

Midnight Cry Messenger

FREELY SHARED WITH THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY FOR TRUTH — NOT TO BE SOLD

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BE READY

by Phil Enlow

First published in 2007, this article is more and more relevant to the times in which we live. A re-make of the movie version of "Left Behind" has just been released. There is a growing sense that the end of the age is drawing ever nearer. What did Jesus teach on this important subject? What did He mean by, "be ready"?

Almost 2000 years ago, for approximately 33 years Jesus Christ, the Son of God, walked among us. During the last 3-and-a-half years of his earthly life he actively ministered in Israel, performing many mighty miracles, delivering God's message to the people, and preparing his disciples for their ministry to come. The purpose for which he had come was fulfilled in his death on the cross for our sins, and then his resurrection, opening a door of hope and salvation for all who would repent and believe the good news.

Shortly before he went to the cross he had the job of preparing the disciples for the fact that he was soon to leave them and return to heaven from whence he had come. The disciples needed instruction, encouragement — and a healthy dose of reassurance!

Accordingly we read in John 14:1-3 these words from our Lord: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."

The essence of his promise — "I will come back" — is a simple one, yet the subject of Christ's return has been attended with a great deal of controversy and confusion over the centuries. This should not be surprising in light of the warnings of Jesus regarding deception. In Matthew 24 we find the disciples asking Jesus about the coming destruction of Jerusalem, about his coming, and about the end of the age. The first words out of Jesus' mouth were these: "Watch out that no one deceives you." Matt. 24:4.

Deception

Matt 24:24-25 says, "For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect — if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time." It is the devil's business to provoke as much unbelief and confusion as possible regarding the coming of Christ so that people might face that day unprepared.

During his time among us Jesus said a number of things about his promised return. These things have been understood and interpreted to fit in with the many various belief systems that have arisen concerning the Bible and truth. Often, these belief systems act like "glasses" in that they cause people to read their beliefs **into** what Jesus said instead of seeing what is actually there. Jesus' words are thus forced to conform to someone's theological system.

I believe that there is a simplicity in many of the statements made by Jesus about his coming that is missed by many of today's teachers. What would be wrong in just reading what Jesus said? Certainly not everything he said is clear and simple but many of his sayings are. Wouldn't such clear statements be a good place to start in understanding the things Jesus wants us to know about his coming?

There are many examples of how people's theology complicates the simplicity of Jesus' teaching. One that comes readily to mind is the widely popular doctrinal system that has Jesus returning to earth not once, but at least three times! This system teaches a very complicated view

Continued on Page 4

Is The United Nations The Beast of Daniel and Revelation?

by C. Parker Thomas

The following article is interesting and thought-provoking. It was first published in the Midnight Cry Messenger in 1957! As it involved world events current in 1957 it is in some ways dated. Although many details have changed in the 57 years since its publication, yet the spirit that is driving the unfolding of world events has not changed. Lucifer's goal of enthroning himself over a world united under his dominion remains the same. Many of the players in the drama are still with us.

The discerning reader will note a number of references to beliefs about the endtimes that Bro. Thomas later repudiated. Were he with us today he would no doubt write this article differently. Nevertheless the real point of the article is not its underlying "eschatology" but rather that it shines a light on the real inspiration behind world events.

Revelation 13:1-3, "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads

and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power and his seat and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death: and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Read also Daniel 7: 7-26.

The eyes of the world today are upon the United Nations. The vast majority of civilized nations are looking to the United Nations to solve the world's problems. To many, it is the last hope for peace in a war-weary world, a world that is dominated by cosmic principles of force, greed, selfishness, ambition, pleasure, and international rivalry.

The UN is hailed by many as the only Saviour of today's world facing its greatest crisis. President Eisenhower said in

Continued on page 2

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Editor's Letter

Dear Saints,

Greetings to all in the wonderful name of Jesus! Recently a sister in the church came and told me she had been impressed to re-read Bro. Thomas's 1957 article on the United Nations. It had been awhile since I had read it and I promised to consider it.

One reaction I had was that the article was somewhat "dated" in the two senses I mentioned in the introduction. It dealt with current events of 1957 and many of its points involved the dispensational view of endtime events that Bro. Thomas had held at the time. For him that view was simply a part of the tradition he had been exposed to and one he later discarded as the Lord gave greater light.

But — as I re-read it I realized that what shone through was some real insight into the satanic inspiration behind the international affairs of our world. And that hasn't changed except to intensify.

I thought of a scripture in 1 Thess. 5:20-21 which says, "Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good." That's pretty good advice! After all, who here on earth has perfect understanding of truth? Yet in spite of Bro. Thomas's limited understanding in 1957 God anointed him to share real truth.

I was reminded of a couple of books I had read earlier this year. Both concerned the endtime. I didn't share the same conviction about endtime events they did; and they didn't agree with each other! One was a novel in the "Left Behind" mode about people who had been saved after the "rapture" who were now living under the Antichrist and the other was a teaching book that contended for a rapture about a year before the end of the traditional 7-year tribulation.

I realized that I would find many things in both books with which I disagreed BUT I also took note that each author was a genuine brother. And so I decided that I would just overlook the points with which I disagreed, not reacting to them, but just

United Nations

Continued from Page 1

his speech to the nation, Feb. 20, 1957: "The United Nations must not fail!"

The following article, datelined Washington, December 27, 1956, perfectly illustrates the attitude and opinion of great men regarding the United Nations and its predecessor, The League of Nations. Woodrow Wilson, born 100 years ago tomorrow, was eulogized tonight as a peace-maker, administrator and one of "our five or six greatest presidents." Tributes came from President Eisenhower and former President Truman and Hoover as part of an international observance of the Wilson Centennial. Eisenhower's statement, prepared for a ceremony in Paris, France, tomorrow was made public by the Woodrow Wilson Centennial Celebration Commission here. "Wilson's defense of human rights and liberties makes him a splendid symbol of the enduring

looking for common ground.

Guess what! I found common ground in each one. In the first one, if you strip away the dispensational stuff about a secret rapture and all that follows in their view you are still left with Christian believers living in a world dominated by the spirit of antichrist. Regardless of what the details of that world will look like it is coming and believers will be here. And so the book is relevant to believers today in ways the author perhaps did not intend!

The other book was an effort to modify dispensational teaching, first by relating the unfolding of the new covenant to the Jewish feasts, and secondly by teaching that there is a difference between "tribulation" and "wrath" and that Christians will be here to experience "tribulation" but be removed before God's wrath is poured out.

Common ground is easy to find in the second case. In fact, a major burden of the co-authors was that the pretribulation rapture doctrine was leaving many Christians dangerously unprepared for what was coming. A very well-written chapter expressed that burden.

I found other things interesting, set aside some of them, put others "on the shelf" for the Lord to confirm one way or another but as for the author's burden I absolutely share it!

Wouldn't it be wonderful if genuine believers would recognize our limitations and seek to build bridges instead of walls? Till next time may God's rich blessings be yours.

Your brother in Christ,
Phil Enlow

friendship that has bound our countries together since the days of Lafayette," Eisenhower said. "Wilson's concept of a great family of nations living peacefully together and ruled with justice under law is still our dedicated goal." The Paris observance takes special note of Wilson's help in creating the League of Nations after World War I. Truman wrote the commission he thought that William Jennings Bryan "did the country a major service in bringing about Woodrow Wilson's nomination. I am pleased indeed that your efforts are being directed toward giving Woodrow Wilson his proper place among our five or six greatest presidents," Truman added. Former President Hoover praised Wilson as "one of the best administrative minds we have ever had in the White House." As a young man, Hoover served under Wilson during World War I and Paris peace conference. Hoover said the United Nations charter follows every major pattern of the covenant of the League of Nations adding: "No greater monument, than this could be erected to the ideas and ideals of Woodrow Wilson."

Despite what men may say or the world may think, is the UN of God or Satan? If it's of God it should have our prayers and support. If it's of Satan it should be exposed and condemned. The only way we can possibly find the answer to these questions is to examine the UN in the light of God's word, the Bible.

What is the UN? It's an attempt by man to bring peace and unity to the earth by means of a world organization. Please note we said it was an attempt by man, because God was left out to begin with. God's word plainly says, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." II Tim. 3:13. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," Matt. 24:7. These conditions will characterize the age at the time of the appearance of the world power known to Bible scholars as the beast of Revelation 13 and Daniel 7:7.

Please note the following remarkable similarities of the UN to this last form of Gentile world power. The beast of Rev. and Daniel, that will exercise such great power over the earth at the time of the return of Christ, will be on the world scene without men being aware of it. To begin with this great power will appear as the very thing the world needs to solve its difficult problems. Instead of appearing as a monstrous power to destroy and made desolate, it will appear as the Saviour of a bewildered world that is looking for a way out. Daniel 8:25 says the beast will "by peace destroy many."

This last Gentile world power will be Satan's masterpiece for deception. Many Bible scholars have taught the people to look for a revival of the old Roman Empire. Some are looking for some great power such as Russia to take over by brute military force. Russia, it's true will be a part of this power, Ezekiel 38, and will play a leading role; but so will the whole Gentile world of organized nations. There will come a showdown and we find that 10 nations who will be of one mind are going to give their strength and power to the beast. Rev. 17:12-13.

God knows that non-spiritual students of the world would try to figure these things out without revelation from the Holy Spirit. It's true, His real anointed are going to see the truth as the prophecies unfold. Jesus would have never said, "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the door," unless He intended for someone to understand. The truth is it won't be the great theological minds that the religious world is looking to. Isaiah 29:13-14. "Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men; therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." In contrast to this God's word says, II Cor. 1:26-29, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how not many wise men after the flesh not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence."

Because of these facts the world as a whole (including the religious world) will not recognize the beast or world power that brings in the great tribulation upon the world. Jesus said in Luke 21:35, "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." A snare is a clever trap that catches its prey when it least expects it, Paul also gives the same warning in I Thess. 5:2-3, "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

Continued on Page 3

United Nations

Continued from Page 2

upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." Think of it, as a thief in the night. The thief comes while you are sleeping soundly; takes your valuables and is gone. This thing is going to take place in just such a manner. In fact everyone will be saying, "Now we are going to have peace and safety. Friend, did you ever stop to realize that the whole purpose of the UN is to bring peace and safety to the world.

Remember also that Daniel 8:25 says the beast will by "peace destroy many." Under the guise of being an organization whose purpose is to bring peace to the earth, the UN now has 80 nations of the world as its members and supporters. Remember also that Rev. 13:7 says, "and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues, and nations." Isn't it a strange coincidence that the UN has under its wings practically all kindreds and tongues, and nations.

So far we have listed three remarkable similarities between the beast of Daniel and Revelation and the United Nations.

1. The beast will not be recognized as such, but will actually be looked upon as a deliverer. So is the United Nations.

2. The beast will, to begin with, use peace as its chief weapon. So does the UN.

3. The world will be under the influence of the beast. Isn't that true also of the United Nations and becoming more so each day.

Let's go on and note other remarkable similarities from the word of God. Similarity No. 4: According to Dan. 8:24, Rev. 13:7, and 17:13, the beast derives his power from other sources. Now that is exactly the case of the UN. It is entirely dependent upon its member nations to give it power. Only as they support it and stand back of its decisions can it assert itself.

Similarity No. 5: According to Dan. 2:40-43 the beast, or kingdom, as it is called by Daniel, will be clay and iron, typifying dictatorship and democracy causing division and weakness. Isn't that exactly what has taken place between the Western powers representing democracy and Russia and her followers representing dictatorship. Also notice Verse 43 of Dan. 2, which says, "they shall mingle themselves with the seed of man; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." How true this is of the UN which is made up of 80 different nations. If this isn't also characteristic of the confusion and disunity that has prevailed in the UN, then I don't know anything.

Similarity No. 6: In the beginning the beast doesn't have power to enforce its decisions. We find 10 of the nations who are of one mind getting together and giving their power and strength to the beast. Rev. 17:12-13. At this very moment while this article is being written, the leading nations of the UN are considering ways and means to give the UN power to enforce its decisions. The UN has its flag, its army, and is just waiting for the big powers to say, "I'll give you my power and strength."

Similarity No. 7: The name Babylon is very significant. In Rev. 17:5 we have Babylon, the Great Whore, Mother of Harlots. Practically every student of the word recognizes this Babylon as apostate Christianity headed up under the Papacy. Her daughters are Protestant Christendom that are following in her steps in trying to build religious empires, and thus make a name for themselves. Now the second Babylon we have in view is the beast's confederated empire or the last form of Gentile world power. To begin with, we find ecclesiastical Babylon, the great whore, riding on the back of the beast, political Babylon. But we find the ten kings of Rev. 17:12-13 turn on the great whore and destroy her, Rev. 17:16-17, "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast; these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

The word Babylon originated at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11) and means confusion. What happened at the tower of Babel was simply men getting together and saying, let's unite together, and build us a great city and tower (or civilization) lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. Now the thing that was wrong was they did not seek God's face in the matter. They were presumptuous, self-willed, and made their own plans ignoring God and leaving Him out completely.

Friends, God already has his plans made regarding this old world and the coming kingdom, and the sooner mankind learns this, the better off he will be. In the meantime, manmade plans and schemes are doomed to fail. The beast of Revelation is called Babylon along with the great whore because the presumptuous and selfwilled spirit of Satan that was in man at the tower of Babel is in them. It's simply man trying to make himself a universal kingdom without God. That is the spirit that dominates the political and religious world. The basic sin

responsible for this is self-worship instead of God. It's the same spirit that was in old Lucifer that caused him to say, "I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the North. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Isa. 14:13-14.

What is the United Nations, but another attempt at world unity without God. It has also turned out to be another Babel, for we have had nothing but confusion.

It seems to me if there was one iota of real faith in God and the Bible, some of our leaders could see that the United Nations is a satanic and unholy alliance that could never result in anything but confusion. How God hates such an abomination. To think that they can yoke up together atheistic, Christ-rejecting heathen nations with all kinds of religions that deny Jesus Christ along with God-hating and God-defying Russia, and still have God's blessing upon them is more that I can understand. Can you imagine Christ and the devil getting together and solving the world's problems.

Oh, if President Eisenhower would only call congress together like the Prophets used to call the elders of the Israel together and read the Word, then seek the face of God – but that will not happen, the scriptures will be fulfilled.

Similarity No. 8: In Rev. 17:3, we find the woman, the great whore, riding upon the beast. This simply means that the woman (the apostate church) will be sustained and supported by the beast (the last Gentile world power). Strange as it may seem but yet fulfilling the scriptures, the present Pope has spoken very highly of the UN and commended it for its role in world affairs. And if the UN continues to grow in power and influence (we believe it will) the whole apostate church world including Rome and her daughters will be only too glad to ride upon the back of the UN.

Similarity No. 9: In Rev. 13:3, 17:8, we notice that the whole world wondered after the beast. Isn't that exactly what is taking place today! The eyes of the world are upon the UN. You cannot pick up a newspaper that does not carry the news regarding the development in the UN. Also if the UN gets the Power to enforce its decisions the world will be saying, "Who can make war against the UN?" Rev. 13:4.

Similarity No. 10: From Rev. 13:3 and Rev. 17:8, we see that the beast had a deadly wound that was healed or it was and is not, and yet is. This means that this beast, or last world power, came into being, then died,

and then revived again. Of all the amazing similarities between the beast and the UN this is the one that should convince the most skeptical. Did you ever stop to realize that the same spirit that conceived the League of Nations after World War I is responsible for the United Nations of today. The League of Nations died because it did not have the support of its member nations to carry out and enforce its decisions. The League of Nations was a man-made, Satan-conceived, plan to bring unity and peace to the earth without following the plan of the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ. It died, but its deadly wound has been healed and today it's called the United Nations. It has the same spirit and the same purpose. Remember former President Herbert Hoover said, "The United Nations Charter follows every major pattern of the league of Nations."

Similarity No. 11: In Revelation 13:11-12, we have another beast coming up out of the earth with two horns like a lamb and spake as a dragon. Remember, now, beast represents kingdom, world power, nation, etc. (Dan. 7). This beast, I believe, represents the good old USA, and we have 5 reasons for believing that.

1: It had horns "like a lamb," typifying Christianity. Was not this country started because men came to these shores looking for freedom where they could worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience? But alas, it has developed into a great world power and today to a great extent it is a military nation whose mighty voice (like the dragon) can be heard in the affairs of the world. Its Presidents and diplomats are prominent figures at the various world conferences.

2: This beast, Rev. 13:12, "causeth the earth and all them that dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed." Verse 15 of Rev. 13 says, "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast." Now let me ask you a question: what nation is most interested in and responsible for the UN? The idea, to begin with was conceived by one of our former Presidents, Woodrow Wilson. Today, where is the UN headquarters located? New York City. It's a known fact, the United States is the main power back of the UN. Remember the beast of Rev. 13:11 gives life to the image of the beast. Were it not for the life given the UN primarily by the United States it would be a lifeless image. Let's remember the UN has no life or power of its own. It's simply a lifeless image, or theory, without power and authority from other nations.

Continued on Page 4

Be Ready

Continued from Page 1

of earth's history and a belief in this view forces one to separate the things Jesus said and to apply them to these three different supposed comings.

Jesus simply said, "I will come back," and he told of a number of things that would happen when he did. There is no hint in anything he said that he would return three times over a span of more than 1000 years — unless you already subscribe to a belief system that forces you to twist his simple words to fit into the system. Let's take a brief look at some of these things Jesus said — and ask the Lord, as we do, to help us to remove our theological glasses and simply see what the Word says.

No One Knows The Hour

Let's begin with a truth with which all should readily agree: no one but the Father knows when Christ will return, not even Jesus! Matt. 24:36 says, "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

It seems almost silly to have to make this point since the scripture is so clear. Nevertheless, from time to time, someone will declare that Jesus will return on such-and-such a date and gullible souls will be taken in by the deception and set up for yet another round of disappointment and disillusionment.

The simple truth is that only the Father knows — and He's not telling! Nowhere are we promised that we can know the day and hour. Anyone who says different is deceived. Don't listen to him. Go by the Word.

No Secret

Another truth that is consistently taught by Jesus about his return is simply this: when he comes everyone will know about it! Nothing about it will be a secret. Righteous and wicked alike will be fully aware of what is happening.

Matt. 24:27 says, "For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man." There is nothing secret about lightning; sudden, certainly, but not secret. In fact this scripture particularly emphasizes its visibility. Even though it flashes in one place, it is visible across the heavens. See also Luke 17:24.

Matt. 24:30-31 says, "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."

Clearly what Jesus is describing is no secret. He will come in the clouds and all nations will see him. There will be an expression of "power and great glory." Glory is "brightness," the kind of thing the 3 disciples witnessed when Jesus was transfigured before them on the mountain. Matt. 17:1-9. Angels will come with him. A trumpet — a **loud** trumpet — will sound.

In other scriptures Jesus confirms this picture. Matt. 16:27 says, "For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done." Matt. 25:31 speaks of the time when "the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory." Matt. 26:64 says, "In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Mark 8:38 says, "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

There are some belief systems that teach that all of this language describing Jesus' coming is symbolic, that it will not happen literally as he said it would. However, consider what the scripture says in Acts, chapter 1.

The disciples stood with their bodily-resurrected Lord on the Mount of Olives. After they had received some last instructions they saw Jesus begin to ascend into the literal sky until literal clouds obscured him from view. What significance is there in this? Simply this: as they stood looking up into the heavens, suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:11.

That sounds pretty simple and straightforward to me! Considering what the angels said, why should we not simply believe it when Jesus said he would come in the clouds of heaven?

But, someone will ask, how will everyone be able to see him? The earth is round. Half of it is in darkness and half in light? I don't know! It's not my job to figure it out — or to worry about it. We're talking about someone who created galaxies by simply speak-

Continued on Page 5

United Nations

Continued from Page 3

President Eisenhower expressed this country's attitude and concern when he said, "The United Nations must not fail." Yes, this country by its active support of the UN is causing all the world to worship the UN. The word worship means to look to, trust in, co-operate with, obey. If the present trend continues to develop, power is going to be given the UN to force the nations of the earth to bow before her.

3: This beast of Rev. 13:11 "doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men." Rev. 13:13. This sounds like the atomic and hydrogen bomb. It's a known fact, such terrific heat is generated by these bombs until it...melts...disintegrates everything for miles around. The sand melted and became a solid sheet of glass from the test bombs exploded in Arizona. It is said that the steel tower from which the bomb dropped melted like wax. The eyes of the world were upon the United States after the atomic bombs were dropped upon Japan.

4: This second beast greatly impresses the rest of the world because of the great wonders and miracles. Rev. 13:13-14. Isn't it true that the United States with its knowledge and development of nuclear energy, along with its scientific know-how, is the amazement of the whole world. These facts enable the United States to cause the rest of the world to take knowledge of the UN.

5: This second beast is also the power that causes the rest of the world to receive the mark of the beast. I don't believe this mark means that men will literally be branded with irons. If it does, then God is also going to brand his people with irons. Rev. 7:3, 9:4, 14:1, 22:4. The key to understanding this mystery is found in the following scriptures. In Ezekiel 9:4 the mark or seal is put upon them that sigh and cry over the abominations of the city. In Ephesians 1:13, 4:30 and also in II Cor. 1:22, we see that God's seal is the Holy Spirit.

The reason forehead is mentioned as the place of the mark is because it means mind. People that have God's spirit in them have the mind of Christ. I Cor. 2:11-16. Romans 8:5-6 says, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Now if God's seal is the Spirit giving us the mind of Christ, then Satan's seal or mark as it is called in Rev. 13:16 is the spirit of Satan giving wicked men the mind of

Anti-Christ. Forehead means mind. The mark of the beast in the forehead simply means that they will be of the same mind. Mark in the right hand means agreement or co-operation. It's the right hand that we extend when we agree with someone. Those that refuse these marks which means to cooperate or to go along with the beast, will not be allowed to buy or sell. Think with me now what happened just the other day when Israel was refusing to co-operate with the UN and get out of the Gaza strip! They were considering economic sanctions against Israel. What are economic sanctions? Just simply, refusing to buy from or sell to. In other words the UN was going to tell Israel, you either co-operate and do as we say or we will starve you out.

What country played the leading role in bringing pressure upon Israel to get out of the Gaza strip? Uncle Sam did, under a headline titled, "UN Must Use Pressure in Mideast Situation." Mr. Eisenhower declared, "The United Nations has no choice but to exert pressure upon Israel." Isn't it significant to Bible scholars that Israel, Palestine, and the Middle East are so much in the news today. This is where the great buildup is going to be that brings the greatest battle, Armageddon, the world has ever seen to a climax. Before that battle takes place, the beast is going to receive power that he doesn't have in the beginning. After he receives this power the great tribulation known as the time of Jacob's trouble will begin. This will last 42 months or 3 1/2 years before the battle of Armageddon takes place. It's during this time that the beast is going to make himself known. This is when he will really take over and begin to assert himself in no uncertain terms. Matt. 24:15-22, Rev. 13:5-8.

To you that read these lines we are afraid it is later than we think. The midnight hour is fast approaching and great multitudes are not prepared. Many church members are like the five virgins of Matt. 25: they have lamps of profession, but no oil. And then, there are those that are still in and supporting Ecclesiastical Babylon, the great whore and her daughters. God is speaking from heaven and saying (Rev. 18:4) "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Praise God, we are looking beyond the tribulation, when the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed. That stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands is going to smite the image, the beast. And then, hallelujah, the stone is going to grow into a great mountain that shall fill the earth. Dan. 2:21-35.

Be Ready

Continued from Page 4

ing. I think he can figure out how to make everyone aware of his coming! The bottom line is this: based on Jesus' words, everyone will know it when he comes.

Like a Trap

Another truth that comes across clearly in the words of Jesus is that his coming will be **sudden and unexpected**. Luke 21:34-36 says, "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

In Matt. 24:44 Jesus said, "the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." It is one thing for the world of unbelievers to be unprepared but this scripture highlights the fact that his coming will happen at a time when even his true followers do not expect it. The only guarantee of safety Jesus gives us is simply to "be ready." When that hour comes it will be too late for those who aren't.

The Days of Noah

Jesus compared his coming with two historical events. The first of these is set forth in Matthew 24:37-39. "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."

We know from the account beginning in Genesis 6 that men before the flood had become so wicked that the Lord was determined to destroy them. However, one man, Noah, found grace in His eyes and so the Lord provided a way of escape, of preservation from the coming calamity. And so the flood came as God had said. A few were ready but most were not. Let's notice some of the characteristics of each group as noted by Jesus and also in the Genesis account.

The picture Jesus paints is one in which most of earth's inhabitants were just living normal lives, carrying on everyday activities. All of their attention was focused on natural, earthly things, doing as they pleased, gratifying earthly desires. It sounds

a lot like today, doesn't it! They lived out the presumption that life was about pleasure and that tomorrow would be like today.

But it wasn't. One day the sun was shining: some were having parties; some got married, expecting a long life ahead of them. The very next day disaster struck — and they were totally unprepared.

Left Behind?

Let me ask you a simple question: what happened to those who were left behind that day? Did life just go on, with Noah and his family simply disappearing from the scene? NO! Every single man, woman, boy, and girl perished. **Not one survived.**

Listen to Luke's account of what Jesus taught about this: "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all." Luke 17:26-27.

What happened to those left behind? **The flood came and destroyed them all.** How many were destroyed? **All of them.** Why don't people preach this? Wherever did this totally unbiblical heresy arise that people will be "left behind" and the world will go on when Jesus returns? Even worse is the notion that those "left behind" will have an opportunity to be saved! Where did Jesus even remotely suggest such a thing? His words are utterly clear. He will return to earth, suddenly, openly, and everyone not ready will perish.

No Second Chance

There will be no second chance. Where do you suppose such an idea came from? Not from Jesus! And yet how many preachers are there who are intentionally or unintentionally conveying to their hearers that they can "wait and see" and then get saved after the so-called "rapture." My wife actually heard a minister on the radio awhile back say that he hoped that he wouldn't go in the "rapture" so he could stay behind and preach! What utter nonsense! How in the world could Jesus be more clear that the only hope of surviving the coming of Christ is to "be ready"?

The people of Noah's day weren't ready — and they ALL perished.

Spiritual Blindness

But Jesus gives us a hint of their spiritual condition when he said, "they knew nothing about what would happen." How could that be? We know from 2 Peter 2:5 that Noah was a "preacher of righteousness." There

was a period of 120 years from the time that God determined to destroy man until the flood itself. Clearly, Noah by word and deed warned men of the coming judgment yet Jesus said, "they knew nothing about what would happen."

This is a picture of what happens to men when they close their ears to truth. Once truth is made known to men they never remain the same. Truth received brings enlightenment — and more truth. Truth rejected leads inevitably to darkness. Even the very capacity for truth is lost.

When Jesus said, "they knew nothing," he wasn't speaking of simple ignorance. God was faithful to warn them; they just refused to listen. In John 12:35-36 Jesus said, "Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." Notice that for the man who does NOT walk in the light, darkness overtakes him.

In 2 Thess. 2:10-12 Paul warns of great satanic deception to come and said of those affected, "They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness."

The darkness that descends upon those who reject truth is itself a judgment of God. It leaves men totally helpless to escape a judgment that is inevitable. It's like a man who is bound hand and foot, blindfolded, and floating towards a waterfall and a drop to certain death — and yet he doesn't have the slightest awareness of his situation. What an awful condition!

And yet it is a fruit of their own choosing to reject truth that could save them. They reject God — and He rejects them. That's what it comes down to. Life is not about "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage." It is about God and righteousness, His purposes, about reconciliation with Him. Nothing else matters.

Well before the flood arrived those who perished were sealed in and by the darkness they had chosen. They were unconcerned about God. They didn't believe that judgment was coming. Surely God would never do such a thing! Mostly, they were stubborn about sin, and descended into a moral abyss, as Romans, chapter 1 makes clear. In the end their condition was so fixed that there was nothing God could do but pour out judgment.

Jesus wasn't simply giving us a history

lesson. What happened then is meant to serve as a warning to us today. It is pretty easy to see that our world today is rapidly heading down the same path. Once again, no one who is unprepared will escape. That is what is at stake: life or death; salvation or destruction — eternally.

Those Who Were Ready

But the lesson Jesus meant to convey in comparing his return to the flood of Noah's day concerns not just the wicked, but also those who survived. What of them? What lessons can we learn from Noah and his family? What are the characteristics of those God preserved at a time when everyone else perished?

One very obvious lesson is that Noah both heard God's voice — and he believed the message. Where others shut their ears, he opened his — wide.

And Noah's faith was expressed through what he did. In other words, he **obeyed**.

In Luke 8:17-18 Jesus set forth a principle that governs what happens when men hear the word of God: "For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him."

God found in Noah one who "has" — that is, he had a heart that received God's word — and the result was that he continued to receive needed light and instruction. Others, those who refused to listen, lost their ability to hear. It was taken from them.

Of course, hearing and believing God's word is not a one-time thing. Noah didn't just say, "Yes, I believe You, Lord," and simply go on with his life. The word that came to him changed the very course of his life, permanently. He not only listened but he *continued* to listen — and obey.

A Continuing Relationship

There is an ongoing relationship involved: God speaks; we obey. We cease our trust in man — even in ourselves. It is not a response of abject terror and unwilling obedience that God seeks but a realization of His amazing love and grace that results in humble and grateful trust. It is a clear cut choice to follow Him — and not the world.

And so we see that Noah's faith was not simply a mental thing. It resulted in ongoing obedience. That obedience was expressed in a considerable amount of labor in accordance with God's instructions. It wasn't

Continued on Page 6

Be Ready

Continued from Page 5

Noah's job to figure out what to do. He had but to hear and obey. Thus readiness is not simply a passive state but one of active and continuing obedience. There is a practical side to readiness and only God knows what is needed and when.

Surely building a boat on dry ground to prepare for a flood no one else but Noah's family believed in seemed insane. But Noah marched to the beat of a different "Drummer." His faith in God was strong enough to withstand the mockery and unbelief of his generation. He carefully followed God's instructions, believing His promise to save those who availed themselves of the ark. Is there a parallel today? I believe there is.

And God proved Himself completely faithful. That is also something Jesus wants us to know. There is no power that can destroy those who put their trust in him. Not only will the judgment that is certain to come upon the world not destroy those who trust in him, that day will be their ultimate deliverance from this present evil world. Even so come, Lord Jesus!

Condemnation of the World

Another observation that should be made concerning Noah was his rejection and condemnation of the world. Heb. 11:7 tells us, "By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith."

Thus we see that Noah's faith was not only a matter of self-preservation but also a condemnation of the world and its wickedness and unbelief. One cannot be neutral in this matter. Either God is right, or the world is. No one can truly believe in and serve a holy, righteous God without simultaneously condemning and rejecting this unholy and unrighteous world.

It was Noah's obedience to God that was a continual testimony that he was on God's side — and against the world. And remember, being on God's side meant being in agreement that the judgment to come was **right**. It was the **right thing** for God to utterly destroy men, women, boys and girls without mercy, so great was the world's wickedness — and, by his actions, Noah agreed.

That sounds pretty radical but the issue is just that clear cut. Jesus said that all of those not ready will die when he comes. How do you feel about that? Is it right for God to do that? That's exactly what happened in

Noah's day.

I'm afraid that our thinking is far too easily affected by constant exposure to man's view of things. It is easy to suppose that such a judgment is extreme, even unjust. Surely things aren't that bad.

But man's view of things is totally corrupted by sin and spiritual blindness.

In Luke 16:15 Jesus said, "...that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God." One glimpse of God's holiness was enough to cause Isaiah to see, not only the condition of men, but also his own need. Isaiah 6:1-5.

In view of God's utter holiness the wonder is that the world has not long since been destroyed. That fact alone is a powerful witness to God's grace and mercy. When we all stand before Jesus on the day of judgment God's righteousness will be completely apparent to all.

But for us today, the lesson is clear. To be ready for the Lord's coming is to be spiritually separate from the world. We ought to be loving and Christ-like towards all men to be sure, yet our faces must be set "like a flint" towards God and His kingdom. And such a stance implies that we are in agreement with God's judgment of the world.

No Hesitation

The clarity of Noah's stand was made evident when God finally told him and his family to enter the ark. There is no hint of hesitation in the account. God said, "Go in," and he went in. His spirit was not compromised in anguish over all he was leaving behind. There was nothing he was leaving that had a hold on his heart. His heart pointed in only one direction — God-ward.

The other historical event which Jesus compared to his coming is the rescue of Lot from Sodom. The wickedness of Sodom and the other cities of the plain had become so great that there was nothing to do but to destroy them. Yet He would not destroy the righteous with the wicked and so sent two angels in to get Lot and his family out.

As they were leaving they were warned by the angels to flee and **not to look back**. But Lot's wife disobeyed and turned to look — and was instantly turned into a pillar of salt. Her look was not idle curiosity. She looked because her heart was back there. There were things she didn't want to leave. She didn't really understand or believe in the judgment that was taking place. And so she perished — and Jesus issued the warning, "Remember Lot's wife." Luke 17:32.

That is one of the shortest verses in the Bible, and one full of implications for us. Where is your heart? If Jesus returned today

would you be ready to leave — immediately, and without hesitation? Would you say, "Wait, Lord, I was right in the middle of an important business deal"? or "I was just about to get married"? or some other earthly concern?

Lot wasn't the finest example of one who followed the Lord, BUT — he did leave and not look back.

And, by the way, what of those "left behind" in the destruction of Sodom? After telling what happened in Noah's day, Jesus said, "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed." Luke 17:28-30.

When did the fire fall? **The day Lot left Sodom**. What happened to those left behind? The fire **destroyed them all**. And so we have two historical events in which God poured out judgment as he rescued those who were righteous. Both of these are compared directly with what will happen when Jesus returns to earth.

Final Separation

In Matt. 24:40-41 Jesus continued his discussion of the days of Noah and, looking forward to his return said, "Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left." This scripture points out that, although spiritually separate, those who are ready and those who are not may be physically together. That day will bring about a final and complete separation.

In Matt. 24:31 Jesus said, "And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other." So we see that angels will be used to actually gather God's elect and thus bring about that separation.

I don't know exactly how that will happen but wouldn't it be something for the Lord to come in power and great glory and for angels to literally fan out across the globe, taking people by the hand, and ascending into the air to meet the Lord! Two men might be working together and an angel fly up and take just one of them by the hand, leaving the other behind. Another angel might fly into a bedroom where a husband and wife are sleeping, take the wife by the hand and leave the husband behind. It is a sober thought — if you are one that is not ready.

It is often unclear to us just who is a true

follower of Jesus and who is not. There will be many surprises on that day. But God knows. And He does the choosing. That is why the word "elect" is used. The evidence that one is a true "sheep" is that he hears Christ's voice and follows. John 10:27. Others may be religious but that is not the same thing. God knows the difference. Before the fires of judgment fall He will faithfully send his angels to gather His own — as He did in Lot's day.

Keep Watch

Jesus gives just one instruction regarding his return to earth. In Matt. 24:42-44 he said, "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

The comparison is made with a thief coming to a house to rob it and the owner needing to be ready if the robbery is to be prevented. The point being made is not the secrecy of a thief's coming but the unexpectedness. Jesus had already told us that his return would be open and universally known, as we pointed out earlier. The issues here are simply expectation and readiness.

And so Jesus' instruction can be expressed in just two simple words: "Be ready." We have been endeavoring, by referring to the words of Jesus, to set forth what "being ready" means. In verses 42-44 we find that readiness involves watchfulness. Watchfulness surely implies that his coming is expected. The world does not expect him to come but those who are ready do. Even though the **timing** of his coming may not be expected, the **fact** of his coming is. And so we are told to watch, to be spiritually alert.

Faithful Service

In Matthew 24:45-51 Jesus gives another lesson that bears on his return. In this passage he tells of a householder, obviously a rich man, who leaves his household in the charge of servants. One servant, described as "faithful and wise," simply carries out the master's instructions even though the return appears to be delayed. The other, described as "wicked," takes note of the delay and "begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards." The householder returns and deals with each according to his actions.

And so we see that being "ready" involves

Continued on Page 7

Be Ready

Continued from Page 6

being faithful in service even in the face of seeming delay. What is the issue here? Did the delay **cause** the unfaithfulness of the second servant? Did a “saved” man somehow become “lost”? No! We see a hypocrite exposed by circumstances. What was in him simply came out. He never was a true servant in the first place.

From this we can see a picture of how it will be as the coming of the Lord draws near. The Lord will allow circumstances to uncover the true condition of professed followers. We see a heart that has never been changed and when conditions are right the true affections of that heart are brought to light.

Such a man will not be ready when the Lord returns and the end will not be good. In the illustration we see what the master of the household does: “He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” I fear that there will be a lot of religious people in this category. Something about that hour, about spiritual conditions, will make their true spiritual state manifest.

The Ten Virgins

And so Jesus continued in Matt. 25:1-13 with the parable of the ten virgins. This parable highlights what is perhaps the most tragic group of those who are not ready for the Lord’s coming.

In this parable Jesus drew upon wedding customs with which his hearers would have been familiar in order to convey truths about the time of his coming. It was customary for a group of young virgins to meet and conduct the bridegroom to the wedding feast. As this typically took place in the evening it was necessary for them to have lamps or torches for light.

Jesus told of ten virgins who took lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Based on outward appearance these virgins were all the same: all were virgins; all had lamps; all went out to meet the bridegroom. And yet Jesus told us that of the ten, five were wise and five were foolish. The difference between these two groups lay in the simple fact that the foolish did not take any oil with them. In short, despite outward appearances, they were not ready to fulfill their role.

Due to a delay in the bridegroom’s coming they all went to sleep. At midnight there was a cry that he was coming and that they should go out to meet him. It was only then that the foolish virgins realized their folly.

They asked the wise to share their oil but there was not enough and so the request was refused.

They went off to buy oil and while they were gone the bridegroom came, the wise virgins went in to the feast and the door was shut. Later the foolish virgins came and knocked and asked that the door be opened only to be refused. The bridegroom called through the door, “I don’t know you.” The lesson drawn is simple: “keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

What Does It Mean?

Jesus’ use of virgins preparing to play their role in a wedding celebration is no accident. These are not people of the world who are unaware of what is coming. Every single one of these virgins, outwardly, at least, gave every indication of conscious preparation for the bridegroom’s coming.

Both that fact and their virginity signify that these are at least professing Christians, living a life of separation from the world. The “virgins” probably all went to church together, worshipped together, served together, and lived lives that would have caused those looking on to count them as believers.

And yet in Jesus’ parable fully half of them were not actually ready. They looked and acted the part and yet a critical aspect of readiness was overlooked: lamps were needed and they had no oil to enable their lamps to give light. What a foolish oversight!

It was no accident that the bridegroom in the parable was a long time in coming. Jesus wanted us to know that it will seem to those who wait that his coming is delayed beyond the time expected. That fact only adds urgency to the admonition to “watch.”

It is also no accident that the coming was at “midnight.” Midnight is the darkest hour of the night, a time when most are asleep. In fact, the virgins all fell asleep — the wise right along with the foolish. The darkness is meant to signify what spiritual conditions will be like as Jesus’ return is drawing near. It will not be a time of great revival but of great spiritual darkness. The power of Satan will reach its climax and that darkness will affect even believers — thus the slumber.

In spite of that slumber, when the midnight cry came the wise were quickly able to get ready. They had both lamps and the oil to enable them to burn. But it was at that late hour, in spite of all their intentions and expectations, in spite of their obvious profession of being some of those waiting for the bridegroom, the foolish discovered to their dismay that they were not, in fact, ready.

Too Late!

And it was too late. There was no more opportunity. They were shut out.

What a sobering picture this is! Look around you, particularly in American churches. Do you think that everyone professing to be a Christian is one? I certainly don’t. In fact I believe that in the gathering darkness preceding the coming of our Lord most of professing Christendom will fall away. Only a remnant will be left still waiting for his return.

And yet, even among that remnant we are told that many will not be truly ready. What a tragedy to come that far only to miss out! And all for the lack of oil. Obviously this oil in Jesus’ parable was meant to signify a critical difference between the two types of virgins. After all, those with oil were received and those without were rejected.

Oil

Oil played a prominent part in the institution of worship in the tabernacle under the old covenant. One of its uses was to enable an ornate golden lampstand to give a continuous light. Lev. 4:24. Another use involved the formulation of a special anointing oil, not to be duplicated, for use in setting apart everything and everyone connected with tabernacle service. Exodus 30:22-38. See also Exodus 35:8, 14-15.

Think about it: apart from the oil the lampstand was just a lampstand. It was pretty but served no useful purpose. Apart from oil everything connected with the tabernacle service was ordinary, just part of that which is corrupted and common. The oil made all the difference. We know that these things were given by God as types and shadows of what was to come. Col. 2:17, Hebrews 8:5.

In Zechariah 4:1-6 we read the account of a prophecy in a time of restoration, specifically, the rebuilding of the temple after its destruction by the Babylonians. “Then the angel who talked with me returned and wakened me, as a man is wakened from his sleep. He asked me, ‘What do you see?’ I answered, ‘I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights. Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.’ I asked the angel who talked with me, ‘What are these, my lord?’ He answered, ‘Do you not know what these are?’ ‘No, my lord,’ I replied. So he said to me, ‘This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

This vision was given to instruct and

encourage Zerubbabel concerning his work. It focused on his need to rely, not upon human strength, but upon God’s Spirit. We see in the vision both aspects of the use of oil. We see the lampstand giving its light because it is continuously supplied with oil from two olive trees. The prophet was told of these two olive trees: “These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth.” Zech. 4:14.

Thus, the flow of oil from the anointed ones to the lampstand is a picture of God’s Spirit. That is what the foolish virgins lacked. They had everything that was “outward” but did not have the Spirit. They professed faith but had never actually been born of that Spirit. In Rom 8:9 Paul wrote, “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.” Accordingly, we see the bridegroom telling the foolish virgins, “I don’t know you.”

Is it any wonder, in the light of all of these teachings of Jesus, that he asked the question in Luke 18:8, “when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” In Matt 24:12-13 Jesus said, “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

One Judgment

One other clear teaching needs to be noted: there will be one judgment for both righteous and wicked alike and it will take place at the time of Christ’s coming. Earlier we quoted Matt. 16:27: “For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.”

Matt. 25:14-46 is all about the coming judgment. Verses 14-30 concern his professed servants and verses 31-46 are a picture of the great judgment scene itself. Jesus is portrayed — when he comes in glory — as sitting on a throne in heavenly glory. All nations will be gathered before him and the “sheep” will be forever separated from the “goats.”

In John 5:28-29, Jesus said, “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”

Nowhere did Jesus say — or even hint — that there would be separate judgments for the righteous and wicked, as many teach. In fact, his promise to the righteous is that

Continued on Page 8

Be Ready

Continued from Page 6

they would be raised “at the last day.” John 6:39-40, 44, 54. How can there be more days after “the last day”? Thus the righteous will be raised “at the **last** day,” at the “**last** trumpet,” when the “**last** enemy is destroyed.” 1 Corinthians 15:26, 51-54. Sounds like the end to me!

Think of all that Jesus is saying: the world as a whole will be in total darkness; most professed followers will fall away (“grow cold”); and many who maintain their profession to the end will only discover the emptiness of that profession when it is too late. It causes one to wonder just how many true followers of Jesus will be left on earth when that day comes. I’m just thankful that he will never abandon even one true follower. It is only by God’s grace and faithfulness that anyone will make it!

What the Apostles Taught

These simple truths that Jesus taught concerning his coming are echoed and confirmed throughout the writings of the apostles in the rest of the New Testament. We have already noted what Paul said about the last trumpet and the last enemy in 1 Corinthians 15.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 is one connected passage about the Lord’s coming. In it we see the believer’s hope of final deliverance together with the sudden inescapable destruction of the wicked. Only two destinies are set forth: salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, or suffering wrath. His death for us is our only hope of escaping that wrath, whether we die prior to his coming or are alive at that time.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10, once again, we see the “relief” for the saints occurring when Jesus comes, pouring out “blazing fire” upon the wicked. In chapter 2, verses 1-12, we see Satan’s power, having reached its climax, being crushed at Christ’s coming, which is connected in verse 1 with our being “gathered to him.”

In 2 Peter 3 we see the same picture: the wicked scoffing and following their own evil desires; a declaration of certain judgment by fire; a sense of seeming delay; the “day of the Lord” coming suddenly; the destruction of the world by fire. The believer’s hope in all of this is that there is coming a “new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.” Verse 13.

Being Ready

In light of the clear teaching of Jesus and the apostles there is only admonition that

makes any sense: “Be ready.” To be ready means being ready if Christ should come today. It also means being ready if his coming is some years down the road, seemingly delayed. The evidence of readiness will be manifest in those who persevere in the face of the gathering spiritual darkness that is rapidly engulfing our world. Only the indwelling Spirit of God will enable believers to stand in such in an hour.

If you have not been truly born again of God’s Spirit then you are not ready. If that is the case then it is likely that you have no idea the danger you are in. May God invade your little world and enlighten you before it is eternally too late.

I am persuaded that many of those true believers left in the world are slumbering in dead churches, put to sleep by false doctrine about the second coming, surrounded by lost church members. The machinery of modern religion will not help you in an hour like this. God’s people need to seek

God Will Invade

God will invade. But I wonder whether people who ask God to interfere openly and directly in our world quite realise what it will be like when He does. When that happens, it is the end of the world. When the author walks on to the stage the play is over. God is going to invade, all right: but what is the good of saying you are on His side then, when you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else – something it never entered your head to conceive – comes crashing in; something so beautiful to some of us and so terrible to others that none of us will have any choice left? For this time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. There is no use saying you choose to lie down when it has become impossible to stand up. That will not be the time for choosing; it will be the time when we discover which side we really have chosen, whether we realised it before or not. Now, today, this moment, is our chance to choose the right side. God is holding back to give us that chance. It will not last for ever. We must take it or leave it.

~ C.S. Lewis

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www.midnightcry.org

Him as never before to lead them safely through. We have not been this way before. His presence, His wisdom, His grace, His provision are what is needed. Nothing less will do the job.

While this is a sobering subject it is not intended to bring fear or despair to those who have truly put their trust in Christ. We have some wonderful promises in the Word. Matt 28:20 says, “surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” In Heb. 13:5-6 we read, “God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’”

Phil 1:6 says, “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

In the light of all that Jesus taught about being ready I would ask the simple question: “Are you ready?”

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.

Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness.

2 Peter 3:9-13 - NLT

TV Network Broadcast

— (30 Minutes Weekly) —

The NRB Network (DirecTV 378)

Sun. 6:30 AM Eastern

Mon. 3:30 AM Eastern

Faith World TV

Sun. 8:30 PM UK Time

COMING EVENTS

November Meeting

November 26-29, 2014
Lexington, South Carolina

Annual Convention

June 24-27, 2015
Jacksonville, Florida

Broadcasts

RADIO STATIONS

*Monday - Friday**

Stat.	Freq.	Location	Time
KAAY	1090 AM	Little Rock, AR	7:15 AM
KXEG	1280 AM	Phoenix, AZ	9:00 AM
WNVY	1090 AM	Pensacola, FL	7:00 AM
KCNW	1380 AM	Kansas City, KA	12:15 PM 9:30 PM
KWDF	840 AM	Alexandria, LA	1:00 PM
WKDI	840 AM	Denton, MD	9:15 AM
KXKS	1190 AM	Albuquerque, NM	5:30 PM
KUTR	820 AM	Salt Lake City, UT	2:15 PM
WKXV	900 AM	Knoxville, TN	8:30 AM
WNQM	1300 AM	Nashville, TN	10:00 AM
WDZY	1290 AM	Richmond, VA	2:15 PM
WWVA	1170 AM	Wheeling, WV	9:30 PM

Short Wave

WHRI ANGEL 1 – (Central & South America)

Mon.-Fri.: 0700 UTC-6.175 MHZ

Mon.-Fri.: 1600 UTC-21.600 MHZ

Mon.-Fri.: 2300 UTC-7.315 MHZ

WHRI ANGEL 2 – (Europe, Russia, Middle East & Africa)

Tues.-Sat.: 0015 UTC-5.920 MHZ

Mon.-Fri.: 0800 UTC-11.565 MHZ

KWHR ANGEL 3 (Hawaii) – (Asia, S.E. Asia & South Pacific)

Mon.-Fri.: 0915 UTC-9.930 MHZ

For a current schedule of “Angel” stations go to <http://www.whr.org/Program-Schedules.cfm>, scroll down to “Detailed Schedule Search,” enter Midnight Cry for the program title and then click “Start Search.”

Television Broadcast

— (30 Minutes Weekly) —

Local Broadcasts

Albuquerque, NM - KAZQ - TV 32
Sun. 7:30 AM

Boone, NC - MTN-TV - TV 24
Cable 18 - Sat. 8:00 PM

Boston, MA/Manchester, NH
WBIN-TV - TV 18 - Sun. 6:30 AM

Chicago, IL - WJYS TV-62
Sun. 7:00 AM

Greenville, SC - WGGG TV-16
Sun. 7:00 PM

JAX, FL - WJXX - Ch. 25 HD - Sun. 6:00 AM
WTLV - Ch. 12 HD - Sun. 6:00 AM

Nampa, ID (Greater Boise area) - KCLP-18
Tues. 8:30 PM

Salt Lake City, UT - KTMW TV-20
Thurs. 7:00 PM & Sat. 10:00 PM

San Francisco, Oakland, California
KBCW TV-44 - Sunday, 6:00 A.M.

Seattle, Washington (reaches Vancouver)
KVOS TV-12 - Sunday, 7:30 A.M.