

The Christadelphian Advocate

SPECIAL ISSUE



A monthly magazine in defense of the “Things Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ” as embraced in The Hope of Israel with a view to “Taking Out A People For Yahweh’s Name”

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The Christadelphian Advocate

He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.

Jeremiah 23:28

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Introduction

*And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever ... **that there should be time no longer** (Revelation 10:5-6).*

The title chosen for this Special Issue, “Time No Longer,” addresses the angel’s declaration that, with the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet, the prophetic time period of a *time, times, and an half* of Daniel 12:7 would be completed. Daniel was told to seal the prophecy, while 630 years later John was told to unseal it, that Christ’s latter-day servants might understand and watch for those events that would by Divine decree come to pass (Revelation 1:1=22:10).¹ It is of that day that Christ declares, *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me...* (Revelation 22:11-12). These prophetic declarations are a most significant and serious consideration for the saints!

We live in the last days of the *times of the Gentiles* (Luke 21:24=Romans 11:25), within which a ðpeople for His nameö was decreed to be taken out (Acts 15:14). We, of course, believe we are among those öcalled,ö and hope to be among the öfewö chosen (Matthew 22:14), as will be determined by our Lord at his return. Our probation period, like our life, is öof few daysö (Job 10:20=14:1), and upon our falling asleep or our Lord’s return, all opportunity to further work out our salvation ceases.

We have the *sure word of prophecy* given to show us things which have been decreed to *come to pass*, and we are most blessed to be in that generation that witnesses these apocalyptic signs. Do we indeed *take*

heed; are we truly moved by these signs to *seek first the kingdom of God*, or do our temporal possessions and activities occupy our thoughts and our time? Though we observe the world around us falling to pieces, in truth, things are falling into place! Jesus chastised the Pharisees for not recognizing and responding to the signs of his first coming= does he not expect the same of us?

Though we observe the world around us falling to pieces, in truth, things are falling into place!

Strong Delusions: The signs we are witnessing in the Western nations reflect society’s falling away from the Bible, as observed by author Melanie Phillips:

“We tell ourselves that religion and reason are incompatible, but in fact the opposite is the case...The loss of religious belief has meant the West has replaced reason and truth with ideology and prejudice, which it enforces in the manner of a secular inquisition. The result has been a kind of mass derangement, as truth and lies, right and wrong, victim and aggressor are all turned upside down.” (The World Turned Upside Down, inside cover flap)

What we observe today is what was decreed in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, *...they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved ... for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* Have we not witnessed the rise of strong delusions within our culture and throughout the world? Simply put, God sends a strong delusion to those who choose not to believe the Gospel, and who delight in mocking and rejecting even the very idea of a Creator. Thus they have turned to lies, fables, and suppression/denial of God’s word:

- The Theory of Evolution
- Islam is a religion of peace (and less a threat to Western Civilization than is Christianity)
- Israel is villainous and the “oppressed” Palestinians are the victims
- The elite and politically correct suppress the truth and marginalize Christians. In entertainment, business, legal circles, and social media, the Gospel message is censored and evil is glorified
- Apostate Christianity has embraced the homosexual agenda, while increasingly asserting that Allah and their Christian God are the same

Ezekiel 38 is progressing before our eyes: the Gogian host nations (Russia, Iran, Turkey, Libya, and others), are aligning as reflected in the broadcast media headlines, while Israel is becoming increasingly isolated. Brethren, as we observe all these things, should we not be manifesting a discernable zeal and expectation for the imminent return of our Lord?

It is that expectation of the soon return of our Lord and the growing shortness of the time left to fill our lamps with the oil of salvation that prompts this Special Issue at this time. In it readers will find articles (both new and old) addressing, 1) the signs of the times=2) the urgency that should be apparent among Christ’s brethren in these last days=3) exposition of brethren’s duties and responsibilities as servants of the Most High and to one another=and 4) articles addressing motivation and preparation for that coming “instant” when we will suddenly find ourselves called to appear to give account: *that we may have boldness in the day of judgment* (1 John 4:17).

¹ There are many signs abroad indicative of the near approach of that interference of God in the affairs of men, which will result in changing the kingdoms of this world into the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15). To discern them, history and prophecy must be known and understood to some considerable extent. These are the two great lights which reveal the bearing of current events. Without them, a man will neither recognize nor be interested in the signs of the times... It is true that Jesus said to his disciples, *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power* (Acts 1:7)—but this had a special bearing on the time and the persons in reference to whom the words were uttered, in no way conflicting with the present inquiry... A statement in Daniel (12:4) seems to indicate that it is in our own times more particularly that the prophetic visions are to be understood, both as regards their events and times—*But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end*... There is a reason why the words may be understood at the time of the end. In the words are prophetically delineated historical events extending over centuries, and at the time of the end, we have the facts of accomplished history as the infallible interpreters of these words. (Robert Roberts, Christendom Astray, 1922 Edition, Lecture 16 of Times and Signs, pp. 318-322)



Time No Longer

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come... be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.
(Matthew 24:42, 44)

There's a good chance that if you will look at your wrists, on one or the other, there will be a timepiece. This would seem to carry somewhat of a message: we are, as a generation, acutely aware of time. We have heard it said that

Use each day of life as though it were an extension of God's mercy ... One of the most deceptive tools of the deceiver, the flesh, is the illusion that we have plenty of time; but you see, we don't.

when the white man first began to explore and settle this continent, the Indian had no need for a watch. In his primitive way of life he gauged time, not by seconds, minutes or hours, but rather by days, moons and seasons. As we reflect on this, we cannot help but note the sharp contrast that way of life offers to this age in which time is such a crucial element to our way of life. Everything works by the clock. Everything is governed by the date of the month, by the day of the week, by the hour, the minute, and even the second. There are deadlines to be met, and sometimes the most serious consequences penalize failure to meet them. In some measure this must be, as the observance of time is essential to organization and the accomplishment of objectives. If each of us arrived at our Sunday Morning worship service or the Bible classes at the moment which best suited each individual's convenience or whim, the organization would quickly fall apart.

Time and Our Creator

Any consideration of time is likely to turn our minds to that great Creator who possesses time without limit. Of the Almighty we are told in the Scriptures that a thousand years is as one day and one day as a thousand years, which conveys the idea that time is not a restraint to God. Yet it was He who ordained night and day, the week of seven days, and the seasons, which play such a part in our lives. It was He who set the heavenly bodies each in its own orbit, each so predictable in its course that those who make a study of them can predict with exactitude where any one of them will be at any future point in time. It was He who established and revealed the time periods which form the framework of that great work which He is accomplishing with mankind.

Time and Mankind

It is somewhat ironic that with all the insight and intellectual abilities which man possesses, he has great difficulty in coming to grips with some of the very self-evident truths with respect to time. One of those truths is the fact that we are given time in a measured quantity. Time began for us individually at the moment our own lives began, and it will end for us when our lives end. Time is that by which we measure our existence, that span of life which we are granted by the grace of the Creator. In a very real sense for mortal man, time equals life—when our time runs out, our lives come to an end. There is a Scripture which reads, *And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer* (Revelation 10:5-6). This writer has to confess that many years ago, looking at this and in a simplistic literal perception of the words, he failed to understand how time could cease to be. The intent, as other versions than the King James will confirm, is that there will be no longer delay, that time has run out. This is one of those manifest truths about time with which we as animal creatures have such difficulty absorbing: with mortal life there inevitably comes a point when there is *time no longer*. Another self-evident truth is the immutable fact that time moves only in one direction—life has no reverse gear. It is likely that at some point in our lives a number of us have with great pain had this lesson forced on us. However painful, however tragic the consequences, however desperately we may wish to go back, however much self-reproach we may suffer, no tears, no repentance can undo the mistakes we have made and the consequences which follow on their heels. There is no means by which we can erase that which is recorded in the annals of time. Pilate said it not with the same intent, but his words carry the message: ðWhat I have written, I have written.ö

And this is where we find the ten virgins in the parable of Matthew 25:1-13. For them there was time no longer, time had run out—ðwhat they had

written they had written.ö The parables of chapter 25, while separated by chapter division from chapter 24, are directly related to and form somewhat of an addendum to that prophecy in chapter 24, which we have come to know as the öOlivet Prophecy.ö Jesus follows up this prophecy with warnings to his servants to be ready, *for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh*. He continues by contrasting the servant who is found doing his Lord's will with that servant who is not so doing, using three parables to illustrate the message öbe prepared.ö It is in this context that we find the kingdom of heaven likened to ten virgins.

While there are many interesting considerations relative to the social customs of the day which may help us better understand the background of the parable, the main thrust is easily grasped. There is a time coming when the day of opportunity will be a thing of the past.

There is a time coming when *he that is unjust let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still*. No more chance for growth, no changing, no road back—but what is written is written. The record is sealed. Whatever hatred, whatever jealousy, whatever uncleanness, whatever love of this world and the things thereof which we have allowed our minds to harbor to that hour ó these are the things we are going to bring before the Lord Jesus Christ. Doesn't that thought give us cause to tremble somewhat? All those things which stultify and crowd out the spirit of Christ, [and] the oil that feeds the light, will be manifest in the eyes of our judge unless we deal with them while there is yet time.

We Christadelphians don't often take kindly to talks that dwell on the possibility of failure. It is well, however, that we understand that there is a difference between being failure-oriented and being awake to the pitfalls that can so easily ensnare us. In studying the parables and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, we find that he has much to say by way of warning of the possibility of failure. No one perceived the dangers to his household more clearly than Jesus, and we do well to listen with a great measure of introspection to his words of warning. We need to face the reality of the price of failure because the flesh will do all it can to hide it from us. Jesus did not seek to modify the picture, but warned of the weeping and gnashing of teeth on the part of those who will see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God and themselves thrust out. The flesh does not allow us to grasp the anguish of mind and spirit, the desperation of those who are shut out of the marriage feast. There are only two sides to that door

The flesh does not allow us to grasp the anguish of mind and spirit, the desperation of those who are shut out of the marriage feast... They will at that point in time realize what the flesh obscures today – how great a privilege is to them forever lost.

There are only two sides to that door

ó no such thing as being halfway in the Kingdom ó no indecision on the part of our Lord Jesus Christ, and those shut out will know it will never be opened. They will at that point in time realize what the flesh obscures today ó how great a privilege is to them forever lost.

One aspect of the parable of the ten virgins which we seldom take a serious look at is the percentages; fifty percent of the number were excluded. Are we prepared to consider the implications of this ratio with respect to the Christadelphian body? These are those who are òcalledö to the marriage supper of the Lamb! We don't point this out to cause anyone to lose heart—but rather as encouragement to find the heart to òawake to righteousness and sin not.ö Shouldn't the prospect painted by the words of Christ cause us to take a closer look at our understanding of the spirit of Christ and ourselves in the light of that spirit? The apostle Paul advised the Ephesians to òredeem the time.ö The words are found in a context which seems to be very appropriate to our day. *See then that ye walk circumspectly (see how accurately you walk - Diaglott), not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.* That the days in which Paul preached were evil, none familiar with history would deny. It is a sad commentary on our times that those of his day would have felt very much at home with many of whom we read of in our day. In one of our Sunday School hymns we sing, òLook at your life as youøll look at it then, scanned by Jehovah, by angels, and men.ö They are words that young children can hardly appreciate, but words certainly worth listening to by adults. So what do we have in our hearts that we would not want to bring before Christ to be scanned by Jehovah, by angels, and men?

Early in childhood most of us become so conditioned to the idea of another chance that it is somewhat difficult to dislodge. We can all doubtless remember pleading with our parents, òJust give me one more chance and I won't do it again.ö For better or worse, most parents tend to yield to such pleas, and as a consequence, we tend to expect the same as adults. It is a certainty that as adults we all need mercy, we need forgiveness, we need time. We need it not to allow further opportunity for procrastination, but rather to use each day of life as though it were an extension of God's mercy, giving us further opportunity to learn and to grow. **One of the most deceptive tools of the deceiver, the flesh, is the illusion that we have plenty of time; but you see, we don't.** Unless we use the time God allows us to learn and to develop the mind and spirit of Christ, the converse will invariably happen. We will grow in the mind and spirit of the flesh, and the mind will become hardened, and the flesh gain a firmer grip.

Some thoughts gained in our younger years make such a lasting impression they stay with us a long time. We can remember at least fifty years ago a teacher in the lower grades of a country school pointing out a lesson which remains with us to this day. The suggestion was made that if we were to tie a

knot in one of the small, supple, tender branches of a tree and come back a short time later we would find it relatively easy to untie the knot. Leave it for a few years though and come back to untie the knot, and the task would be virtually impossible without destroying the branch. Flaws in our makeup are not much different: the longer they are allowed to remain, the more ingrained and the more intractable they become.

We find it difficult to leave the idea of the marriage supper of the Lamb, in the context of the parable of the ten virgins, without taking note of the stark contrast between the scenes on the two sides of that door, the unspeakable joy of the fifty percent who had the exalted privilege of entering as contrasted to the utterly hopeless state of those who were excluded. We are privileged to get a glimpse of the exceeding great joy on the inside through words penned one thousand years before the time of Christ. One cannot read the 45th Psalm without catching the spirit of exhilaration that practically leaps from the page as he contemplates the marriage of Christ and his Bride! Read in its entirety, this Psalm presents a beautiful picture of that wonderful occasion which is yet a matter of promise. What an unspeakably wonderful privilege it will be to be among those who are so portrayed!

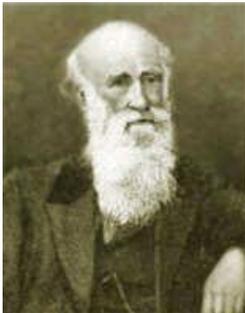
Can we not hear ever so faintly in the distance the cry, *“He’s coming! The bridegroom is coming!”* It’s getting closer and closer, and time passes so quickly! Before we know it the procession will be right in front of our eyes! **Don’t you think that we would do well to take another look at our supply of oil before there is “time no longer”?**

William W. Winfree, Fairfax, VA

(The above is a shortened version of the original article published in the February 1989 *Advocate* í Brother Winfree fell asleep in the Lord on February 2, 1998.)



The Angel’s Oath



John was favored with a vision of the same man seen by Daniel [12:7], only instead of seeing him clothed with linen at the time, he saw him *“clothed with a cloud.”* He had to communicate with John upon the same subject he had been treating of with Daniel ó upon the *“How long to the end of the wonders?”* In effect, he swore by Him who lives for the Millennial Future, that when he should stand upon the sea and upon the earth, ***Time should be no longer***=that is, *“the time, times, and a half”* should expire=therefore, he adds, *“But in the days of the voice of the seventh*

angel, *when he shall sound,* the Mystery of the Deity should also be

finished, as he hath declared the good news to his servants the prophetsö (chapter 10:6, 7). The *time*, concerning which Daniel inquired, saying: öWhat the end of these times?ö is to continue öno longerö than the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet. When this shall sound, *the 1260 time* of Daniel 12:7 will all be in the past ó this time will be no longer=but will be superseded by another ömanner of time,ö commonly styled, öThe Millennium=ö by Daniel *hah-olahm*=and by John, as in verse 6, *the cycles of the cycles*, which constitute YAHWEH'S TIMES, or the *future age* (Isaiah 33:5,6). **Such is the angel's oath...**

(John Thomas, Eureka, Volume 2B, p. 199)



The Return of Christ

The brothers and sisters of Christ of our day are surely the most blessed of the many generations which have intently looked forward to the establishment of their ultimate hope ó the Second Coming of our Lord and the establishment of his kingdom

on the earth. It is an event which shall exhibit both ögloriousö (Titus 2:13) and öterribleö (Joel 2:11, 31) aspects to various groups of peoples. The wonderful promise of Jesus was, *the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory* (Matthew 25:31). That event will surely fulfill the ögloriousö aspect of his appearance to those who have faithfully strived to follow him in all righteousness and faith.

It is an event which shall exhibit both “glorious” and “terrible” aspects to various groups of peoples.

But we must be aware of the “terrible” aspects of his coming as well ó the paramount significance of this event not only to the unfaithful of his household, but to the world in sin. It is prophesied to occur at a time of great international trouble, when entire nations are *distressed with perplexity* about the things that are menacing them with rapidly increasing, deadly, and unstoppable certainty.

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Let's drop back a bit. Every student of the Word is acutely aware that the holy city of God, Jerusalem, was predicted to be ötrodden downö under the heels of Gentile repression for a period ó an era expressed as *“the times of the Gentiles”* ó at the end of which the city would be liberated from Gentile domination (Luke 21:24). This key milestone was passed on May 14, 1948 (East Jerusalem liberated in June 1967). At that time, the text indicates that a new set of challenges arises, for the Master, in that same chapter in Luke, described the coming terrible events as including **signs** (Strong's 4592 ó *semeion* – “sign, signal, mark”) *in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with*

perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring. These speak of signs that would be both ceremonial and supernatural, which we have and are witnessing.

The “signs” therefore, were to be manifested both in the “heavens” as well as “upon the earth.” At the present time, world affairs are more complex and involve a greater number of people. The distress and perplexity we are witnessing is rapidly upsetting the peace and õnorms of society.õ Since the landmark year of 1948, the change in global affairs has been remarkable and dreadful, as is clearly reflected in the present spawning of international Islamic terrorism. The overwhelming effect of these ever-worsening events would be, said the Master, *Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken* (Luke 21:26). Here we are given to understand that the cumulative effect of these unusual and terrible events would õshakeõ *the powers of heaven* (Strongõs 3772 ó *ouranos*), the word here used to reflect secular power, i.e., the earthõs rulers, governments, kings, presidents. In this matter, we understand the õheavenõ to be the political heavens, not the celestial ones over which the Almighty alone has power.

We realize through these prophecies the powerful effect of these unusual circumstances: that entire earthly governments and kingdoms should be greatly distressed, and their rulers confounded with great apprehension. They would be faced with such insoluble and appalling challenges that they would be overcome with great dread. This is now the case, as we note:

É Nearly every nation on earth is being suffocated with mounting debt so huge that it probably can never be repaid.

É The condition of the family as the basic social unit of man has been compromised in nearly every nation.

É Unnatural affection has emerged into the open in many nations, on a scale perhaps second only to Sodom and Gomorrah. It is being foisted upon countries with great persuasion and force (not passively or discretely as previously), and has stealthily entered even into the household of faith.

É The rise of anarchy and terror groups has been remarkable during this time period. Whole nations have fallen into disarray and dysfunction.

This appalling set of events for the world is a reassuring sign to the saints, for we were foretold that *when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh* (Luke 21:28). At the height of this terror, an event of earthshaking importance comes upon the nations ó an intervention which they do not expect, and one which they will not understand, comprehend, nor readily accept, for it shall be the Event of the Ages. That event is the return of Christ, described in the following verse, *And then shall they see the Son of*

man coming in a cloud with power and great glory (Luke 2:27). Although his appearing will be unannounced as a thief in the night, every person will behold him at that time, but shall not perceive his identity. Even his people of Israel shall cry excitedly, *Who is this that cometh from Edom...glorious in his apparel...traveling in the greatness of his strength?* (Isaiah 63:1)

Christ first appears to Israel as the head of a conquering army, yet he is actually the one who will quickly and completely dispossess **all** their enemies of their power, their might, their prestige, and their governance. Their enemies' houses are about to fall, having been built upon the shifting sands of false religion, independent of and in direct opposition to the Almighty and His will. It shall be the time of the consolation of Israel, the fervent hope voiced by the just and devout Simeon in Luke 2:25.

But, dear brethren, important as that great event shall be, there is a previously occurring appearance that is of greater importance to us who also live for that day. It is, of course, our Lord's entirely hidden, personal return to us, the living saints, who shall be gathered along with all the covenanted saints having been raised from their memorial graves to the place of judgment by their Master. To the brethren of the New Covenant, this is the critical appearance of the Lord from heaven. Its coming shall bring the decision of the ages for every one of us who seeks the positive declaration by our beloved Master, *Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord* (Matthew 25: 21, 23).

Our Lord has revealed these little appreciated facts to the household of faith for a specific reason, to urge them to perfect their lives of service to him, *So that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints* (1 Thessalonians 3:13 ESV). That is the message that gives motivation to us as unique men and women who are sanctified to His service and who bear His name. It is the primal offer of salvation to which we at first responded when our thankful minds grasped the enormity of God's purpose as bound up in his faithful servants. It compelled us to enter His service as had multitudes of our brethren of past time, and to vow our fidelity to Him in truth.

The initial actions of Christ and the Saints in clearing the Promised Land of its interlopers and squatters will initiate an enormous renovation that is in complete accord with God's will. Their victory over the inner ring of nations will probably be mistaken for some clever Israeli weapon or pact (perhaps the Antichrist making peace for Israel?), resulting in the nations' frantic knee-jerk response in raising yet additional armies to liberate Palestine from this intruder. Having not done their diligence, the outer ring of nations makes a unanimous decision to resist with all their might. The next entity to fall shall be the Gogian host of Ezekiel 38 and 39, which, supposing Israel to be vulnerable, comes against her *as a cloud to cover the land* (38:16). The Gogian host's destruction then

motivates the European ðten hornö nations to give their power to the beast to make war with the Lamb (Revelation 17:12-14). As Daniel summarizes, *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever* (Daniel 2:44).

The nations could easily have known this Intruderø's true identity had they consulted the widely and freely available öWordö (*τὰ βιβλία – the books*) of the holy prophets from the earliest of times until Christ at his first Advent. **Unfortunately for them, their scholars are students of atheism, of secular humanism, of biological evolution, and of narcissism in general, turning aside any possible acceptance of any authority above and beyond their own.** It has been the worldø's fatal mistake throughout time. Its overt manifestation in this case will result in the direct and overwhelming response of the eternal God of Israel ó intervening on behalf of His people of every stripe, and bringing to a divinely mandated conclusion the unreserved godlessness of all mankind.

How remarkably ironic, that in a near-future day, *it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you* (Zechariah 8:23).

Harold Lafferty, Hagerstown, MD



Be Not Ashamed Before Him at His Coming

Awakened from a deep sleep by a shout and what sounded like the blowing of a trumpet (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 1 Corinthians 15:52, Daniel 10:9), I felt my body reinvigorated as the breath of life again entered into my lungs and I felt my heart beat once again. Realizing that I had been touched by a life-giving hand, I found myself upon my hands and knees, hearing a comforting voice that gave me instructions to stand up=trembling, I rose to my feet (Daniel 10:11). Having regained full consciousness and mental capabilities, I now understood that this was the moment for which I had prayed my entire life, especially after my baptism=the return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of those in covenant, and the establishment of the promised Kingdom on Earth. Within moments, I found myself in a secluded, mountainous region (Deuteronomy 33:1-3), being escorted towards a great white throne (Revelation 20:11), upon which sat a man described as clothed with a white full-length garment, having a golden belt around his chest and feet that shined like polished brass. His hair was white as snow and his piercing eyes were like flames of fire (Revelation 1:13-15). Seeing the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in all of his immortal and glorious brilliance, I lost

all strength and fell upon my face before him, speechless (Revelation 1:17, Daniel 10:15). Out of the mouths of two or three witnesses is a matter established (Deut. 19:15), and the angel that accompanied me had in his possession the book that contained the works of my life (Revelation 20:12). With trepidation, I realized the negative accounts in the

Understanding that the time had come to give an account before my Master, a whirlwind of thoughts and emotions flooded my consciousness: recollections of mistakes, weaknesses, lost opportunities, regrets, and a failure to make full use of the time and talents that had been graciously given me...

book were those sins for which I had not truly repented and had therefore not been blotted out from the record (Psalm 51:1, 9). With a sinking feeling, I lamented my failure to fully avail myself of repentance through the Savior and mediator, Jesus Christ. Understanding that the time had come to give an account before my master (Daniel 10:16), a whirlwind of thoughts and emotions flooded my consciousness: recollections of various fears, mistakes, weaknesses, lost opportunities, regrets, and a failure to truly redeem or make full use of the time and talents that had been graciously given to me by Father. That time and those opportunities had passed—it was too late to amend the written account of my life and I could only take comfort in understanding that the judge who gazed upon me was merciful and righteous, recognizing my weak frame and makeup because he too was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). As the angel began to open the book, a comforting memory verse reminded me that, *By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast* (Ephesians 2:8-9). I remembered that our gracious Father does not expect perfection from sinners, but instead, *Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing* (Luke 12:43). My hope was that I had truly been found *ōso doing*.ö

The above imagined description of finding oneself before the Judgment Seat is of course fictional, albeit influenced by familiar Scripture. For those in covenant, the coming judgment will be very much a reality. Though we can only speculate as to the exact sequence of events that will transpire at that time, we know with assuredness that *we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad* (2 Corinthians 5:10). The time to influence what is written in our *book of remembrance* is now (Malachi 3:16). Though we understand that salvation is through God's grace, we also recognize that Yahweh expects us to perform works that reflect and manifest our faith (James 2:20). Unlike the five foolish virgins who were unprepared for the sudden appearance of the bridegroom, we must do all that we can to be prepared, having sufficient oil

(representing the light of the truth) in our lamps so that we may better withstand the trials and difficulties that are common to each believer's walk during this time of probation. With this understanding, each of us must therefore ask ourselves very simple but poignant questions: What must we do *ó* right now *ó* so that *when he shall appear, we may have confidence* (Strong's #3954 *ó*assuredness*ö*), *and not be ashamed* (Strong's #153 *ó*disgraced*ö*) *before him at his coming* (1 John 2:28)? How must we now live our lives so that *we may have boldness in the day of judgment?* (1 John 4:17) After all, our salvation depends upon our response to these questions.

To understand the lesson that John is seeking to teach in these verses referenced in 1 John, we must review the content of the chapters and verses that precede them. In doing so, we note that the inspired apostle emphasizes a consistent message throughout this letter, certainly in an effort to accentuate the importance of the lesson. For instance, **in the first two chapters, he takes great care to state that the believer must adequately demonstrate several important characteristics and actions:**

- Repentance=confession of sins through Christ (1:9=2:1-2)
 - *If we **confess our sins**, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* (1:9)
- Belief in sound doctrine (2:18-24)
 - *Let that, therefore, abide in you which ye have **heard from the beginning**. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall **remain** in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.* (2:24)
- Faithful walk (2:3-6)
 - *But whosoever **keepeth his word**, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him.* (2:5)
- Love of the brethren (2:9-11)
 - ***He that loveth his brother abideth in the light**, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.* (2:10)

If those who desire to be children of God (2:1) follow these instructions, John concludes in 2:28 that they will *abide* (Strong's #3306: *ó*dwell, endure, remain*ö*) in Christ and receive the promise of eternal life (2:24, 25, 28) to be granted at his coming. **Demonstrating the importance of this lesson, he then repeats this theme in 1 John chapters 3 and 4, reiterating the necessary character traits that must be cultivated by those "called the sons of God" (3:1):**

- Repentance=not abiding or continually practicing sin (3:4-9)
 - *Whosoever **abideth in him sinneth not**; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* (3:6)

- Belief in sound doctrine (3:23=4:1-3)
 - *Beloved, believe not every spirit (i.e. teaching), but try the spirits (teachings) whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (4:1)*
- Faithful walk=keeping God's commandments and demonstrating faith through works (3:18, 22)
 - *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. (3:18)*
- Love of the brethren (3:10-16=4:7-16)=by doing so, we demonstrate that we seek to manifest Yahweh, who is love
 - *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (3:16)*
 - *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. (4:11)*

John's conclusion is that only by manifesting these essential traits can a believer gain "boldness in the day of judgment" (4:17), for by doing so, we show our desire to emulate or manifest the characteristics of our Father as good and obedient children who long to abide in His household eternally. With this lesson established, how should we be influenced to live our lives as we prepare and pray for the return of Christ?

- **Honestly examine ourselves** and be willing to see, recognize and admit our faults, flaws and the mistakes that we constantly make, seeking forgiveness through our faithful High Priest and intercessor Jesus Christ—for, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8)*. If we do so, then we can be confident that, *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12)*.
- **Read and meditate upon the Scriptures daily**, as they are our source of strength, wisdom and encouragement. If we do so, then they will guide us safely throughout our lives, for, *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path (Psalm 119:105)*. Only by doing so will our lamps constantly be replenished so that Christ does not find us destitute and void of the Word at his return.
- **Seek to act in a manner that is consistent with what Scripture teaches us** so that our actions may demonstrate a strong faith. As James 2:18 says, *I will show thee my faith by my works*. We understand that it is impossible to walk perfectly due to our sin nature, but we must nevertheless seek diligently to perform the works of God rather than those of the flesh.
- **Love the brethren**. Have empathy for one another. Be longsuffering and kind. Try to help and encourage one another in any

way possible. Strengthen the weak and downtrodden. Teach and mentor the young (demonstrate the confidence and joy that comes from living God's Word). Reconcile with those with whom we have a quarrel or whom we have wronged before there's no time remaining to do so and the Book of our lives cannot be altered. Seek to recover those who have become lost, for whatever reason. Sacrifice for the good of one another, for *we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren* (1 John 3:16). Exhibit fervent love towards our brethren, thereby following the example of both Christ and Yahweh. If we do these things, then perhaps we can approach the judgment seat of Christ comforted by the words found in 1 John 4:18, ***There is no fear in love. On the contrary, love that has achieved its goal gets rid of fear, because fear has to do with punishment; the person who keeps fearing has not been brought to maturity in regard to love*** (Complete Jewish Bible).

May we all be found also doing John's instructions so that we may *have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming*.

Art Sankey, Morrison, CO



Judgment

Hymn 190 (1932 Hymn Book)

**There is an hour when I must part
With all I hold most dear;
And life, with its best hopes, will then
As nothingness appear.**

**There is an hour when I must sink
Beneath the stroke of death,
And yield to Him who gave it first
My struggling vital breath.**

**There is an hour when I must stand
Before the judgment seat,
And all my actions, thoughts and words
In trying ordeal meet.**

**Oh, may I now be wise, while still
That hour's in future stored,
And live acceptably to Him
Who is my Judge and Lord.**

Waiting for Christ



All Christ's allusions to the circumstances of his second coming pre-suppose a time of indefinite waiting on the part of those servants whom he finds alive in the earth.

They discern the signs of their time, yet they know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh. They recognize the time of the end, but have to wait longer than they supposed they would when they girded their loins and set their lights burning. This unexpected delay caused some to relax their vigilance, and to say, *My Lord delayeth his coming*. On others, though hope deferred

maketh the heart sick, it produces not this effect—they endure to the end. They are the class contemplated in the words of Christ when he says, *Blessed are those servants whom their Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching*. Their existence is distinctly recognized in the words, *Behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments*.

The leading events of the age all tell us that the Lord is at the door!

The delay tries us, but destroys us not. It is no delay in the true sense. That is, there is no delay or slackness from the Lord's point of view. With him the time is fixed to a day, and his coming will not be a day after the time appointed. The idea of "delay" relates to our expectations. The neighbourhood of the day has been revealed, but not the day itself. We had expected the arrival of that day as soon as its neighbourhood was reached. Time has shown us that the end, and *the time of the end* are two different things, though belonging one to the other. The latter we have reached: the former we yet wait to see. **This delay in relation to expectation is one of the foreseen characteristics of the end; how otherwise does the Lord, at his appearing, find some who say, *My Lord delayeth his coming?* It is a delay for which some of us – yea, all of us – may be thankful... and to none of us would the day have come so acceptably as it will after a prolonged season of works and faith and patience.** Not that our poor works can commend us to the grace of God—for Christ has instructed us to say, after we have done all we can, *Behold, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do* (Luke 17:10). **But there is a satisfaction in the answer of a good conscience towards God,** and this satisfaction will be greater after years of toil and waiting than if we had been ushered into the presence of the glorified Jesus immediately after we had begun the race...

If we store our mind by reading and reflection, we shall be enabled to realize how short are the years as they fly, and how brief would be the delay of even a whole lifetime. The man who neglects the food of wisdom becomes

impoverished and lean in his spiritual man, and too weak to bear the load of present deprivation or to endure the weariness of waiting. God's plans are on a great scale, and of slow growth. If we make

If we make ourselves familiar with what is past, we shall understand what is present, and be able to wait patiently what is future.

ourselves familiar with what is past, we shall understand what is present, and be able to wait patiently what is future. But if we restrict ourselves to what is now present, our minds will be dwarfed and overpowered. The things of the passing moment and the things of the surface destroy, if our impressions and motives are drawn from them only. **Wisdom lies deep. You have to dig for it: sweet when found, but hard to reach. God has arranged it so; and wisdom, when found, tells you that it is wise to have it so.**

A fool and a wise man will look on the same objects, but be very differently impressed. The surface reader looks back and sees Bible history as a scholastic abstraction, and the names of Abraham, David, and others as the chance celebrities of capricious fortune—while the daily attendant at the gates of wisdom discerns the living perspective of the divine work in the earth, covering even the present hour, and sweeping forward into a future bright with glory. **To such, the past is real and the future a fact, and the present, with its troubles, patiently and willingly borne.** To them the waiting for Christ is no empty phrase, but words expressive of a palpable and daily-felt reality. Wisdom is justified of all her children, and will clothe them with honour at last.

Meanwhile their lot is one of deprivation and sorrow. It has always been so; come out of great tribulation, is the description of them all in their glorified state. This helps us to endure the tribulation while it lasts—not that we have much to bear compared with some, but what we do have to bear, is what every member of the family has suffered before us, more or less. The apparent indifference of God, for instance, to what is going on—*the prosperity of the scorner and the casting down of the righteous*—*the absence of God's visible operation and the triumph of those who regard Him not*—*are features of our affliction which distressed the beloved of God in ancient times no less than ourselves now.* Thus we find Jeremiah lamenting: *Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root; they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins...* By the Spirit, David and David's Lord and Son speak together: *Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.* We are apt to think of David, and especially of the Son of David, as unsubject to the weariness, which we experience from the absence of the visible working of God. We

are liable to imagine them as having lived in a continual joy of God, undepressed by the triumph of ungodliness in the earth. A careful consideration of their words will disabuse us of the idea, and help us to feel them our brethren in tribulation, who have drunk of the same cup of bitterness, and exercised themselves in the same weariness of waiting and seeking after God. They felt as if God stood afar off: as if God hid Himself in time of trouble. This was to them a sorrow—a continual burden, as the similar experience is to us. The anguish of their hearts sought vent as ours will. They spent much time in prayer. The breathings of their sorrow are recorded that all the children of God may understand and be comforted. **In all their generations, they feel alike oftentimes desolate from the same cause; but by these they are taught to forbear to think that some strange thing has happened unto them. They become enlightened to perceive that it is the will of God that they should have a season of solitariness, in which they wait for God and seek Him with their whole heart, under the sweet power of the hope which God has linked with the sorrow.**

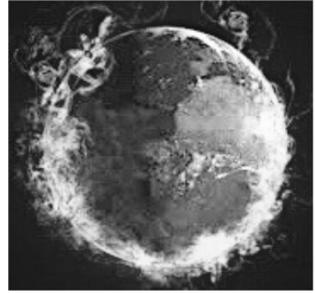
God has not said, *Seek ye my face in vain.* On the contrary, He has said, *Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.* And this finding of Him is the finding of all that the soul can desire, for every good and perfect gift comes from Him, but to everything there is a season and a time. *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart*—but the reaping is in the day of harvest. For this they have to wait. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord. Now they are sorrowful, though always rejoicing in the midst of their sorrow. In due time He will wipe away the tears and fill our mouth with laughter. In this respect we learn to rejoice even in tribulation. Therefore may they even now obey the commands addressed by Jesus to those who suffer in the way of righteousness: *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad.*

Especially in our day may we cultivate this gladness. The signs of the times tell us that we are rapidly nearing the time of the dead when God shall give reward to His servants the prophets: when all who fear His name, small and great, shall awake together to the joyful celebration of His praise, and the execution of His judgment upon the nations. **The ear that can hearken hears the voice ringing through the world, “Behold, I come as a thief.”** A little more waiting for God; a little more patience; a little more endurance of evil and continuance in well-doing, and the hour will arrive. The moment will be here when we shall suddenly be confronted by the great fact that the Lord is in the earth. Great will be the joy of the saints at the announcement, though they mingle trembling with their fear.

Robert Roberts, *Seasons of Comfort*, Volume 1, Chapter 17,
 “Waiting for Christ” abridged

What Manner of Persons Ought Ye to Be?

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (2 Peter 3:10-12)



Though the various prophecies addressing the “day of God” speak to both the world’s political and physical realms, the magnitude of the destruction described in these verses is so clearly beyond our experience, that one might expect Peter’s words would, on one hand, be passed over and neglected as too terrible to contemplate; or, on the other hand, burned into our consciousness to such a degree that it would overwhelm our daily thoughts. It does appear to represent an end to the world as we know it today. The described impact upon the surface of the earth through earthquakes, and such descriptions as *every wall shall fall* (Ezekiel 38:20) and the *works therein shall be burned up*, are perhaps beyond our ability to truly understand. Intellectually, we understand what is prophesied and we can form a mental picture in our minds of that *day of the LORD*—but do we allow ourselves to truly believe: to come to grips with the soon destruction of so much of what we know, see, and value in this life? We can only imagine what the earth looked like after the fountains of the deep were opened and the flood waters rested upon the earth for over a year. Though we don’t expect that the destruction by fire and earthquake will be as the flood in Noah’s time (in that God said He would not in like manner curse the ground, nor smite every living thing ó Genesis 8:21-22), what might we expect and what impact should that have on our conscience and conduct?

The important consideration then is, are we in fact preparing and praying always that we may be accounted worthy to escape all these

Isaiah speaks of the convulsions that would set the stage for the new heavens and earth, a time when the LORD would make the earth empty...make it waste... the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left (24:1, 6).

things that shall come to pass? (Luke 21:36) Might we be taking our lives and our salvation for granted and not truly *looking for and hasting unto* Christ’s return, nor giving serious consideration to whether we may or may

not be among those *“accounted worthy”*? Let us review some of the prophetic descriptions associated with this *time of trouble such as never was*, a time in which *them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*; a time when *they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament* (Daniel 12:1-3).

The Coming Destruction: Isaiah, the prophet of Judah during the period when the Assyrians carried away the northern tribes and besieged Judah, prophesied the fate of the nations and cities round about, the fate of Israel, and the glorious *new heavens and new earth* (65:17) that would supersede them. (Isaiah is known as the Messianic prophet, testifying to the future glory that lay in store for Israel when *the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established...and all nations shall flow unto it* ó 2:1-4.) In chapter 24, Isaiah speaks of the convulsions that would set the stage for the new heavens and earth, a time when the LORD would *make the earth empty...make it waste... the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left* (24:1, 6). There are an estimated seven billion people on earth today, and although we don’t know exactly what the word *“few”* in verse 6 actually depicts, we note that its Hebrew form *mizar* (Strong’s #4213) is defined as *“few”* and *“small matter.”*

Let us consider just a few verses that address the nature and extent of the coming destruction:

By Fire: *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up* (2 Peter 3:10).

Peter declares that this destruction will certainly occur and will appear without warning (Christ prophesied in Matthew 24:44 that his coming would be *in such an hour that ye think not*). In 2 Peter chapter 2, Peter describes the punishment brought upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah that reduced them to *ashes...making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly* (vs. 6). In chapter 3, he reminds his audience of the circumstances surrounding the destruction of the antediluvian *heavens and earth that perished* in the flood due to their lascivious ways and unbelief (vss. 2-6), declaring, *but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men* (vs. 7). The examples given of Sodom and Gomorrah and the great flood covering the earth would certainly have left an impression upon Peter’s audience as to the destruction to come, as it does upon us. Fire is associated in Scripture with judgment and testing (see Malachi 3:2=1 Corinthians 3:11-15). In our subject verse (2 Peter 3:10), fire serves as a destroyer and purifier. We see this process reflected in the description of the *second death...the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone* (Revelation 21:8). **Brother John Thomas aptly described the**

“lake of fire” for what it is to be, both for the beast and the false prophet (Revelation 20:10), as well as for the saints whose names are not found written in the *book of life* (vss. 14-15):

ōA lake is a tract of standing water. The lake into which the Beast and the False Prophet are to be cast, is not, however, of water, but of fire. A lake of fire is a *tract of land in a state of fiery ignition...* When a country is in a normal state, it is apocalyptically neither a lake of water or of fire, but simply ðthe earthø ... but if that country be thrown into a state of destructive conflagration, it becomes apocalyptically *a lake of fire*. Hence, the lake into which the Beast and False Prophet are cast is all that tract of country upon which they exist as the secular and ecclesiastical constitution of the inhabitants. To cast such into a lake of fire in which they are destroyed, is to kindle an intense conflagration in the territory of their dominion, which is not extinguished, or quenched, until they are consumed...ö (Eureka, Vol. 3B, page 255)

By Earthquake: *I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger (Isaiah 13:13)=And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done... there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great... and the cities of the nations fell... And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found (Revelation 16:17-20).*

The horrific effects of the great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great, is apocalyptic enough concerning the total destruction of the political powers that be; yet in their temporal/physical impact, actual earthquakes would be related to destruction by fire. Earthquakes result from the pressured movements of the earth's tectonic plates. Continuous movement along narrow zones between the earth's plates, particularly in those areas where plate-tectonic forces are most evident, results in continuous and discernible quake activity. When the plates move apart, new crust is created by magma pushing up from the mantle, frequently accompanied by volcanic activity. We read in Genesis 19:24 how God overthrew the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when He rained upon them “brimstone and fireö out of heaven. Brimstone is said to be the archaic name for sulfur, the word itself evoking the irritating odor of volcanic activity. We might well imagine that a *great earthquake* would also involve eruptions that would rain down great quantities of fire, ash, and brimstone, and the destruction would be great in those areas impacted. Our Lord Jesus prophesied, *And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven (Luke 21:11).*

Revelation 16:20 indicates *every island fled away, and the mountains were not found*. Though we believe this specifically addresses the öisland

As Israel had been instructed by the prophets as to the choices and respective destinies awaiting them, so have we been instructed.

kingdomsö and ömountain empiresö in the political world as Brother Thomas suggests in Eureka, Vol. 3B, pp. 215=224=251, we can only speculate as to

the extent of the reordering of the earth's topography as other prophecies such as Isaiah 24:1 appear to suggest, *Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down* (margin ö öperverteth the face thereofö), *and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof*. The bottom line=***there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book*** (Daniel 12:1).

Brethren, Peter both confronts and challenges us in asking, *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? These words were meant to move us to action.* Indeed, has our appreciation of our great blessings and hope, as well as our understanding of what is coming upon the earth and upon all mankind, been burned into our consciousness to such a degree that these facts impact our daily thoughts and activities? We, in this time and place, are blessed beyond our needs, but our hearts must be turned from the things of this world to seek first the kingdom of God, for the world we now know is vanity and will be destroyed. As God declares, *Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind* (Isaiah 65:17). Just as Israel had been instructed by the prophets as to the choices and respective destinies awaiting them, so have we been instructed.

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless (2 Peter 3:13-14)

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Evidences of Our Lord's Coming

The following excerpts from the July, 1916 Advocate article reflect the ecclesia's interest in prophetic time periods and the appointed time of our Lord's return some one hundred years ago. World War 1 was entering the third of its four-year duration, and the Jews had been returning to Palestine in noticeable numbers. The author, Brother James Laird, describes the time as "of great events" and that "every ear" was attentive to the "dreadful storm" that was devastating "so large a part of the world." Though the Lord's return would not occur as quickly as the author anticipated, his

observations surely reflect our experience in regard to prophetic time periods, expectations, and events witnessed. May this appeal serve as a reminder as to where our individual and collective attention should be, lest we be found slumbering and neglectful by our Lord at his return. – Editor

In former years I have given addresses on this subject, but in none of those years did I experience that sense of responsibility that I now feel. The subject is a very joyful one. Some of us have waited for the Lord ten, twenty, thirty, forty or more years—we have waited and watched, hoped and prayed, longed and yearned, from day to day. So we are very happy in the thought that now at last, in very truth, the Master's coming is very near. It is also a very solemn thought, for our Father Himself has said, *Who may abide the day of his coming and who shall stand when he appeareth?*

But however much I may sympathize with the prejudice against “dates,” I must try to show you that it is not at all founded either upon prophetic precedent or apostolic guidance.

For many years I have been convinced that there is a key that will unlock the secret of the Master's coming. I go farther ó you also have for many years shared the same convictions. Farther yet I go, and say that this same conviction has been shared by our brethren the wide world over. You all know the ökey.ö It is the interpretation that has been given to us in the thirty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy. The prophecy relates to a mighty confederation, which under the leadership of a nation understood to be Russia, shall invade the Holy Land in the latter years. At the time of this invasion, the land of Palestine is to be largely resettled by the Jews who, probably under the protection of Britain, will be dwelling securely and shall have attained quite a degree of prosperity. This aggressive power is to be opposed by a nation identified with Britain and her colonies. This, as you are well aware, is substantially the interpretation that has been given of this prophecy, and is accepted as the key to the understanding of our nearness to the Lord's comingí

While it is true in the absolute sense that “God has eternity to work in,” yet it is also true that the Father hath appointed times and seasons for the completion of His work upon earth, and beyond that period there shall be “time no longer” (Revelation 10:6), but the great work of God shall be öfinished.ö Before saying anything about time periods in particular, I wish to say a few words about time periods in general. You are all aware that Dr. Thomas was a great student of chronology, and, in connection therewith, of the prophetic time periods revealed in the Bible. He was very confident that the Lord would come in the epoch of 1864-1868. The attitude of the brotherhood at that time was one of almost universal expectancy, much more so than it ever has been since. One year followed another, and the Master came not, and in another year or so our beloved leader ceased from among men. The disappointment and sorrow was very great. The

reaction which followed was felt wherever adherents of the faith were to be found. The love of many waxed cold indeed. Many became engrossed in worldly pursuits and ambitions, striving very hard for a time to serve two masters, and many others openly abandoned God and His word.

An ever-increasing measure of understanding of “times” has been granted to the saints through the ages, and the Scriptures teach that comparative fullness of understanding will be reached before the Lord’s return.

Thus, speaking after the manner of men, “very great injury was done to the truth” through “setting dates.” The years rolled on and one *ōdateō* after another was set for the Master’s arrival, and each in turn was duly falsified. One result of these repeated

failures was to utterly discredit the study of prophetic times. Very intelligent brethren would avert that they knew nothing about *ōdatesō* and did not take any interest in their study—and, so far as one could form an opinion from their action, the Bible would have been none the poorer or incomplete a book if not one time period had ever been given. To such an extent is this true in that, I suppose, there is not one brother of repute or standing in our body who will venture to affirm anything precise with assurance and confidence regarding the *ōtimeō* of our Lord’s appearing...

But however much I may sympathize with the prejudice against “dates,” I must try to show you that it is not at all founded either upon prophetic precedent or apostolic guidance. In 1 Peter 1:9-12, we read. *Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls; of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently ... searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow; Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things...* **From this testimony we learn that the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets. That it testified the “time” relating to the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow; that they “inquired and searched diligently” to know the meaning of the “time signified,” and were told that the revelation was not given for their benefit, but for those of a later age...**

An ever-increasing measure of understanding of *ōtimesō* has been granted to the saints through the ages, and **the Scriptures teach that comparative fullness of understanding will be reached before the Lord’s return.** Again, our text instructs us that the *ōtimeō* was *ōsignified.* This being so, we are taught to look for a concealed meaning in the words which have been employed by the Spirit of Christ in expressing *ōtime.*

Clearly, then, we are assured that the time of our Lord’s second coming is revealed in the prophets, and not necessarily anywhere else. To the prophets,

then, let us come, and dealing first with things fulfilled and understood, receive guidance for events that yet await fulfillment...

The actual literal coming of the Master is thus seen to be a contingency of the immediate future. That it is so may seem incredible, but it is confirmed by the type in a manner that excites my most profound admiration for the wonderful ways of our God.

James Laird



Can Ye Not Discern the Signs of the Times?

Imagine that you won the lottery and were awarded \$86,400 a day. The only catch is you have to spend it all that day, and there would be no carrying over. Every day you got a fresh \$86,400. How often would you spend that money wisely? How often would you waste it? How quickly until you grew complacent knowing that there was always more money coming?

Every day we are given a total of 86,400 seconds. Every day we are faced with the choice of spending our time wisely, or foolishly wasting it. It's been said that time is our most precious commodity. It is the great equalizer: rich and poor get the same amount. Contrary to what we say, we can't save time: at best we can use it more efficiently. **We must, however, face the fact that time will abruptly end for us – whether we perish, fall asleep, or are called to judgment.**

Revelation chapter 10 addresses that day yet to come, when the Rainbow Angel stands ready to initiate that great and terrible Day of the LORD. The question for believers is, how long until that day when the seventh angel *begins to sound*, and there is *time no longer*? (Revelation 10:6-7) Truly, as Paul exhorts in 2 Corinthians 6:2, *Behold, now is the accepted time* (the time of grace); *behold, now is the day of salvation*.

How can we decipher these times in which we live? Daily we are witnessing the fingerprints of the Elohim as they prepare the nations for Christ's return. Even a casual daily glance on our computers or smartphones will show us how active God is in preparing for His Son's glorious return. Understanding the prophetic significance of these events, it is our choice, indeed our chance, to watch and to be positively motivated in our walk in the LORD.

Ezekiel 38 is one of the easiest prophecies to understand and monitor, as it details adversaries who will unite to invade Israel at the time of Christ's return. The nations there identified are:

Tarshish (Britain): Believers could have outwitted the so-called experts with their faith that Britain, identified for centuries as the seafaring *Tarshish*



power, would distance itself from the ten-toe nations associated with the European Union, and vote to leave it. The June Brexit outcome has caused tremendous upheaval in the political heavens and the global economy, which still has not sufficiently healed from the 2008 global financial crisis.

Gog, the land of Magog (Russia): Russia is in the news daily and is showing the depth of its influence as it rattles its sabers in northern Europe ó Belarus, and Ukraine (Crimea), while exerting pressure on much of Eastern Europe. Russia recently restored diplomatic ties with Turkey, which is another crucial development in the Gogian host. Russia has outmaneuvered Western powers in Syria, taking over negotiations to support its brutal ally Bashar al Assad=facilitating the import of weapons from Iran=and stationing military personnel just to the north of Israel.

Persia (Iran): Iran has been handed international legitimacy thanks largely to the U.S.-led Nuclear Deal of April, 2015. The Foreign Policy Institute's recent report on the one-year anniversary of the deal concluded that just about every major promise made has been compromised or ignored. Iran continues to pump weapons and specialists into Shiite spheres of influence, i.e., Syria, Iraq, western Afghanistan, Bahrain and Yemen, typically with the support of Russia. Meanwhile, it continues to wage a clandestine war with Israel, a nation it has sworn to "wipe off the map."

Ethiopia / Cush (Sudan): This territory doesn't immediately appear as an opponent of Israel until you look at the forces on the borders of this Nile region. Sudan has a history of sheltering terrorist leaders from Carlos the Jackal to Osama bin Ladin ó men united in their hatred of Jews. To the east of this region is Al-Shabaab, an al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist group based in

Somalia. To the west is al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (largely in the Chad River Basin), as well as Boko Haram (Nigeria), which switched allegiance from al-Qaeda to ISIS. As South Sudan teeters on the brink of civil war, this area continues to crystallize and is ripe for anti-Israeli fervor to take root.

Libya / Put (Libya): This region seemed easy to understand with madman Muammar Gaddafi in control. Now that he is dead, this region is engulfed in civil war, with al-Qaeda and ISIS vying for control. Some of the most hardened ISIS fighters, many who have committed acts of terrorism in Europe, have come from the northeast coast of Libya. Like Ethiopia, this area continues to crystallize at an alarming rate as it is awash in weapons and weak governance.

Gomer (some say Turkey, others France): I personally believe this adversary is modern Turkey, so I will concentrate on this nation. Turkey's domestic turmoil smolders from youthful reformers, the PKK (originally a Soviet-backed Kurdish liberation group), and ISIS, which Turkey had turned a blind eye to until it was blamed for the bloody attack on the Istanbul airport. In addition to recently extending an olive branch to Russia, Turkey also renewed relations with Israel, but continues to support the Palestinians and Hamas ó which runs Gaza ó and has flirted with al-Qaeda and ISIS for attention.

Togarmah (Turkey, possibly into northern Syria): This could include a very interesting hot spot of southeastern Turkey, northern Syria and northwestern Iraq. If accurate, this is the current stronghold of ISIS, which has targeted the West but has kept Israel and the Jews in its ideological sights. The presence of ISIS has brought Russia, Iran, Turkey, parts of Libya and the West into a region less than 400 miles north of Israel.

As John Thomas wrote in Eureka Vol. 3, this all-powerful Rainbow Angel of Revelation 10 óis not only strong, but he is a Man of War. Yahweh ish Milkhamah, says Yahweh shemo ó He who shall be is a man of war= Yahweh is his name.ó (Exodus 15:3) It goes without saying, that we have never seen all these regions from Ezekiel 38 unified in such a state of chaos, hostilities, and seeded with aggressive anti-Semitism.

With such great signs before us, why do we slumber? With so many events unfolding on an almost daily basis, many of us find ourselves wondering why our zeal wavers, or our vision of the New Jerusalem overshadowed by the vain things of this temporary world? How often do we find ourselves wasting those 86,400 seconds we are provided each day? Peter also warned believers that the day of the Lord will come like a thief, entreating them, *since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation* (2 Peter 3:14-15 NIV).

Despite man's sharp moral decline, God continues to work with His creation, even though time is running short. We believers greatly benefit from His longsuffering, but we must be careful that we don't become desensitized or disinterested in these events. That casual attitude is one that Jesus warned against in Matthew 16:1-4, as the Pharisees and Sadducees asked for yet another sign. They had already seen so much, but they could not bring themselves to believe. They were skilled in and spent much time discerning the superficial things of life such as the weather, but were blind to the much greater and eternal events unfolding around them. When alone with his disciples, Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith and warned them about the leaven of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:6-12). **Jesus' teaching outlines three things we must be mindful of as we guard against complacency:**

Lack of Faith: This really is at the heart of the matter. We believe that Christ will return soon, but has that recognition brought about a noticeable and positive change in our walk? Has time become more precious to us, or do we continue to squander it on trivial matters of the world and not of faith?

The Leaven of the Pharisees: We can probably think of a lot of words that sum up the spirit of this sect, but the one most common is "hypocrisy." What a poisonous and destructive spirit this is, of which the Scriptures are full of examples. But before we point the finger, we would do well to consider the definition of hypocrisy: "The practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform" (Oxford American Dictionary). Are we not all guilty of being hypocrites? Some may disagree, but I believe this is a sobering reality worth our consideration. Does this mean we are incapable of discerning right from wrong, or that we are in some way unworthy of comment or guidance on the behavior of our neighbor because of our struggles? Not in the least. But it is a warning to the prudent that we must recognize our inherent weaknesses and should be humbled by them. The Pharisees were convinced that events would unfold in a particular way. So when Jesus presented a different series of events, they turned on him with ferocity, desperately trying to trap him with deceitful words. Do we spend our time shepherding the flock with purpose in these last days, or do we spend our time attempting to purify and ultimately divide the flock?

The Leaven of the Sadducees: In the words of Melva Purkis (in [A Life of Jesus](#)), this sect is probably best defined by its "materialism." How much time do we spend pursuing the "things" that will make us happier, richer, or more respected by this world? It's easy to get caught up in the chase for the next shiny object. We are bombarded by it in this materialistic society. But when our faith is weak, we forget that God will provide everything we need for the day, and we find ourselves going to lengths to secure more. This acquisition of things lessens our reliance on God, blunts our zeal, and clouds our vision of the New Jerusalem.

Time is short. But every day, until this dispensation abruptly ends, we have 86,400 seconds to work with. Let us give no quarter to wasting that precious time: let us dedicate ourselves to serving the Lord with all our heart. May we all, through His grace and mercy, be together with our Savior after this òtimeö is no longer.

Brian Forbes, Littleton, CO



About the Front Cover



The background picture on the front cover, though hard to clearly make out due to its translucence and the printed text, depicts John gazing upon the angel he describes in Revelation 10:1-6: *clothed with a cloud...a rainbow upon his head...had in his hand a little book open...his right foot upon the sea and his left foot on the earth...who lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever... that there should be time no longer.*

How Hast Thou Spent Thy Time?

I stood far from the Judgment Seat, head bowed in bitter shame;
Within my head words echoed loud for I'd myself to blame.
I'd seen the King and standing there beheld his glorious face,
And just aside in joy supreme, my friends, saints, saved by grace.

Engulfed in grief, alone, afraid, my pleading all in vain,
The words re-echoed louder now, and burned within my brain –
“Come now” – and so I'd gone before the one I'd longed to see;
Said angels serving near the throne, The Master calleth thee.”

To give account, what I had said? “One reason,” I was asked
Why I'd neglected things of God, and hurrying by them passed?
I then recalled how oft I'd said, “Oh dear, there is no time.
I'll do it – well, another day” – and that had been my crime.

I answered not; dumb, full of guilt; but Jesus knew and said,
“No time to do the things of God? No time to bow thy Head?
No time to kneel in daily prayer, or wait till Him you heard?
No time to pause and meditate the riches of His word?

No time to visit poor or sick; no time to smile and give
The stranger in your gates a word of hope that he might live?
No time to weep with those who wept; no time to joy with one
Whose victory over human sin was well and truly won?

“Yet you had time for menial tasks and time to exercise
Your mental power on common things; your home to supervise.
You'd plenty of time to read and talk of things which mattered not,
But things which matter most to God, you spurned or just forgot.”

That was enough; I heard no more though words continued long.
My talent lay neglected there; to him it did belong.
But I'd forgotten it was His and thrust it on one side;
And now before the throne it lay, my face then did I hide.

The saints remained there on His right, safe in the Savior's cleft;
But I was thrust among the ones upon the Judge's left.
The words which burned within my brain. Verdict on guilty crime;
No place, no hope, no righteous crown; for you I have no time.

“A dream,” you say. Yet but how real, and what relief to wake,
To find I still have unspent time ere judgment morning break.
For me the Savior, scourged and scorned, up Calvary's hill did climb.
What shall I say when he shall ask; “How hast thou spent thy time?”