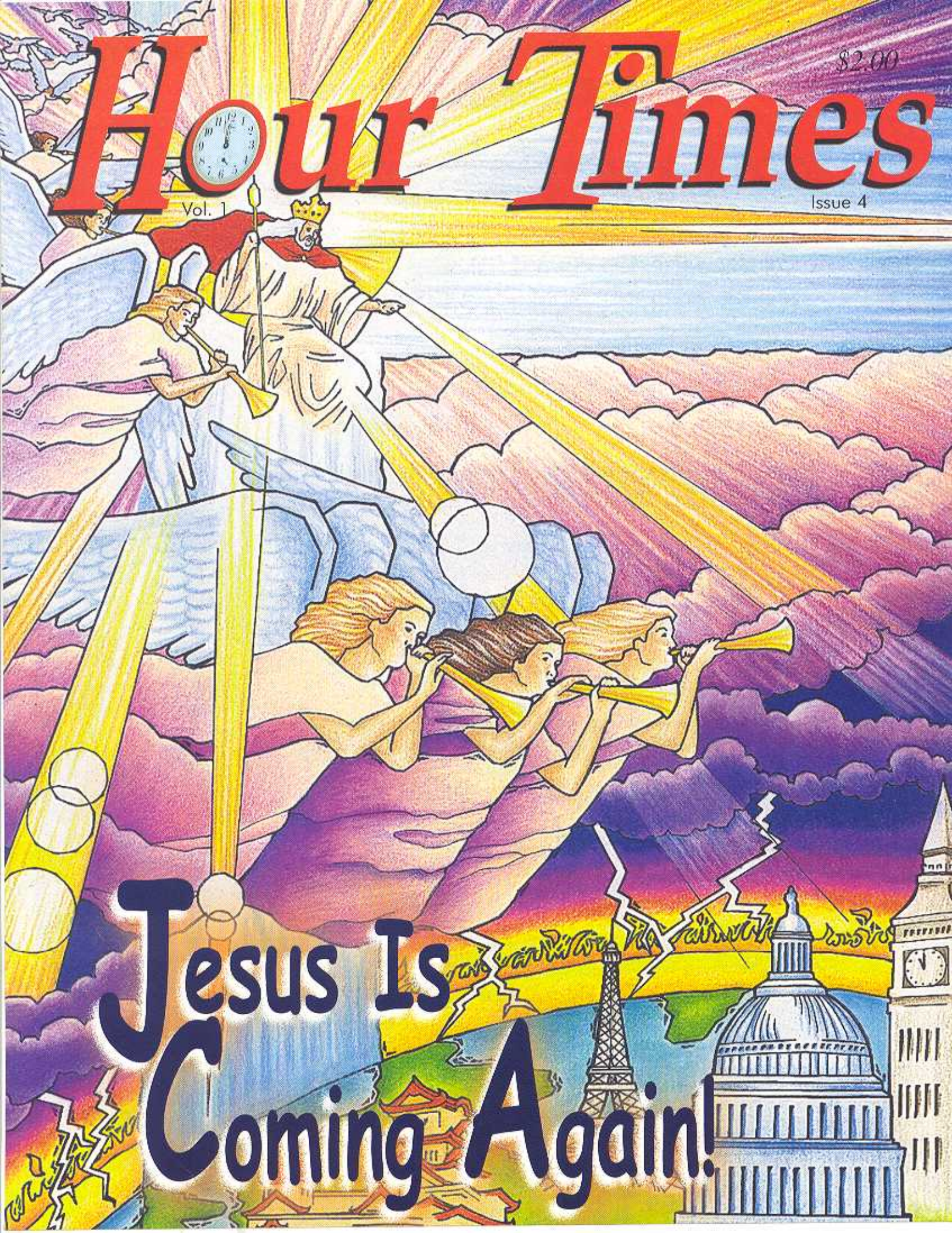


Hour Times

\$2.00

Vol. 1

Issue 4



Jesus Is
Coming Again!

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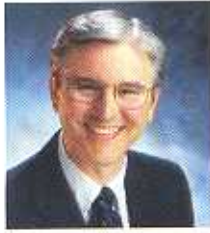


The Bible—Is It Still Worth Dying For?

In this age of indifference, situational ethics, and moral ambivalence, rediscover the one and only source of absolute truth.

Our Mission:

Hour Times, published by Remnant Publications, a nonprofit organization, is produced for the sole purpose of leading individuals, families and society to "A Better Way of Life," as found through God's Holy Word, the Bible. We believe that the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God, its principles and counsel are as relevant and binding upon humanity today as they have been throughout the ages.



When Jesus Comes— What Will It Mean?

By Jay Gallimore

In the visions of Revelation, John saw Jesus coming with power and great glory in the clouds. He also saw the people of the earth crying in terror for the rocks and mountains to hide them from His face. Even John himself cried out, “Who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:17).

Wrapped in the clothing of humanity, Jesus hid His glory the first time He came to this earth. Seeking to attract people because of His character, He healed the wounds of humanity with a touch they could understand. But when wicked Caiphas demanded to know whether He was the Messiah, Jesus declared that Caiphas would see Him coming in great glory sitting at the Father’s right hand.

For nearly 2000 years Christians have longed and hoped for the return of Jesus. Often their hope has been the butt of cruel and mocking jokes, but not so many are laughing these days. People are beginning to realize that the world cannot go on indefinitely. As nuclear, chemical and biological weapons continue to become available to unstable dictatorships; as populations spin out of control and food and other resources are unable to keep up with demand; as the “have nots” watch the “haves” by means of global communication; as great destructive earthquakes and other natural disasters play havoc with the earth; as the earth groans under the load of chemical pollution; as justice is bought and paid for like some commodity; and as drugs, violence and perverted sexual exploitation become the norm, confusion, anger, bitterness, despair and hopelessness push the world toward chaos and ruin.

The prophet Daniel describes a time period called the “time of the end.” (Dan. 8:17). During this “time of the end” great events are to take place. Daniel sums up those events by saying that knowledge will increase and men will run about everywhere.” He also describes a great and terrible worldwide time of trouble so awful that nothing like it has ever happened before:

If Daniel is right, and he has never been wrong for 2600 years, then this, our day of enlightenment, will give way to a great time of trouble, followed by the coming of Jesus. Of course, that is a bare outline. The New Testament fills in a lot more details. Jesus also

talks about the time preceding His coming. He describes a time when nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. (Was He describing World War I and II?) Then He talks about false prophets and false Christs deceiving many within the Christian community, declaring that just before He comes the gospel will be preached to all the world.

In Revelation 14, three angels are pictured flying across

heaven with three messages. The first angel has the “everlasting gospel” and speaks to every tribe and people group on the planet. Then he appeals to the people of the earth to “fear God . . . for the hour of His judgment has come.” The next two angel messages are tied to that judgment-hour message.

The second angel declares that “Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” This is the great power that gets the peoples of the earth drunk with her beauty and immorality. They become so drunk that they are not prepared to detect the mark of the beast. Like a bucket of ice

water thrown on a drunk to revive him, the third angel, with sirens wailing, warns the earth not to receive the mark of the beast and its judgments.

The rest of Revelation 14 describes the second coming of Jesus as a harvest of wheat and grapes. Jesus is pictured gathering in His “wheat” to Himself. Then He gathers the “grapes,” only to trample them in the winepress of God’s wrath.

This brings me to the final point. When I hear so many Christians discussing the coming of Jesus, they talk about how wonderful it will be. And that is true—for the “wheat.” But what about the “grapes”? That is why we publish *Hour Times*. We want you to be wheat, not grapes.

You know by now that the devil is working on a counterfeit coming. Guess who will be the counterfeit Jesus? It is going to be a mess. One group will be shouting that Jesus has come, and the other saying that He has not. You can’t just walk away from this one. You will make a choice. How can you be sure about being ready for the real Jesus? The answer is simple. If you truly trust the One who gave us the Bible, and if you will test all teachings by His Word, you will not be deceived. You will receive the seal of God and everlasting life. ⓧ

**For nearly
2000 years
Christians
have longed
and hoped
for the return
of Jesus.**

"I will come back and take you to be with me where I am."

—Jesus, in John 14:3 (NIV)

"As the Christian with the Bible in his hand surveys the world scene, he is aware that we do not worship an absentee God. He is aware that God is in the shadows of history and that He has a plan. The Christian is not to be disturbed by the chaos, violence, strife, bloodshed, and threat of war that fill the pages of our daily newspapers. We know that these things are the consequences of man's sin and greed. If anything else were happening, we would doubt the Bible. Every day we see a thousand evidences of the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Every day as I read my newspaper I say: 'The Bible is true.'

"No matter how foreboding the future, the Christian knows the end of the story of history. We are heading toward a glorious climax."

—Billy Graham, *Unto the Hills*, 340

"Christ's promise to come again stands out, among all that is difficult to comprehend in Biblical prophecies, for its clarity, centrality, and certainty. This promise constitutes the assurance and goal of the

Christian hope for a better future."

—Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Advent Hope for Human Hopelessness*, 58

"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

—Peter, in 2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)

"When Jesus comes it will be different. We'll throw away our glasses, our canes and crutches, our hearing aids and all the things that have dragged us down. We'll be made new. As one evangelist said it, 'When Jesus comes we will have perfect minds in perfect bodies and live in a perfect world, and when we've lived a million years, we'll just have gotten started.'"

—Morris L. Venden, *Common Ground*, 37

"We are not to be sad, but cheerful, and we are to keep the Lord Jesus ever before us. He is soon coming, and we must be ready and waiting for His appearing."

—Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, 253

When Jesus comes in glory,
As Lord and King of kings,
O what a wondrous story
The blessed Bible brings:
His face will shine like sunlight,
His head be white as snow,
His eyes like flaming firelight,
His feet like brass aglow.

His voice like rushing waters
Will reach with mighty sound
Into the deepest quarters
Of all creation round;
And at this wondrous greeting
The dead in Christ shall rise,
Their Lord and Savior meeting
In glory in the skies.

And we who are believing
And His appearing love,
Shall know we are receiving
His glory from above;
His resurrection power
Will raise us to the place
Where we that wondrous hour
Shall see Him face to face.


O hasten Thine appearing,
Thou bright and Morning Star!
Lord, may we soon be hearing
The trumpet sound afar;
Thy people are all yearning
To be Thy raptured bride,
And at Thine own returning
Be caught up to Thy side.

—Samuel M. Miller

We value the opinions and thoughts of our readers. Please share how *Hour Times* has made an impact on your life. Your feedback is essential to our success. Thank you.

Hour Times P.O. Box 426, Coldwater, MI 49036

The King Is Coming



Are you ready?

By Steve Vail

Two businessmen, one Russian and one American, sat in a restaurant waiting to be served. The conversation flowed freely, touching on lighter topics at first, then becoming more serious:

"I am wondering about America," the Russian said, turning in his chair to face his friend squarely. "Is it the vast wonderland we all hear about, or do you, too, have problems?" The American shook his head, then began to explain. "Yes, we have our beautiful parks and wealthy homes. But we also have the homeless who wander in the back alleys and bed down in cardboard boxes and under bridges for the night. We have many families in fine suburbs, but we also have broken homes and disillusioned teenagers walking the streets of big cities, crying out for love and affection. We have our health clubs and joggers and marathons, but we also have the drug-addicted, alcohol-dependent chemical users searching for an escape. America is a land of contrasts. We have peace and freedom, but we also have our fears and insecurities—crime, contagious diseases, the threat of nuclear holocaust..."

The Russian put up his hand. "So, you have many of the same problems we do. But

you Americans, do you have any solutions?"

Without a moment's hesitation the American replied, "Many Americans believe there is only one solution—a King!"

Shocked, the Russian replied, "A king? For America?"

"Yes," the American replied quietly, "a King. An extraordinary King. And He's coming soon to settle all the problems in the world. I'm talking about King Jesus."

King Jesus! Men and women have anticipated His reign ever since He departed two thousand years ago. Clinging to His promise, "I will come again" (John 14:3¹), Jesus' followers have never given up hope that, yes, there is a solution to all the crime, sickness, sorrow and hardship pervading our world today.

The apostle Paul, writing from his prison cell, said he was "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13).

Later, as the executioner stood only steps

Jesus' followers have never given up hope that, yes, there is a solution to all the crime, sickness, sorrow and hardship pervading our world today.

away, Paul triumphantly proclaimed: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

Paul could face the executioner's sword with confidence because he had faith in Christ's promise to return and resurrect the righteous.

THE PROMISE

As we face the closing hours of Earth's history we can find strength in remembering that Jesus' promise to His disciples belongs to us as well. He will return! That promise is the world's only hope for survival, its only assurance that the future is not in the hands of unpredictable world powers.

Knowing that Satan would attempt to counterfeit His coming, Jesus gave us the exact details in the Bible. Looking down through the ages He warned that "false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders." (Matt. 24:24).

If we don't know how to recognize the genuine Jesus or spot the counterfeit, we could be deceived by an imposter!

THE ULTIMATE DECEPTION

Jesus wasn't referring to a few clumsy deceptions in the preceding passage. He was talking about incredible impersonations, so carefully planned and executed that almost the whole world would be deceived! And such a thought is not too difficult to imagine in our age. The advertising world has perfected the art of influencing the human mind; modern technology has almost perfected subliminal perception. The sights, senses and thoughts are carefully bent and shaped toward desired ends. From another angle, we call it "virtual reality," and as fantastic as the computer is in creating illusions

today—we haven't seen anything yet!

The Bible tells us that our five senses will be the focus for imposters in the last days. Our eyes will behold miracles, our ears will hear the unexplainable, our fingers will touch healed flesh—yet such supernatural demonstrations may not be manifestations of a divine power.

Imagine turning on the evening news and hearing a report that Christ has returned. All networks are focused on Chicago. Pictures are flashed in color—live! We see a noble being healing the sick, performing miracles, speaking words of love and peace and Christian unity. Captured on camera are masses of people pressing to see him, to feel him. Never has the world heard such simple words that seem to make so much sense! Everywhere the newscast is seen—Berlin, Beijing, Singapore, Cairo, Moscow, St. Louis—people are reacting with tears, joy and excitement such as we have not seen in our time.

What do you do? Reserve a seat on the next flight to Chicago? Bow down and worship him?

Without a clear understanding of just what to expect when Jesus comes again, we are vulnerable to almost any clever deception, especially if it is masterminded by the ace of deception, Satan himself.

Jesus said, "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it." (Matt. 24:26).

Christ advises us not to even check out the claim. Rather than put ourselves in a position where we might be deceived by miracles or charisma, it's best to stay home. After all, a man might teach like Christ, heal like Christ, or even sound like Christ. He might even come close to deceiving "the very elect"—but he would still be a false christ, a super deceiver.

So you see why it is so important not to trust even our own senses?

The Bible is the only safe guide by which we can distinguish between counterfeit christs and our Lord Jesus, and it's very clear about the signs preceding His coming as well as the

If we don't know how to recognize the genuine Jesus or spot the counterfeit, we could be deceived by an imposter!

manner in which He'll return.

First, Christ's return will be visible to all. "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." (Matt. 24:27).

We won't have to turn on our television to catch the news of Christ's return: everyone will know about it! "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him." (Rev. 1:7).

Every eye! Imagine it! The tired eyes of the old and weary. The shining eyes of the child. The discerning eyes of the young adult. The glazed eyes of the blind. The happy eyes of the saved. The downcast eyes of the lost.

TOO MANY ANGELS FOR A UFO

Christ is not going to suddenly appear in some distant city or quietly step out of a flying saucer. He is coming back in the clouds with power and great glory, and every eye will see Him! "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him." (Matt. 25:31).

When Jesus comes, He'll be accompanied by all the holy angels filling the skies with glory and songs indescribable! When just one angel rolled back the stone from Christ's tomb, the Roman guards fell down in a daze. Think of the glory of "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" of angels! (See Revelation 5:11.)

The Bible says it will not only be a glorious, visible event but it will also

be a dramatic, audible coming. All nature will join forces to create an impact never before heard or seen. "And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.... Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." (Rev. 16:18, 20).

The crash of thunder and the rumble of earthquakes will be punctuated by the clear, full tone of heavenly trumpets and the melodious, commanding voice of God calling the saints to come forth from their graves. "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first." (1 Thess. 4:16).

The Lord Himself will descend! But what kind of a Lord will that be? A spirit without substance and flesh? A being indescribable, seen only as dazzling light?

The Bible makes it clear that when Jesus returns at His second coming, He will be the same Jesus remembered by thousands of Palestinians—the traveling Teacher, the Carpenter from Nazareth, the remarkable Healer, the great Friend of all.

At the ascension of Christ, the promise of the two angels to the disciples was that "this same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11).

This same Jesus! Jesus with flesh and bones, nailprints in His hands and feet, and a wound in His side. The same Jesus who talked and walked and prayed with the disciples. The same Jesus who went away in the clouds will return the same way!

Do you see how the counterfeits pale in comparison to the actual picture of what the second coming of Christ will be like? If He isn't seen by every human eye, if there is no glorious descent to earth, no call that pierces the sleep of death, no retinue of dazzling angels—it

isn't Jesus! It's as simple as that.

Such an understanding is crucial to our eternal destiny. If we are deceived and don't prepare for Christ's coming, we lose everything. No replays—no reruns! When that thunder crashes and those trumpets play, the destiny of every human being will have already been decided! Judgment for all the living and the dead will already have been settled—that's how the angels know who will rise first and join the redeemed from among the living.

How insignificant are the earthly treasures we now prize so highly. One earthquake, one tornado, one nuclear bomb, one doctor's diagnosis, one threatening phone call from a stranger in the night, and our security is shattered. That is why Paul said, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." (Col. 3:2).

WHERE WILL YOU BE WHEN JESUS COMES?

Can there ever be anything more important than being ready to meet Jesus? *Today* we can still decide. We can still choose. What a precious

If He isn't seen by every human eye, if there is no glorious descent to earth, no call that pierces the sleep of death, no retinue of dazzling angels—it isn't Jesus!

privilege! In choosing Jesus as our Lord, we are choosing everything that matters most in this life and the life to come.

Where will you be and what will you be doing when Jesus comes? When all nature is in turmoil—the earth convulsing, mountains and islands disappearing, cities toppling—how will it be with you?

When a small cloud appears on the horizon, growing in size, getting brighter every moment until everyone in the world is aware of this compelling Person and His entourage in the skies, how will it be with you?

AN INVITATION WITH YOUR NAME ON IT

One day Christ will come, not as a man of sorrows, but as a mighty conqueror; not with a crown of thorns, but a crown of glory; and with Him the armies of heaven! No human pen can portray the scene, no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor. "And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: King of kings and Lord of lords." (Rev. 19:16).

At the sound of a heavenly chorus, at the spectacle of a sky filled with the glory of our returning Lord and His heavenly paratroopers, criminals will drop in their tracks, armies will lay down their guns, battlefields will be still. Only one thing will matter to those who have rejected the wooing voice of the Holy Spirit, and that will be to pray for the rocks to fall on them rather than look upon the face of Him they rejected or neglected.

A loud but friendly call will pierce the air, trumpets will echo the summons; graves will open, and the redeemed dead will rise out of those graves or be gathered from the

depths of a hundred seas. The saved among the living will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air and taken to those "mansions" prepared by our Lord for a thousand-year vacation.

Could anything be more thrilling, if we are prepared? I am beginning to feel the excitement even now!

Are you ready for Jesus to come? Why not decide right now to be a part of that grateful number who sing their joy: "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us." (Isa. 25:9).

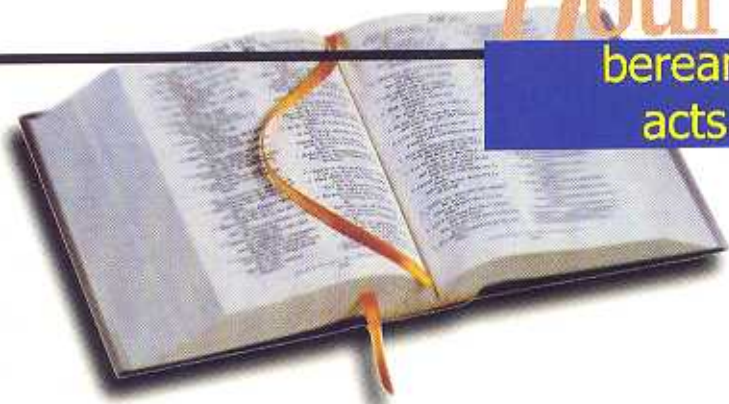
Back comes Jesus' invitation, "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." (Matt. 25:34).

Your name is on that invitation. ✠

*All Bible texts are from the New King James Version.

Hour Times

berean corner acts 17:11



Study to show thyself approved . . . rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Tim. 2:15.

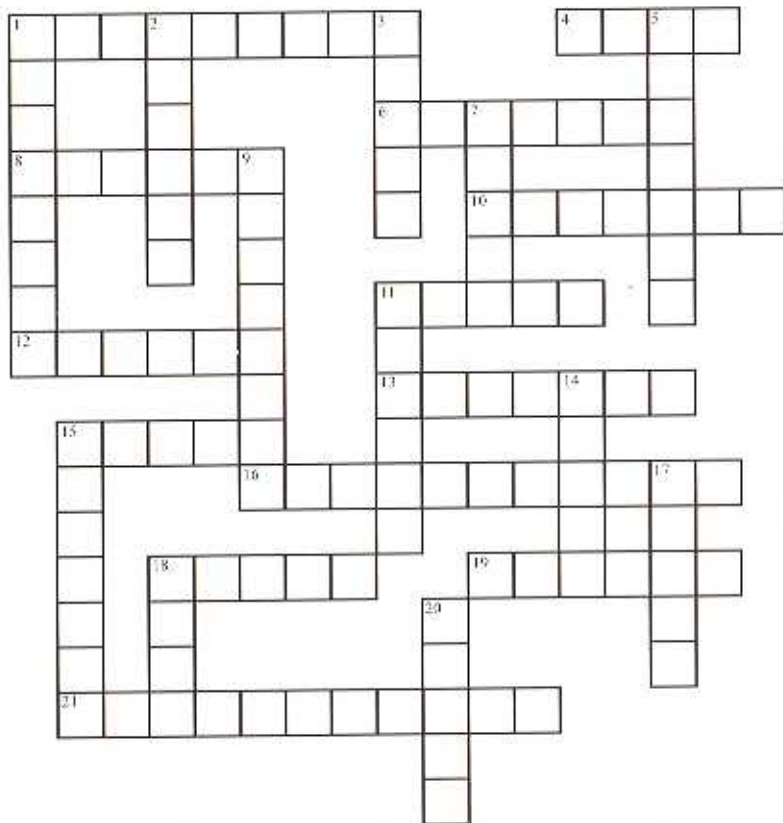
Use King James Version for answers.

Across

- Mother of king Solomon (1 Kings 2:19)
- First baby born on earth (Genesis 4:1)
- Jacob and Esau's mother (Genesis 25:20-26)
- Led Israel against Jericho (Joshua 6:2)
- Wife of Nabal and later of David (1 Samuel 25:3, 42)
- Disciple who walked on water (Matthew 14:29)
- Cleansed of leprosy in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:1, 14)
- What John the Baptist ate (Matthew 3:4)
- Don't throw your pearls before _____ (Matthew 7:6)
- The wide gate and the broad way lead to _____ (Matthew 7:13)
- "And a little _____ shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6)
- Saved from the lions' den (Daniel 6:20-22)
- "The dead know _____" (3 wds.) (Ecclesiastes 9:5)

Down

- Accused of stealing a silver cup (Genesis 44:1-12)
- "So are My ways _____ than your ways" (Isaiah 55:9)
- Cain is to Abel as Moses is to _____ (Exodus 4:14)
- Abraham's son through Hagar (Genesis 16:15)
- "All the world wondered after the _____" (Revelation 13:3)
- "Touch me not, for I am not yet _____ to my Father" (John 20:17)
- Governor that delivered Jesus to be crucified (Matthew 27:23-27)
- Who is often transformed into an angel of light? (2 Corinthians 11:14)
- King of Israel with a navy (1 Kings 9:26)
- The Lord is the Alpha and the _____ (Revelation 1:8)
- Joseph's famous garment (Genesis 37:3)
- Satan afflicted Job from head to foot with _____ (Job 2:7)



Answers

1. Mother of king Solomon (1 Kings 2:19)
 2. First baby born on earth (Genesis 4:1)
 3. Jacob and Esau's mother (Genesis 25:20-26)
 4. Led Israel against Jericho (Joshua 6:2)
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Exploding the Israel Deception

Photo by Corbis

By Steve Wohlberg and Doug Batchelor

Today, at the dawn of the new millennium, millions of people expect Israel to be a focal point for this world's final, climactic events. Well known authors such as Hal Lindsay and Dave Hunt have detailed their beliefs about what will happen, and even the pope is said to be keeping a careful eye on Jerusalem.

While there are differences of opinion among evangelicals as to exactly what will happen in Jerusalem, the majority believes that the following already have been, or soon will be, fulfilled as prophetic events:

1. The rebirth of the nation of Israel in 1948.
2. A soon-coming, seven-year period of great tribulation.
3. The rebuilding of the Jewish temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.
4. The rise of the Antichrist during the tribulation, who will enter that temple and proclaim that he is God.
5. A final war against the nation of Israel, which will result in the Middle East battle of Armageddon.

In reviewing this widely expected turn

of events, it's natural to ask a few questions. For example, one might wonder whether the end-time prophecies in Scripture might point to a spiritual Israel, rather than the literal country we are acquainted with today. Is it possible that there is a deeper interpretation to these prophecies than immediately meets the eye?

A WORD OF WARNING

In studying this issue, remember that when Jesus came the first time, His own people misunderstood and misapplied the prophecies concerning His kingdom. Although Jesus constantly tried to explain that His first coming was to establish a *spiritual* kingdom, the Jews were eagerly waiting and watching for a literal *earthly* kingdom.

Unfortunately, because the teachings of the day looked for a "muscular" Messiah who would overthrow the Romans and seat himself on David's throne, even Jesus' disciples brushed aside

Today, at the dawn of a new millennium, millions of people expect Israel to be a focal point for this world's final, climactic events.

His comments regarding the spiritual nature of His kingdom. They tried to make the spiritual prophecies literal, and their expectations were crushed by the Cross.

"We were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel," they lamented. (Luke 24:21, NKJV). Even after the resurrection, the disciples still clung to these popular views, hoping for an imminent, literal kingdom. As the Bible records, "When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

THE SAME MISTAKE?

Is it possible that the church at large today is making the same mistake the Jews did—by misapplying prophecies regarding spiritual Israel and the temple and by trying to interpret them in a literal sense? If so, they could be preparing to embrace a diabolical deception, not to mention the devastating disappointment that is sure to follow.

AN OLD TESTAMENT KEY

It is impossible to clearly understand the subject of Israel and its prophetic place in these last days of earth's history without a careful study of the Old Testament.

The name *Israel* first appeared in Scripture when it was spoken to Jacob after his long night of wrestling with a powerful opponent. "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob," said the heavenly stranger, "but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and *hast prevailed*." (Gen. 32:28, emphasis added).

At first, then, the name *Israel* was of heavenly origin and applied

to Jacob alone. And it was a special name, representing Jacob's spiritual victory over sin through wrestling in prayer and claiming God's promises.

Later, of course, the name *Israel* also applied to the descendants of Jacob. "Israel is my son, even my firstborn...." was the message God sent through Moses to Pharaoh. "Let my son go." (Exod. 4:22, 23).

So the name *Israel* first applied to a victorious man, and then to God's people. As we continue through the Bible, we find other references to Israel as God's son: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." (Hos. 11:1).

Matthew writes that little Jesus remained in Egypt "until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the lord by the prophet saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." (Matt. 2:15).

Notice that Matthew is quoting Hosea 11:1, which originally referred to the nation of Israel coming out of Egypt. Yet Matthew declares that this prophecy, which originally applied to literal Israel, was fulfilled in Jesus Christ!

This is not the only time Matthew applies a prophecy concerning Israel to Christ. On another occasion, Jesus charged a group of people He had just healed "that they should not make him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and

he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets." (Matt. 12:16-19). Here the Gospel writer is quoting Isaiah 42:1-3, a passage that originally applied to "Israel...my servant." (Isa. 41:8). But Matthew again tells us it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ!

The apostle Paul followed this same principle of applying statements that originally applied to literal Israel, to Christ. God called Israel "my firstborn" in Exodus 4:22. Yet Paul said it was Jesus Christ who is "the firstborn of every creature." (Col. 1:15).

The clearest example of them all is where God called Israel "the seed of Abraham." (Isa. 41:8). Yet Paul later wrote that Abraham's seed does not refer to "many," but to "one...which is Christ." (Gal. 3:16).

Thus we discover that over and over in the New Testament statements that originally applied to the nation of Israel, are applied to Jesus Christ. The Messiah is now the "seed." Therefore, Jesus is the very essence of Israel! This is an explosive truth, for it affects who the biblical "Israel" is today. A careful study of the New Testament

Is it possible that the church at large today is making the same mistake the Jews did—by misapplying prophecies regarding spiritual Israel?

reveals that Christ actually repeated the history of ancient Israel point by point. Where they failed, He overcame. The following are a few examples of this:

• In the Old Testament we find a young man named Joseph who had dreams and went into Egypt to preserve his family alive. (See Genesis 45:5.) In the New Testament we find another Joseph, who likewise had dreams and then went to Egypt to preserve his family. (See Matthew 2:13.)

In the New Testament, the name *Israel* applies not only to Jesus Christ but also to those who are born in Christ.

• When the young nation of Israel came out of Egypt, God called it “my son.” (Exod. 4:22). And when baby Jesus came out of Egypt, God said, “Out of Egypt have I called my son.” (Matt. 2:15).

• When Israel left Egypt, the people went through the Red Sea. The Bible says they were “baptized unto Moses...in the sea.” (1 Cor. 10:2). Jesus was also baptized to fulfill all righteousness, and immediately afterward God proclaimed Him “my beloved son.” (See Matthew 3:15-17.)

• After the Israelites went through the Red Sea, they spent 40 years in the wilderness. Immediately after His baptism, Jesus was “led up of the Spirit into the wilderness” for 40 days. (Matt. 4:1, 2).

• In Psalm 80:8, God calls Israel a “vine” that He brought “out of Egypt.” Yet Jesus later declared “I am the true vine.” (John 15:1).

• God told the ancient Israelites, “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” (Exod. 19:6). In the New Testament, Peter applies these ex-

act words to the church: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” (1 Peter 2:9).

Likewise, right after Paul’s statement in Galatians 3 about Jesus being the “seed,” he told his Gentile converts that if they were Christ’s, they were “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:29).

Thus, in the New Testament, the name *Israel* applies not only to Jesus Christ but also to those who are born in Christ—His church! In other words, *all true Christians are now God’s spiritual Israel!*

We need to start “seeing double” when we think of Israel, because there are two Israels in the Bible, a literal and a spiritual Israel. Paul reinforced this point when he said, “They are not all Israel, which are of Israel.” (Rom. 9:6). In other words, some literal Israelites (Jews) were not part of spiritual Israel.

In Romans 2:27-29, Paul states clearly that lawbreaking Jews are really Gentiles and not Jews. In contrast, a Gentile who serves God is really a Jew. “For he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter.” According to the New Testament, a real Jew in the sight of God is anybody—Jew or Gentile—who has personal faith in Jesus Christ. Eventually, Peter also came to understand this truth, saying, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is

accepted with Him.” (Acts 10:34, 35).

PROPHETIC IMPLICATIONS

Of course, the difference between spiritual and literal Israel has dramatic implications for the interpretation of Bible prophecy today. If the references to Mount Zion, Israel, Jerusalem, Armageddon, and the Middle East made in Revelation apply to literal Israel, then the evangelical world is right to expect great events in the Middle East.

In contrast, the New Testament revelation of Christ and His followers as spiritual Israel, and “heirs according to the promise,” puts Bible prophecy in an entirely different light. And the truth is that the prophetic book of Revelation centers around Jesus Christ and God’s Israel in the Spirit, not the Israel of the flesh. “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Phil. 3:3).

We can share with others the truth that now “there is neither Jew nor Greek...for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:28, 29).

Let us not live in the flesh or accept popular, convoluted teachings that focus on an earthly state. Rather, let us live in the Spirit. Like Jacob of old, let us wrestle in prayer and cling to Jesus until by faith we hear Him say, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” (Gen. 32:28). Shalom! ☩



ATTITUDE: FRIEND OR FOE?

By Vicki B. Griffin, Ph.D., MACN, Author, Lecturer, Researcher

ATTITUDE: FRIEND OR FOE?

The Bible teaches that there is more to good health than physical habits and good nutrition. A bad attitude can “veto” all the spiritual and physical benefits of an otherwise good lifestyle. Our attitude can be a beneficial friend or relentless foe. Perhaps that is why we are admonished to “let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice” as a condition for receiving salvation. Eph. 4:31. With the aid of the Holy Spirit we are to cultivate gratitude, benevolence (unselfishness, goodwill), kindness, sympathy, joy, optimism and a contented attitude. God’s Word tells us that those who share these traits receive the greater benefit! “But godliness with contentment is great gain.” 1 Tim. 6:6.

NEW EVIDENCE: OLD COUNSEL.

New medical evidence points to key emotional traits that can promote health, boost the immune system and, combined with good diet, protect against a spectrum of diseases ranging from colds to cancer. It is thought that the left brain in particular influences the body’s immune responses. Studies show that worry, anxiety, anger, hostility, grief, negativism, fear and mental stress all depress the immune system, especially “T” killer cell activity and its ability to fight viruses, bacteria and cancer. The evidence is new, but the counsel has been around for

centuries: “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones.” Prov. 17:22. There is even new evidence linking depression to osteoporosis—“dry bones.”

CHARACTER, DECISION AND DISEASE

Researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine and the University of California at San Diego reported that such positive attitudes as gratitude, optimism, perseverance, diligence under stress, and absence of malice (benevolence) are linked to a better chance of beating disease and higher survival rates when disease does occur. The lower stress levels that accompany these traits encourage better memory and learning because nerve cell expansion is greatly inhibited in the presence of chronic stress. Positive attitudes increase not only learning ability but also the ability to handle new challenges and sudden changes, a key attribute among centenarians. Senior citizens who volunteer just 40 hours a year or less experience greater longevity than those who do not. One interesting study showed that helping strangers gave more of an immune boost than helping those we are acquainted with! What a blessed health boon for the person who follows the Bible injunction of gratitude and benevolence, who will “give a portion to seven, and also to eight”! Eccl. 11:2. “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers” takes on new proportions! Heb. 13:2.

WRATH IS CRUEL

Conversely, there is a simple statement in the Scriptures that tells us: “Wrath is cruel.” Prov. 27:4. But the true import of these words is more profound than we may realize. Anger affects more than the person who is the target of this emotion. As we have mentioned, anger suppresses the immune system. Although there are several factors known to increase the risk of stroke, a new study has also implicated anger and aggression as a significant risk factor for sudden stroke. In addition, people with heart disease double their risk of heart attack when they indulge in outbursts of anger, and the danger lasts for two hours after the episode. Hostility also increases the risk of atherosclerosis and early death. Stress, depression, guilt and anger not only depress the immune system and cause or exacerbate a host of diseases, but new studies link these traits to proneness to heart disease, memory impairment and dementia, and early death.

Fast Facts

- **A new study reveals that plant foods help prevent tumor formation, stop cancer growth at every stage, block the formation of carcinogens, and disable the carcinogenic effect of toxic compounds. ARC Scientific Publications 1996.**
- **Study findings show that mild psychological stress can lead to increases in blood levels of homocysteine, an amino acid linked to cardiovascular disease. Life Sciences 1999 May.**

UNSAFE HARBOR

It is a risky business to harbor anger and ill feelings. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Eph. 4:26. Suppressed anger has some interesting side effects. Attempts to suppress anger, as well as verbalizing negative feelings and adopting a "fighting spirit" in response to stressors, are all associated with chronic dyspepsia (indigestion). It has been shown that individuals who direct anxiety and tension inward are more susceptible to early death than those who do not. This is why the Lord tells us to go to Him with all that perplexes and annoys. (See 1 Peter 5:7.) Through prayer, Jesus can truly change our attitudes and help us cope with the bad attitudes of others. Gal. 4:6-7.

YOU CAN DUCHENNE

If a cheery attitude is so vital to good health, do we need to wait for a good mood to "hit" us before we can smile and receive a benefit? Recent psychological research suggests that not only does a merry heart create a boon to health but a cheerful countenance can, of itself, create a merry heart! Voluntarily making a certain kind of smile, called a Duchenne smile, named after the researcher who studied it, can trigger some of the same physiological responses in the brain that have been associated with positive feelings. Because there are more than 100 muscles in the face, humans are capable of producing a wide variety of facial expressions. For instance, the "cheese" smile given for photographs uses the zygomatic major muscles that surround the mouth. This smile

is biochemically unproductive in terms of positive emotion and brain response. But when the orbicularis muscles around the eyes are deliberately flexed as well, it produces the "sincerely happy" smile characteristic of genuinely happy experiences. It was found that a deliberate decision to smile using those muscles actually generated the same positive brain activity in the frontal cortex as a spontaneously happy smile! We can actually cheer ourselves up as well as someone else by "putting on a happy face."

We can actually cheer ourselves up as well as someone else by "putting on a happy face."

MOOD-CHANGING STRATEGIES

When a bad mood is looming in the horizon, there are practical steps that can be taken to drive it away! First, call out to the Lord, and discuss the thing with Him—find the Bible promises that focus on power for victorious living and God's ultimate justice! This helps to temper the storm and put things in perspective. Soothing music is a great mood-modifier, and so is a good bout of exercise. Maybe you are really fatigued and just need a nap or "time out" to calm down. Getting involved in a "helping" activity for someone less fortunate, or just focusing on or praying for the needs of others, is a good way to redirect "energy" in a positive way. Most important, we need, at those times, to set a watch at the door of our mouths and ask the Holy Spirit to help us see and deal with the thing from God's point of view! And remember: You can Duchenne! ⌚

References available upon request.

recipes

CREAMY CASHEW MILK

Ingredients:

- 1 C Well cooked brown rice
- 2/3 C Raw cashews
- 1/3 C Unsweetened coconut
- 1Tb Vanilla
- 1 tsp Salt
- 2 Tb Honey

Directions:

- Grind cashews and coconut in a blender.
- Add ALL ingredients and blend with 3 cups of water until very frothy and creamy.

- Pour into 1/2 gallon container, add water to fill and chill in refrigerator.
- Shake well before each use.
- For richer, sweeter milk, add less water. Makes a great thick cream over pies.

Serving Suggestions:

- MOOOOve this one right in where you've used the *alder* milk in the past.



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Are You Ready for Jesus to Come?



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A Spiritual "Checklist"

By G. Edward Reid

If you were taking the vacation of your dreams to Paris, Hawaii or some other exotic location, no doubt you would make careful preparations for that trip. Your airline tickets, accommodations and passport would be in order weeks, and maybe even months, in advance.

Serious travelers planning to "make the trip" to heaven will also be involved in earnest preparation.

Similarly, serious travelers planning to "make the trip" to heaven will also be involved in earnest preparation. There are decisions to be made, friends to bring, battles to be won and ongoing education to minimize

"culture shock" when you reach those heavenly shores.

Following is a "Traveler's To-Do List," a checklist, of sorts, for pilgrims embarked on this lifelong journey. This list should spur the thinking of any Christian as he or she asks the all-important

question: Am I ready for Jesus to come?

Question 1: Have I made a decision for a full surrender to Christ?

By faith, we can be Christians here below while preparing for translation. Of course, that requires a decision on our part—a conscious decision to give and live our lives for Jesus. When our hearts are open and fully surrendered to Christ, then (and only then) can the Holy Spirit work in them with mighty, renewing power.

Question 2: Do I love to think of Jesus and what He did for me?

Do you think often of what Jesus did for you there on the cross? Have you begun to see the awfulness of sin? When a person, through faith, really takes hold of God's love, he or she becomes a new creature. The world is overcome, human nature is subdued and Satan is vanquished.

Question 3: Am I making my preparations for heaven a matter of prayer?

"Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition to receiving. We must pray always if

we would grow in faith and experience.”¹

Question 4: Do I make time for regular morning worship and/or other regular times for Bible study?

There is power in God’s Word! “The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God.” (*Education*, p. 126). “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” (Ps. 119:11, NKJV).

Question 5: Am I following the example of Jesus?

The holy life and character of Jesus is a faithful example to us. As we study His life, we will see that:

- His confidence in God was unlimited;
- His obedience and submission were unreserved and perfect;
- He came not to be ministered to, but to minister to others;
- He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him; and
- He relied totally on God for His strength. (“I can of mine own self do nothing,” John 30.)

Question 6: Am I involved in God’s work?

If we truly believe there is a heaven to win and a hell to lose, we will be actively involved in helping others to find God as we have. Strength comes by exercise. Activity is the very condition of life. The only way to grow in grace is to be disinterestedly doing the very work that Christ has asked us to do—to engage, to the extent of our ability, in helping and blessing those who need the help we can give them.

Question 7: Am I prepared to fight?

In the war with sin, each of us has a personal battle to fight. We must win our own way through struggles and discouragement. No one, not even God, can carry us to heaven unless we make the necessary effort on our part. If we de-

cline the struggle, we will lose the joy and strength of victory.

Question 8: Am I cooperating with God?

We are to labor together with God. The idea that we have little or nothing to do in the work of our salvation is dangerous, for God does nothing for people without their cooperation. We have an important work to do—a work that can be done only in Christ’s strength. “Without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5) doesn’t mean that He will do it all or that we will do it all. It is cooperation—working together with Jesus and in His strength—that wins the victory.

Question 9: Am I “temperate in all things”?

Self-discipline is essential to that mental strength and spiritual insight that will enable us to understand and practice the truths of God’s Word. As a result, temperance, or self-control, is important to those preparing for Christ’s second coming. During His 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus fought and won the battle of appetite. This victory is critical for us also—to keep our minds clear and receptive to spiritual things.

Question 10: Am I separating myself from the world?

Jesus said, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him.” (1 John 2:15). As Christians, we are to be separate from the tastes, habits, fashions, pride and customs of the world. God says, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate . . . and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” (2 Cor. 6:17). This is both a command and a promise, and one that must be obeyed if we are preparing for the world to come.

DON’T WAIT

If your answers to some or all of these questions were somewhat sobering, don’t delay. You can make a decision for Christ today. Great and significant events are already taking place in the world. God is at work preparing the way for Christ’s return. “Be-

hold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor. 6:2).

At the end of the world, there will be no future “probation” or “second chance” to make things right with God. Jesus made that clear in the parable of the wheat and the tares. If you haven’t already done so, you need to make a decision today. Here is something to write in your Bible and read out loud every morning:

“God helping me, I am determined to be an overcomer. Through Christ I shall obtain the victory. Then His joy will re-

At the end of the world, there will be no future “probation” or “second chance” to make things right with God.

main in me, and my joy [will] be full. I will talk of His goodness; I will tell of His power. Through a dependence upon the divinity of Christ, I may overcome as He overcame.” (Sermons and Talks, vol. 2, p. 294).

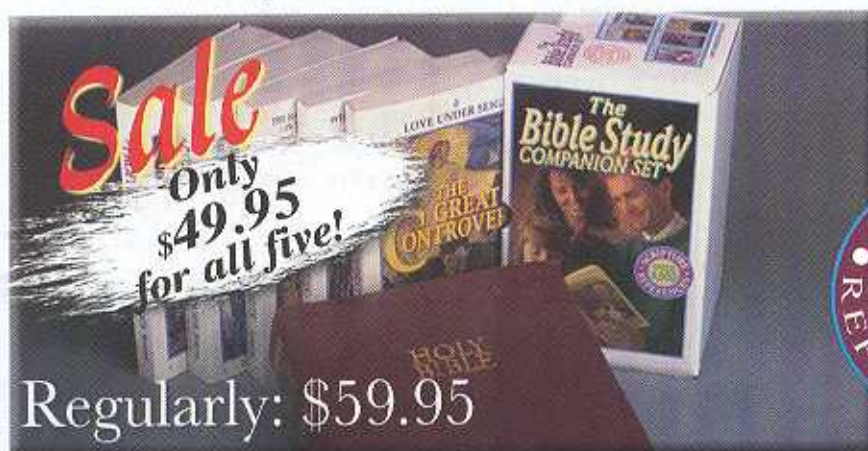
We can be one of God’s people, a part of His grand and soon-to-be triumphant Church. True, we are currently facing a world that is almost totally given over to Satan. But the day is coming when the battle will have been fought and the victory won. Then the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven. All the people of God will be part of a happy, united family. All will be clothed in the garments of praise and thanksgiving—the robe of Christ’s righteousness. All nature as well, in its unsurpassed beauty, will be a constant praise to God. The world will be covered with the light of heaven. And the years will move on, not in sadness, but in gladness!

So let’s grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, determining right now that we, and as many as we can influence to come with us, will be ready for Jesus to come. To Him be the glory both now and forever! ❧

¹ *Steps to Christ*, p. 97

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