation; and second, that there must be a recognized head of the restored Roman Empire who shall confirm a covenant with the Jewish nation, thus ushering in the first 3-1/2 years of the tribulation."

Today Israel is a nation, and nations of Europe are seen uniting to form the last political confederacy forecast by the Prophet Daniel so that we believe the time is ripe for the appearance of Antichrist, as well as the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His own. What tremendous days in which to live as we witness prophecy being fulfilled before our very eyes.

When will Christ come?

Peter, in his second sermon following Pentecost, told his hearers that Christ was in heaven "until the times of restitution of all things..." (Acts 3:21)

This word "restitution" used here is really a reference to the restoration of Israel to her land, and of the restoration of the theocracy under David's Son. (Gr. APOKATASTASEOS used in Acts 1:6 also)

Remember how the disciples said to our Lord following His resurrection and ascension to the Father, after which He returned to the earth - "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" The word 'restore' used here is the same Greek word which is translated 'restitution.'

Thus, Peter declares that our Lord is in heaven where He will stay "until the time of restitution of all things," or until such a time when this earth is prepared for Him to come.

The world is in pretty bad shape. Regardless of the place you name - Paris, London, Washington, Cairo, Jerusalem....you can be sure there are serious problems confronting the various governments of the world. As Lt. Col. Delcourt, of the French Salvation Army testified: "The Lord's return is imperative and imminent because of the terrible state of the world today." Only Christ's coming can restore decency and respectability to government, and bring law and order to mankind. He is now in heaven but will be sent by God when the time is considered by the Father to be ripe for the restitution (or restoration) of all things.

David, too, speaks of the day when our Lord shall return to sit upon the throne reserved for Him. In Psalms 110 we read, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (v. 1)

Now some interpret this to mean our Lord can't return until He destroys the wicked, or until after the tribulation. But in reality what is meant is that our Lord will not begin His reign until His enemies are destroyed. At Armageddon we see the defeat of the enemies of God and the establishment of the millennial reign of Christ.

Other reasons for believing the time of Christ's reign is near is the interpretation the early Church Fathers gave to the Apostles' teachings concerning the Coming Again of Jesus Christ.

For instance, Peter cautioned his readers, saying: "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet. 3:8)

We may be ignorant about a lot of things but here we are told not to be ignorant concerning the time of Christ's Coming.

Barnabas, a fellow-labourer with Paul, writes in his epistle which is not found in your Bible, that the reference to a "day as a thousand years" is a reference to the days of creation. As God made the world in six days, and He rested on the seventh day, so this world will continue on for 6,000 years followed by the millennium of a thousand years. Thus, writes Barnabas, "In six thousand years God will bring all things to an end, for a day is with Him as a thousand years." Again notes Barnabas, "In six days, that is in six thousand years, all things will be finished."

Don't you think God wants us to know something of His plan and purpose for this age; else, why would He caution - "Be not ignorant of this one thing," referring to the idea of a thousand years represented as one day?

Irenaeus, another one of the early church fathers, stated: "For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years will it be concluded."

My friends, it must be later than we think!

Dr. Oswald J. Smith comments: "The age from Adam to the flood was about 2,000 years; from the flood to Christ was about 2,000 years. And from Christ to the end of this third age will probably be 2,000 years. After that will come the Sabbath age of 1,000 years, the Millennium, making some 7,000 years altogether. This may, therefore, be the end of the present age!" says Smith.

Relating this information to a High School Club, one of the young people gasped in consternation, saying: "I didn't realize it was that close!"

Indeed, my friends, we are fast coming to the close of 6,000 years of history. And from the writings of these church fathers, we see where they believed the rule of man would end after six thousand years, and the seventh thousand-year period would constitute the reign of Christ.

Some may question the reliability of these witnesses, but John Wesley pays these church fathers the highest tribute saying they were holy men.

Irenaeus goes on to explain: (quote) "Therefore, when in the end the Church shall suddenly be caught up from this, it is said, 'There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.'"

Some would declare that the idea of the rapture occurring before the tribulation is a new idea, but Irenaeus places the catching up of the Church as occurring before the Great Tribulation.

At least, from these quotations we would at least ascertain that the Lord's Coming is near, even nigh at hand.

In June of 1973, Rex Humbard published an article in which he similarly wrote: "One of the truths that the Bible plainly teaches is the re-establishing of Israel after 2,000 years of being scattered throughout the world. There were 2,000 years up to the flood," says Humbard, 2,000 years till the coming of Christ and the fulfillment of that prophecy, and now almost 2,000 years have taken place since then. According to the Jewish Calendar," he notes, "we are in the year 1994!" (Or, in this year of 1974 according to our calendar we might say this is 1995!)

Humbard points out that there are 360 days in the JEWISH Calendar, and we would add that there is some confusion as to the accuracy of our own calendar, so that we cannot set dates. Even if we sought by computers to figure out the exact date of our Lord's Return, it would be impossible to do so, for our Lord asserted categorically that no man knoweth the day nor the hour.

This does not mean that we cannot know the approximate time of our Lord's Coming. Though the Apostle Paul describes the Day of the Lord as a thief in the night, he quickly asserts: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are the children of light, and the children of the day: Therefore, let us watch and be sober!" says Paul.

Fred J. Meldau, the beloved founder of CHRISTIAN VICTORY magazine, once wrote: "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."

Are you watching for Christ's Coming? Are you ready should He come today? Have you repented of your sin to trust the Saviour, and are you living for Him right now a life of faith and purity, looking in expectancy for His return?

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

—TIME IS RUNNING OUT!



Billy
Graham



WHEN WILL CHRIST COME?

Evangelist Billy Graham, in one of his crusades, declared that it was his belief that the second coming of Christ may be near. "The Bible says there's going to be an X-point in history that will be known as the last days," said Graham. He went on to relate that he had the habit of wondering when he went to bed at night if the Lord would come during the night, and "When I wake up in the morning, I wonder if He's coming that day."

The verdict of those who are willing to speak out concerning the days in which we live is that **TIME IS RUNNING OUT!** These are the last days and Christ is soon to come!

Even men of scientific renown know that these are climactic days in which we live. Our scientists have pictured an atomic clock showing it is minutes to midnight.

H.G. Wells said before he died, "This is the last generation. There will not be another." William Boughton testified: "This is the end of history as we know it."

Were these great men correct in their assumption? Is it possible that this is the last generation?

Our Lord in the 24th chapter of Matthew, you'll remember, was asked this question by His disciples.... "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" In the conclusion of the chapter, our Lord is heard saying, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Did you hear it?

Our Lord has enumerated certain events which would transpire throughout this age. There would be wars and rumors of wars....famines, and pestilences and earthquakes. False prophets would arise and deceive many, and the gospel of the kingdom preached into all the earth for a witness. Tribulation such as the world has never seen, with the sun darkened and the moon withdrawing its light, and the stars falling from heaven shall mark the end of this age. But climaxing it all will be the Son of man coming from heaven with power and great glory. When will this happen that Christ will come? It is here that our Lord injects a parable of the fig tree which many believe refers to the nation of Israel. It is when the fig tree puts forth its leaves that you know that summer is nigh, said Jesus. Likewise, said He, it is when these aforementioned events come to pass that ye know His coming is nigh, even at the doors. Our Lord then reminds us, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Could it be that the people who see the nation of Israel born, symbolized by the budding of the fig tree, will also see His return? At least, this is the supposition given by those who interpret the symbolism of this parable to indicate that Israel's rebirth is a sign of Christ's return for His own.

If this is true, then we are living in the day of His coming! Israel has already celebrated a quarter-century of her existence which means the day of Christ's coming must be near and is hastening.

What manner of persons ought we to be, looking for and waiting for that day. By knowing Christ as Saviour and Lord, and living for Him daily, we await expectantly His coming.

A listener wrote in response to our plea that Christians begin praying for our Lord to come. Speaking on the subject, WHEN WILL CHRIST COME? - we had said, Christ will come when we pray for Him to come.

She writes: "Your broadcast yesterday was received in my heart and life like no other I have ever known, and I listen to 40-50 hours of Christian radio a week--for 25 years." Then she makes this request. "Why do you not lead the thousands of Christians in prayer for revival!" She believes if listeners to these seven hundred stations that carry this program were to unite solidly in prayer, we would witness revival that would create the atmosphere needed which will surely bring about the return of the Lord.

Indeed, it is most proper to pray for our Lord to come.

In the early church the prayer oftentimes used by believers was an Aramaic expression with which Christians are familiar, the word MARANA THA, meaning "Lord, Come!"

The Rev. John Wood, comments: "Here is a prayer which broadens our horizons. As we read it, we hear the very tones in which the first Christians in Jerusalem breathed their prayerful anticipation of their Lord's return...Maranatha!"

A second century book called the TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES indicates that this prayer was used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper among the early Christians. They broke bread "until He come," and they expressed their hope and faith in this one short expressive prayer.

The Apostle Paul was the one who wrote to the Corinthian Church and signs his autograph and quotes this brief familiar prayer which was used in the Palestinian Church - "Maranatha, Lord Come."

In the Lord's prayer that He taught His disciples, He specifically mentions they are to pray for His coming. "Thy kingdom come!" is a request that our Lord return to establish His kingdom upon earth.

We might mention the last prayer in the Bible found in Revelation 22:20...is "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

In our office devotions conducted each working day, we have prayer for the various requests that are sent in; and it is delightful and refreshing to hear those of our group who conclude their praying by requesting the Lord to come, and asking that He keep us ready for His coming. This, we believe, is Scriptural praying. All of us should cultivate this kind of praying. Why not make it a point to begin praying now and every day: first, that our Lord will come quickly; and in the second place, we should pray that we will be ready. With this kind of urgent praying on the part of a vast multitude of people, we are sure it won't be long ere Christ will come in answer to the prayer of His people. And while we are praying for our Lord to come, it will surely quicken revival within us. For we cannot pray for Christ to return without it somehow affecting our lives. We will want to be ready for that day of His unannounced return.

Now the purpose of this kind of praying is not that we be spared ordinary troubles and trials common to life. Surely the Lord will give us grace to bear inconveniences such as we have undergone during the fuel crisis, and amidst shortages of various commodities, along with the rising prices of various products.

It is in view of days ahead when there will be great afflictions and unspeakable torments, with Satan himself cast down upon the earth, that our Lord has urged 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)

So there are important reasons why we should be found praying for Christ to come, and praying that we will be ready for Him when He comes. In fact, we would again impress upon you the importance of concluding our prayer by praying, "Dear Lord, come quickly, and keep me ever ready for your coming!"

By receiving Christ as Saviour and Lord, trusting His blood shed on the cross for our sins, and living in obedience to His will, we can be ready for His coming. For remember, our Lord hath said: "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."