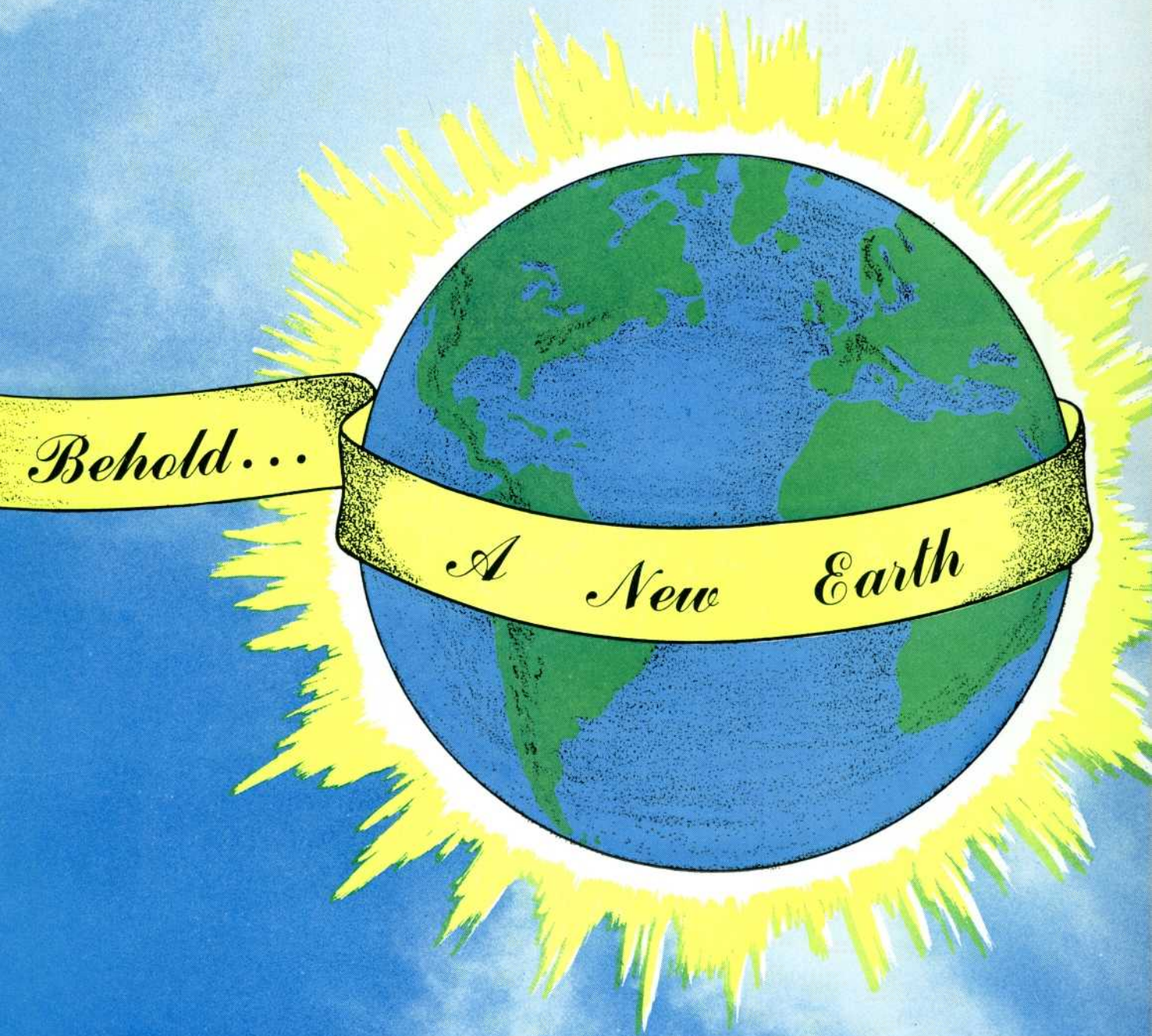


# Megiddo Message



New Year Issue

Vol. 65, No. 4

April, 1978



# "I Will Be With Thee . . . Whithersoever"

THE FORTY years of wandering were finally at an end. On the morrow the Israelites would be entering a new land and beginning a new life.

Well could Joshua have anticipated the worst. Moses had died and the responsibility of leadership had fallen upon him. What would happen in the days to come?

At this moment, as they prepared to cross Jordan, the people gave Joshua their enthusiastic support. "All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go" (Josh. 1:16). But the words were too high-sounding to be genuine. Joshua knew this people. He knew how rebellious and stubborn and changeable they could be. Many years he had watched as Moses dealt with them and with their fathers. Even now the people assured Joshua that "according as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee." What was Joshua to think of this? He knew only too well how they had hearkened unto Moses; would they do any better by *him*?

It was not a high moment of hope. The thought of what might lie ahead on the new and untried path in the unconquered land would have been enough to fill any ordinary man with fear. But not Joshua. Why? Because Joshua was not facing it alone. He had placed his confidence in the Lord, and the Lord had promised to stand with him. The *people* spoke to him assuringly—which meant very little. The *Lord* spoke to him assuringly—and this meant *everything*! "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Josh. 1:9). "The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever. . . ." What more could he ask!

As they prepared to cross Jordan, the Lord spoke again to Joshua. There would be blessings for Israel; there would be special blessings for Joshua. "The Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I

will be with thee" (Josh. 3:7). How could Joshua fear the future with such a promise?

Like Joshua of old, we are entering upon a new and untried path. If we look around, we can see many causes for alarm, for fear or worry. There will be new experiences to face, new opportunities to grasp, new tasks to perform, new blessings to enjoy, new problems to solve, new temptations to meet, new trials to endure. There will be testings; God never promised His people all things easy. Often must they see tomorrow's duties without seeing how they are to be accomplished. But why worry? Is not our God able to see us through any task? Has not He who allows the trial promised the strength to endure? If God in His mercy grant us the days of the coming year, we shall emerge with a stronger, more radiant faith than we ever had before.

If we are committing ourselves in faithfulness to God, we need not fear what is beyond our power to control; is not that where God wants us to claim His promise, "I will be with thee . . . whithersoever"?

The New Year is upon us. With its dawn, hope springs afresh in our hearts. How can we hope in a hopeless world? Because we hope in God; and if God be for us, who or what can ever be against us? There will be hardness, there will be pressure, there will be resistance; but we have support beyond the strongest that human hands can provide. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." Looking forward, we see the coming days as glowing as the stars. They are days of living opportunity, and how our hearts yearn for them. Our world is not here in vain; our time is God's; and God's time is budding with purpose, plan and destiny. If the coming year brings stress, it is only to make us better, stronger, wiser, and more ready for the great Day of Christ that is drawing nearer every day.

What we need to do most urgently is to live each present moment in holy obedience and submission to Him; then we can know He will be with us—whithersoever. ●●

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF  
THE MEGIDDO MISSION CHURCH  
L. T. NICHOLS, *Founder*  
KENNETH E. FLOWERDAY, *Editor*

The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

Published monthly by the  
MEGIDDO MISSION CHURCH  
481 Thurston Road  
Rochester, N. Y. 14619

● SUBSCRIPTION RATES: One year, \$2.00; six months, \$1.00. Make checks or money orders for all literature payable to the Megiddo Mission Church. Please notify promptly of any change of address. Foreign subscribers, please make all payments by international money orders, available at most banks and post offices.

Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, New York.

# Megiddo Message

Vol. 65, No. 4

April, 1978

## EDITORIAL

- 2 "I Will Be With Thee . . . Whithersoever"  
God will be with us, if we are with Him.

## ARTICLES

- 6 **Seconds Till Eternity**  
Our lives are so short, eternity is so long.
- 10 **Abib Calendar**
- 16 **FULFILLED AS FORETOLD**  
**O Little Town of Bethlehem**  
**A Child and A King**  
**He Will Be Great**  
**"I Will Come Again"**  
**It's Time to Look Up**  
**Remember Lot's Wife**
- 18 **New Year Resolutions**

## SPECIAL FEATURES

- 4 **"Behold, A New Earth"**  
When the Millennium is spent, ETERNITY will dawn.
- 14 **A Thousand Years**  
The Millennium depicted in poetry

## REGULAR FEATURES

- 11 **Scriptural Spotlight: *The Benefits of Discipline***  
On Hebrews 12:11. The profit comes *afterward*.
- 12 **Pro & Con**  
Discussing the state of the resurrected, the Judgment, and the "bottomless pit"
- 28 **Cover Feature: *Our Perfect Example***

## Megiddo Means

"a place of troops"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon

"a place of God"

—Young's Analytical Concordance

Geographically, Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, located at a strategic point, demanding heavy fortification; for Palestine is the age-old gateway between East and West, and the avenue connecting North and South. Supremacy there has long been the envy of aggressive nations, and the prevailing power has guarded it with jealous eye. The famous pass at Megiddo through a solid mountain range is the one means by which this avenue between continents may be traversed.

In the spiritual parallel, it is a place of troops, where soldiers are equipped for spiritual warfare against the forces of evil without and within. "The weapons we wield are not merely human but divinely potent to demolish strongholds; we demolish sophistries and all that rears its proud head against the knowledge of God; we compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5, NEB).

Bible Quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version

Other versions are abbreviated as: *New International Version* (NIV); *New English Bible* (NEB); *Revised Standard Version* (RSV); *The New Testament in Modern English* (Phillips); *The Living Bible* (TLB); *New American Standard* (NAS); *The Jerusalem Bible* (JB).





*This is the thirteenth and last  
in a series of articles  
on the coming MILLENNIUM  
and the ETERNITY Beyond.*

*"And he that sat upon the throne  
said, Behold,  
I make all things new.  
And he said unto me,  
Write: for these words are  
true and faithful"  
—Revelation 21:5.*

*"For behold, I create  
new heavens and a new earth:  
and the former  
shall not be remembered,  
nor come into mind.*

*"And I will rejoice in Jerusalem,  
and joy in my people:  
and the voice of weeping  
shall be no more heard in her,  
nor the voice of crying  
—Isaiah 65:17-19.*

*"And he said unto me,  
These sayings are faithful  
and true: and the Lord God  
of the holy prophets  
sent his angel  
to shew unto his servants  
the things which must shortly  
be done"  
—Revelation 22:6.*

# "Behold, A New Earth"

**"B**EHOLD, I create new heavens and a new earth" (Isa. 65:17).

The promise is from heaven; spoken many centuries ago by the messenger of the Lord, it has been preserved to arouse the expectation of generation upon generation. "Behold, I create"—the Lord is working. He is doing something. He is fashioning, developing, shaping. The process of creation takes time; but the work is destined to be completed. There shall be new heavens and a new earth.

First will come the "new heavens." Christ is returning to be "king over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9), and soon after His arrival He and the saints shall take over the jurisdiction of earth's affairs, and their righteous rule shall displace the faulty systems of men. For "the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan. 7:27). Christ and His saints will compose the "new heavens," the new ruling authority upon earth.

"Behold, I create new heavens"—this process of creating requires six thousand years before they are finally selected, developed and exalted to positions of honor, seated with Christ upon His throne of glory (Rev. 3:21). But what a glorious day when all shall "behold" these "new heavens" who shall "judge the world in righteousness, and minister judgment to the people in uprightness." In their hands will be the glorious task of making "all things new" from "sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Rev. 21:5; Ps. 72:8).

After the creating of the "new heavens" will follow the task of creating a "new earth." A whole new populace must be developed to fill the earth with the glory of the Lord. But they will not be accepted as the laws of nature produce them, rough and untried. They must be brought "through the fire" and refined "as silver is refined" and tried "as gold is tried" (Zech. 13:9). The Lord will have no inferior material in His finished creation; all must have proved themselves under trial.

When this creating task is complete and the final rewards are given, the words of Revelation 21:5 will be fulfilled: "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

All things new! A splendid promise, you say. But what does it mean to an ordinary man or woman living in the old world of 1978?

First of all, if you are there to behold it, you yourself will be new. You will be a radiant, glorious immortal being with the life and vigor of the angels of heaven. Pulsing in your veins will be the lifeblood of immortality. You will be all new!

Picture yourself in the flush of eternal youth, with eternal vitality, eternal strength, eternal energy. You will have new muscles which cannot strain, weaken or tire. You will be able to "mount up" with power that can defy the laws of gravity, to "run and not be weary," and "walk and not faint" (Isa. 40:31). You will be able to come and go with the freedom of the summer breeze.

Then, you will have a new intellect, an intellect that will grow and expand with the endless cycles of the eternal years before you. Imagine what it will be like to never forget what you want to remember. It will be a mind capable of retaining and relating limitless impressions as you are exposed to more and more of the wonderments of heavenly wisdom and knowledge.

Then, you will have new eyes, eyes which can behold the transcendent beauties of that bright new world, eyes that can rejoice in the exceeding brightness that accompanies immortals everywhere they go. You will need these new eyes even to live with yourself, for as an immortal being, you will be shining, too! What will it be to have eyes that can view all the unfoldings of God's magnificent plan through ages upon ages of fruitful, immortal activity!

Then, you will have new ears, ears that can perceive sounds surpassing the finest mortal imagination. Music? You have never yet heard anything that merits the title. Immortal beings know music beyond our fondest finite fathomings. You will need your new ears to hear it, and a new mind to comprehend it.

You will have a totally new body, composed of a new substance, a substance superior to flesh and blood, a substance that can never age or decay.

As well as perfect physical and mental capacities, you will also have a perfect spiritual capacity and an appreciation of the workings of God which is beyond imagining now. New dimensions of holiness will continue to thrill you through all eternity. The majestic holiness and grandeur of Jehovah is inexhaustible. Only immortals can begin to comprehend it.

"Behold, I make all things new." First, the new "you," and then—

Everyone you meet everywhere and anywhere you go throughout the wide world will be just like you—another happy, glorious, immortal being. Everyone everywhere will be rejoicing in the marvelous salvation of our God. Go where you will,

you will find people everywhere with whom you can share a new immortal experience, or a new gem of heavenly knowledge, or a new insight into the workings of Omnipotence. Everyone everywhere will be interested in the same goals that are yours—indeed, your goals will be the universal goals of the world, for everyone will worship and praise and serve and adore the same Eternal God.

You will all be members of one family, an eternal family that will never know a sorrow or a parting or a care. There will be no sickness, no old age, no suffering in that family. Every member

Someday a bright new wave will break upon the shore

And there will be no sickness, no more crying, no more war,

The saints will be immortal, none will suffer any more,

And there'll be a bright new morning over there,  
There'll be a bright new world for them to share.

Someday there'll be an end to unkind words and cruel,

The man who said, "There is no God" will know he was a fool;

And peace will be a way of life when Christ the earth shall rule,

And there'll be a bright new morning over there,  
There'll be a bright new world for some to share.

Someday, we know not when, when toiling days are done

And saints of all the ages shall be gathered in as one,

Their voices shall be ringing out the vict'ry they have won,

And there'll be a bright new morning over there,  
*Shall we be there that bright new world to share?*

will be continually challenged by new horizons of knowledge as they advance from "glory to glory."

Do you think that you will grow tired of your family on earth, after you have lived with them for a few billion years? Don't fear, you will continually be making new acquaintances after earth is accepted into the family of the "Lord God of hosts." Indeed, you will need Eternity to get acquainted with all the glorified immortals from other worlds who will be your own brothers and sisters. Earth will no more be an island alone, for God's will

*(Continued on page 18)*

# Seconds Till Eternity

SOME TIME ago a newspaper carried a picture of an airliner stricken in flight. The plane in the picture is tilted at a steep angle and is clearing the treetops by only a few hundred feet. One motor is blazing, and disaster is written across the sky in the trail of smoke it has left behind. Under the picture in large black capitals are the words: "Seconds until eternity." At the moment the picture was taken, all on board the vessel were living, animate beings. Only seconds later, it was all over; there were no survivors.

The picture is a grim portrayal of imminent doom. But we do not have to be on board a crashing airliner to have only seconds separating us from eternity.

Does the term "seconds" seem like a misjudgment of the human lifespan? It is a matter of viewpoint. We are all familiar with the small, soft-bodied insects we catch on our windshields during warm summer evenings. These little nuisance creatures, known as May flies, or day flies, have a lifespan of from one to three days. In some species the lifespan is less than two *hours*.

Now we would judge a lifetime of two hours, or even two days, as exceedingly short, comparing it to our seventy or eighty years. How similar must our brief seventy or eighty years appear to the Being who "inhabith eternity," who exists "from everlasting to everlasting"! Might He not think of us as human "day flies"? We are so temporary; He is so eternal.

It is impossible for us to see our lives as they appear to the Omnipotent Creator, but a comparison with the age of the earth might be helpful. Scientists today believe the earth to be some four billion years old, give or take a billion years. How long is our lifespan compared to the earth's age? Our seventy or eighty years are less than one forty-millionth of the age of the earth. Or to say it another way, if we let our seventy years represent the age of the earth, our actual lifespan in this proportion is a mere 39 seconds! What are our days, then, to Him who "inhabits eternity, whose name is holy"?

"Before the mountains were brought forth," extolled the Psalmist, "or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Ps. 90:2).

## The Meaning of Time

We talk so easily of time. We have time for this, and no time for that. But do we realize the intrinsic value bound up in each fleeting second? God is so eternal; we are so temporary; only a few seconds, and we shall belong to eternity. And what will that mean for us—eternal death, or eternal life? This is the greatest question that faces us as we enter this new year: Where will we spend eternity? The question is ours to answer, and our answer depends on what we are doing with the seconds that are ours; for when these seconds are gone, our destiny will be sealed; time will cease to belong to us; opportunity will be gone forever. Our probation will be over, and change for us will have become either impossible or unnecessary. The words of the Revelator will apply to us: "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" (Rev. 22:11).

Only seconds until—? The eternity we reach will be the direct consequence of our wisdom, or our folly.

There are two basic reasons why we this very moment are only seconds from eternity: 1) human life is so brief, and 2) the end of an age is upon us. Let us think about each of these reasons and what they mean to us.

### 1) Human Life Is Brief

All men in all ages have had only seconds, as God measures time; only seconds to do their work, to seek their pleasures, or to offer themselves to His service; only seconds, for human life is so temporary. As the Psalmist observed centuries ago, our life is as "a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again" (Ps. 78:39). Our days are as "an

handbreadth" (Ps. 39:5). We are "as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again" (II Sam. 14:14). "Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding" (I Chron. 29:15).

Only a matter of seconds; seconds till eternity.

There is something within us that cries out against this impermanence, that longs for stability and security. We grasp for "things," for family and friends, a home, a bank account, land or investments, anything that will give us an illusion of security and comfort and permanence. God in His merciful kindness grants us a measure of these; but we dare not set our hearts upon them, for in them is no lasting security. There is nothing among earthborns that is secure. There is nothing, even among man's most sophisticated creations, upon which he may look and say, "See, this is eternal." A few seconds, and all is gone.

This is God's point of view, and we should apply ourselves to learning His values; for it is to Him that we look for anything we hope for beyond the few seconds we now have. Upon Him we are dependent for all we are or ever hope to be. Only in His realm can we find ages and hours beyond the introductory seconds.

## 2) The End of the Age

There is a second sense in which we have but seconds till eternity: We are near the end of an age.

No one has ever doubted that each individual lifetime is as a pendulum which must someday fail to hit its full arc and fall motionless. But today there is an astonishingly widespread feeling, even among those who profess no belief in the return of Christ, that in a larger sense the corporate life of all men is reaching some kind of climax. The dizzying accelerating of events, coupled with the incalculable growth of power and no balancing growth of wisdom, has created a feeling that man's influence on his destiny is cracking; human history is approaching some kind of end. In the words of a sage of yesterday, "Time that takes a survey of all the world must have a stop."

This widespread feeling among thinking people is a fulfillment of Scripture prophecy, and it confirms the conviction of every believer that we are indeed living at the end of an era. Jesus foretold that there should be "signs 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; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven

[political powers] shall be shaken" (Luke 21:25-26).

The feeling is not universal—there are always a few voices from the complacent, who say that "since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning"; but these bring little conviction, and the prophets of automatic human progress have all but abandoned their theme. There are a few believers in inevitable progress, but beneath the surface in most people is a profound disquiet. Perhaps the following statement is too strong, but one cannot mistake its mood: "We confront several problems, which are absolutely predictable, absolutely unavoidable, and absolutely disastrous."

### Looking Ahead . . .

What then is the human picture? Perhaps only seconds, only seconds until—and no one dares to imagine *what*. In an age when men face problems beyond human solution, when they hold in their hands atomic power—and worse—which they can neither comprehend nor control, one can live more comfortably if he doesn't stop to imagine what may happen. Without God in the picture, the future does indeed look ominous.

What does all this speak to us as Christians? Only "seconds," figuratively speaking, only seconds until the end of the present system of things and the establishing of a new and vastly superior order. Only seconds until—and the sentence can be finished with any of a thousand statements of the wonder and glory and grandeur that will belong to *God's new world!* At the beginning of it all will be the grandest event of the ages, the climax of all history, the apocalypse of the Son of God! For when "men's hearts" are "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth"—*then*—"then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:25-27).

Some people, seeing only the hopelessness of the human picture and rejecting the promises of God, seek escape into a world of pleasure and fantasy, where they attempt to live without thinking. But what do they gain? Only a few seconds—and many find it hard to hear the music of their revelry above the ticking of the clock. There is a saying to "love that well which thou must leave ere long"; but such merry abandonment of the real issues of life amounts to a living death. To find pleasure in such an existence requires that one retreat into himself, the smallest prison possible, and the loneliest. It is the cry of "eat, drink, and be merry," with death the only ultimate.

What shall *our* reaction be, as we hear the

seconds ticking, ticking away, and as we realize the end of the age is upon us? Jesus said it in these words: Let us take special heed to them. "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. . . . Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21: 28, 34-36).

The arrival of the King—indeed, the arrival of His herald—will mark the end of the last second of the present age. And that time, figuratively speaking, is only *seconds away!*

### What Is Eternal?

Our lives are temporary; the present age is destined to end. Yet God has set before us that which He has assured us is *without end*, that which is *eternal*. Said Jesus, "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, . . . with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30). The promise is "an hundredfold now, . . . and in the world to come *eternal life*."

God sees and judges all things in the perspective of endless time, and that is the way we must learn to judge also. Then we will be able to say with the far-sighted Paul, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4:17-18). The invisibles are the realities, and the intangibles are the permanencies: "The things which are *not seen* are *eternal*."

In God is the promise of "salvation which is in Christ Jesus with *eternal glory*" (II Tim. 2:10). Christ is the "author of *eternal salvation* unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). In Him we may have "*eternal redemption*" and the "promise of an *eternal inheritance*" (Heb. 9:12, 15). He has promised to make of us "an *eternal excellency*, a joy of many generations" (Isa. 60:15), if we qualify as His people. He has pledged Himself to give to all who "by patient continuance in well

doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, *eternal life*" (Rom. 2:7). Eternal strength, eternal health, eternal happiness, eternal life—eternal everything which we may desire or imagine—and more—is offered us by the eternal God.

Yet, everything in our world, and we ourselves, are so temporary. How can we know that anything is really eternal?

In the midst of our changing and impermanent world, God has permitted us to see *some* things which are *eternal*—enough to assure us that the eternal IS. These things are not within our grasp—we cannot claim anything lasting because we ourselves are so momentary. But some of the commonest sights and sounds of our present environment will go on forever—which is visible evidence to us that there is power and life above and beyond our own. For example, we can look up at the heavens. Our telescopes reveal myriads of shining orbs, many so distant that the light they radiate requires millions and billions of years to reach our eye. Here is visible evidence of that which is eternal. Those stars were shining before we were born; they will be shining long after we are forgotten.

We see the sun rise every day, to give us heat and light. And though we know it will not always be needed to give us light, the Bible tells us it is eternal. Even the ground we tread and till is more lasting than we are, for while "one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: . . . the earth abideth for ever" (Ps. 72:5, 17; Eccl. 1:4).

We can be thankful God has permitted us this much contact—limited though it be—with things that are eternal. And with the knowledge He has given us in His Word, we can know that His promises are sure. Someday immortal beings will tread the very soil on which we walk, *and we can be among them!* Someday the very air we breathe will vibrate with immortal voices *and it can include ours!* Someday immortal music will echo between the hills and vales and across the lakes and meadows of our world, *and we may hear it!* Someday—beyond the seconds—in eternity.

### Eternity vs. Time

What do we mean when we speak of eternity in contrast to time? We take time for granted, but time has a limit for each of us. When our time is gone, what marches on is eternity, unmeasured duration in which we have no part.

The word "eternity" occurs but once in Scripture, and it is found near the heart of Isaiah's message. The Prophet uses it to describe the habitation of the great Creator Himself: "Thus saith the



high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isa. 57:15). What grander introduction could be given to Omnipotence—"the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity"!

Eternity is a great word—let it never be lost among the commonplace: We might do well occasionally to focus our minds upon its tremendous issues—not that we will be able to comprehend them; but, in the words of our founder, it will expand our minds so that we may expand our actions.

First, let's attempt to bring eternity within the reach of our finite conception. What does it mean?

We will have to use units of time known to us (as days and years), even though we know these have no part in eternity. So let us start with the "seconds" that belong to us, the average lifespan, our threescore and ten. Then let's imagine that we can add. Begin by adding to these seventy years one year of life for every leaf that grows on every tree in the world during those seventy years. Then add to that figure a year for every

grain of sand on every seashore of every continent. The result is staggering, but this is not eternity.

Then continue by adding a year for every blade of grass that grows upon the earth's surface during these same seventy years. We might also add a year for every drop of rain that falls during that period of time. We have surpassed our comprehension a million times, but we are still far from eternity. We might proceed to add a year for every time the sun has risen and set during the more than three billion years of earth's existence. Still, our total is only a small fraction of eternity.

How do we apply this to the issues before us?

We are even now only seconds from eternity. And eternity for us will mean either eternal death or eternal life.

Eternal death is not difficult to comprehend. It is simply an unending state of oblivion, nothingness, non-existence. Our few brief seconds run out, and there are no more for us. (*Cont. on page 25*)

---

## *Let Us Pray . . .*

Dear heavenly Father, we thank Thee that once again we are privileged to meet in Christian fellowship in Thy house. As we turn our steps into the path of a new year, grant that we may go forward as those who are journeying to a known destination, seekers of a city which hath foundations of eternal duration, and whose Maker and Builder Thou art.

We thank Thee for the birth, life and destiny of Christ Thy beloved Son, the anniversary of whose birth we remember. He was—and is—the great hope of the world. It was He who showed the world the perfect example of right living. He it was who burst the bands of the dark tomb never again to be held in its cold embrace. Though He were dead, yet He now is alive for evermore, giving realistic support to our hope that if we live as He lived, follow faithfully in His footsteps, we too can ultimately be placed beyond the power of death, and live forever.

Grant that the rapidity with which the passing year has fled may remind us of the swift passage of time, and the need for haste if we would finish our life's work during the few days or years allotted us. With the Psalmist, may we know how short our time is, and so be impelled to make the

very most of the perilously short time remaining until the end of the age.

Father, we once were walking in darkness, unaware of the value of time. But now that Thou hast enlightened us, grant us the wisdom to walk as children of light. Help us to show the influence of our enlightenment in our everyday living, and now act like sensible men, not like thoughtless. We know of the times and seasons, we know of the shortness of our mortal existence, we know of the imminence of the end of the age. Help us then to walk as children of the light.

Alert us that time is our most precious commodity, it is the stuff of which life is made. He who uses time has much time to use, he who wastes time is wasting life itself. We are living at the end of the ages, the time for Thy work upon earth to be revived is right upon us. May this fact be so vividly ominous to us that we will not waste a single moment of it.

We rejoice to know of the position Christ is destined to fill, that in the fulness of the times He shall become King of kings and Lord of lords, the benevolent Ruler of the entire earth, and that in His days the righteous shall flourish, and an abundance of peace shall prevail as long as the moon endures.

And now as we enter the portals of this New Year, grant that our fervor to be ready for that blissful Day may be more intense, and our determination to go the last mile of the way be unbounded. We ask all in the name of Thy dear Son, and our much longed-for King. Amen.

# Abib Calendar

## The Bible New Year:

*Abib 1—from sundown April 8 through sundown April 9*

Abib, also called Nisan, was the first month of the Hebrew year according to the law and pattern given by the Lord to Moses (Ex. 12:2). What a suitable time to begin the New Year, with this "spring" or "sprouting month," and how fitting a time for the Lord of life to have been born!

## The New Passover:

*Abib 13—the evening of April 20*

This was the day that the early Church received earlier than the traditional Jewish passover occurs at the beginning of Abib 13, in the evening. It is a day we are expressly commanded to remember, as Jesus said: "This do, in remembrance of me." By this memorial we renew our covenant to surrender completely to the will of God, to suffer the death of our old nature and so to die with Christ, in prospect of someday living with Him.

## Christ's Resurrection:

*Abib 15—morning of April 23*

We perpetuate the memory of this great event, knowing that in it lies our assurance of future life. Christ triumphed over death, and so may all who follow His example.

## The Ascension of Christ:

*Forty days after the Resurrection—June 1*

This was the day Jesus led His disciples as far as Bethany, and "he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:50-51). And as surely as He went away, so surely shall He return (Acts 1:11).

## Pentecost:

*Fifty days after the Resurrection—June 11*

This was the day that the early Church received "power from on high"—certain evidence that Jesus had been glorified and exalted (John 7:39) and that they were commissioned to be His witnesses and preach the gospel throughout the known world, "confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

---

## The New Year

*What shall I ask for the coming year?*

*What shall my watchword be?*

*What would'st Thou do for me, dear Lord?*

*What shall I do for Thee?*

*Lord, I would ask for a holy year,*

*Spent in Thy perfect will;*

*Help me to walk in Thy very steps,*

*Help me to please Thee still.*

*Lord, I would ask for a trustful year,*

*Humble, and yet so high;*

*Help me to sink all my selfish hopes*

*And my old self crucify.*

*Lord, I would ask for a year of faith;*

*Give me Thy faith divine,*

*That I may share Thy inheritance*

*And make Thy fulness mine.*

*Lord, I would ask for a year of love,*

*Love for the highest and best!*

*I want that love which can never fail*

*Under the hardest test.*

*Lord, I would ask for a busy year,*

*Filled up with service true;*

*Doing with rich and pure delight*

*All that I find to do.*

*Lord, I would ask for a year of prayer—*

*Teach me to walk with Thee:*

*Lord, keep me close in temptation's hour,*

*Pray Thou Thy prayer in me.*

*Lord, I would ask for a year of joy,*

*Of patience and peace divine,*

*Springing undimmed through all the days,*

*Whether in shade or shine.*

*Lord, I would ask for a year of hope,*

*Looking for Christ our King,*

*And hastening on that year of years*

*When praise through the heav'ns shall ring.*

*—Sel. and Alt.*



# SCRIPTURAL SPOTLIGHT

*"Discipline always seems for the time to be a thing of pain, not of joy; but those who are trained by it reap the fruit of it afterwards in the peace of an upright life"*  
(Heb. 12:11, Moffatt).

**D**ISCIPLINE is one of life's first and last and most important lessons. It is necessary in every stage of development from the cradle to the grave. In the home, in the school, in the church, in military service, in government and in business, there must of necessity be discipline.

In our modern society, the discipline of children has been down-graded in favor of freedom of expression, but an eminent doctor has said that children need rules and discipline for emotional health as much as they need proper food for physical health. Just so, aspiring children of God need mental discipline for spiritual and moral health.

The process of discipline is not always pleasant. It hurts; it goes against the natural inclinations. The hurt may be physical, but more often it is mental. Witness the loud wails of the toddler as his mother administers a necessary spanking. The hurt may be both mental and physical. Likewise, the eight-year-old, forced to sit alone in the school room while his friends play outside, is hurt—but it is only his feelings. The youth in high school is hurt when he is compelled to stay after school to make up his homework; his hurt is mental. It is all discipline, administered for the profit of the offender. It causes pain, but its purpose is the fruit that will be in later life.

Beyond the bounds of home and school, there will be more discipline. Without it our world of activity would be hopelessly disorganized. If the laborer is to have a job, he must work regular hours—even if he doesn't feel like it. He must learn to exercise self-discipline at work or at play. Hasty words could cost him his job; uncontrolled temper could cost him his friends.

Without self-discipline nothing of significance has ever been accomplished. Those who have achieved success in the fields of athletics, science, medicine and business have been people who disciplined themselves rigorously, both physically and

mentally. The athlete watches his diet and rest closely, spending long hours in the gym or on the track. The scientist practically lives in the laboratory at the expense of leisure and relaxation. The businessman at the top spends long hours at the office, forgoing the pleasures of home and family life for the success of his business. For such people, discipline is part of the cost.

Discipline is no less important in the Christian life. Christians are not born, they are developed through the process of discipline. The harvest to be reaped in the end will depend upon the reaction to the discipline along the way. If there is to be Christian growth, discipline must be welcomed.

Training in godliness requires discipline. It is not chastening such as that forced on a law-breaker. The Christian is in training by his own free choice. This training is characterized by firm religious convictions and a desire to reap a harvest of eternal life, enjoying "the peace of an upright life" as he pursues his goal. He submits to a higher form of discipline, even the control of his conscience, his thoughts and his will.

Conscience is the voice of the inner man that responds to temptation with "Thou shalt," or "Thou shalt not." It is the moral sense of the Christian that enables him to discern between good and evil, to control the will, the thoughts, the actions.

Conscience is dependable only as it is educated. An uneducated conscience is totally unreliable. It will not answer according to God's thoughts unless it has been properly trained. Without the knowledge of God, it will most likely be the voice of tradition or custom, social approval, ambition or cowardice—whatever best fits the desires. Only the spiritually mature will have a conscience that can discern right and wrong according to God's Word. "Their perceptions are trained by long use to discriminate between good and evil" (Heb. 5:14, NEB).

*(Continued next page)*



It requires sound doctrine to have a conscience that is in harmony with God's word. Paul's was a well-trained conscience, one in harmony with the mind of Christ. He declared before the council that he had "lived in all good conscience before God," and in his defense before Felix he said, "I . . . train myself to keep at all times a clear conscience before God and man" (Acts 23:1; 24:16, NEB).

Paul's clear conscience came by training and he exhorts his followers to pursue a similar course. The knowledge of God's Word cannot be over-emphasized, as Paul witnessed in his letter to Timothy. He warned against giving "heed to fables and endless genealogies," and "any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine," but urged him to "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine," and to "meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them" (I Tim. 1:4; 4:13-15).

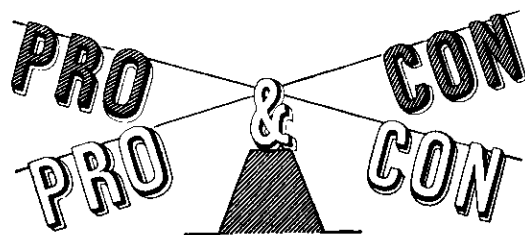
The well-trained conscience acts from principle—it does not have to go to the book to look up the rules. Such a conscience is so accustomed to doing right that it becomes second nature.

Conscience directs the will and the thoughts. The will, guided by a conscience under the influence of God's Word will answer every temptation with the words of Christ: "Not my will, but thine be done." If the will is right, it will not conflict with the will of God.

Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34). His will and the Father's were one, and the will of His followers must likewise be one: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:10).

Behind every conscious act there is a thought. Thoughts precede action as lightning precedes thunder. If the thoughts are right, the actions will be right. A disciplined conscience will produce right thoughts by controlling what enters the mind. Paul had some good advice for good thoughts: Think on good things. Fill the mind with things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report (Phil. 4:8). If the mind is filled with right thoughts there will be no room for wrong thoughts; as a result, there will be no wrong actions.

There may be times when the pain of the discipline will seem to outweigh the joy of the future; but remember, it takes the pain of discipline to produce the fruits of righteousness. "Those who are trained by it reap the fruit of it afterwards in the peace of an upright life," and it not only yields fruit in this life, but also in that which is to come. ●●



### *A Column for Open Discussion*

*All our readers do not agree with us. If you are among those who differ on some point, write us your views and we will consider them in the light of Scripture teaching. Our policy is the Apostle's injunction: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."*

#### ● Concerning the resurrection and judgment

**"Your absurd idea that the saints are going to be resurrected mortal finds no support in the New Testament. First Corinthians 15:52 refutes the idea of a mortal resurrection of the saints at the last trumpet."**

*—T. B. C., Blakstock, South Carolina*

First Corinthians 15:52 reads: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

If all the covenant-makers were to be raised from the dead as immortals, what would become of the unfaithful? We are told plainly that they shall come forth, "they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29). There will be both faithful and unfaithful resurrected, and can we think that the unfaithful, those who are "contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness" shall receive "glory and honour and immortality"? (Rom. 2:7-9). The Bible allows for no such possibility. The final reward of unfaithfulness is destruction, death (Matt. 7:13-14; Rev. 21:27).

Also, if the covenant-makers are all raised immortal, what need of a judgment to determine whether they are worthy of the reward of immortality?

Read Jesus' parable of the Wedding Feast of the King's Son (Matt. 22:1-14) and note what happens to the man without the wedding garment on. Also read Jesus' parable of the Pounds, and note what happens to the man who did not make use of his which would not that I should reign over them"

pound (Luke 19:13-27), also "those mine enemies, (v. 27). If they were to be resurrected immortal, how could Jesus command, "bring [them] hither, and slay them before me"?

If you will read further in I Corinthians 15, you will see that Paul could not possibly have meant that the dead will come forth incorruptible, for he says (v. 53) that "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." If they had been brought forth from the graves already incorruptible, Paul would have had to say that "this incorruptible" and "this immortal"—and what would they have to put on? Not incorruptibility, or immortality, for they would already have that. No, this was not Paul's meaning.

If we read verses 42-43, we get a clue as to what Paul means by "raising." A body that is "sown" is "cast out upon the surface of the ground," as the original word translated "sown" means. "So also is the resurrection of the dead" (v. 42). This shows us what Paul is talking about. Those who come forth at the resurrection are "sown in corruption," then later they are "raised in incorruption." That is, they are cast out of the graves corruptible and then, after the Judgment, "raised" to "incorruption." This is harmonious with Bible teaching, and Paul does not contradict himself. Likewise, "it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (vs. 43-44),

All Christ's servants will be brought forth ("sown," or "cast out," or "resurrected," depending on which word you choose to use) from the grave mortal. Only the Judgment will determine who will be changed to immortality (Phil. 3:20-21; John 5:28-29; Dan. 12:2-3; II Cor. 5:10).

**"You speak of the resurrection and judgment as at Christ's coming. You quote II Timothy 4:1, that Christ will 'judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.' Other translations don't say that (see NAS and NEB).**

Other translations do give a different thought in II Timothy 4:1, as the *New American Standard*. But the thought of the resurrection and the Judgment occurring at Christ's coming does not depend solely on this one text. For example:

First Thessalonians 4:16 associates the resurrection with the arrival of Christ: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise."

The time of the Judgment, the time of the April, 1978

dispensing of the rewards, is to be at the time of Christ's return, as says the apostle Peter: "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 5:4); "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:13). Jesus Himself associated the time of His return with the Judgment. In Matthew 25:31, 34 He describes the process of separating the sheep from the goats (the Judgment) as occurring "when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him." Luke's Gospel says also, "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just"—showing that the resurrection and the Judgment occur at approximately the same time. Jesus said also, "Behold, I com equickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

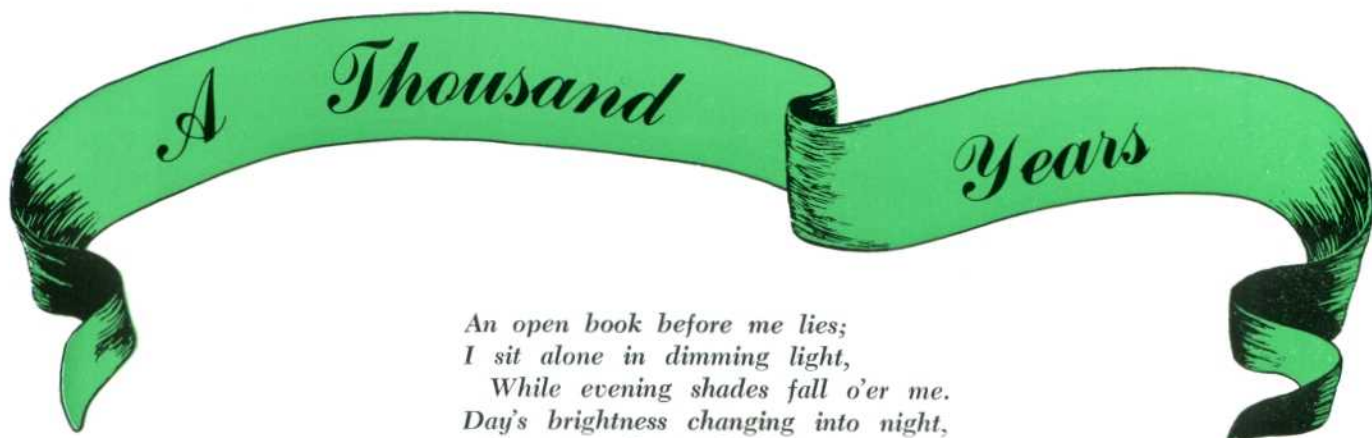
#### • Concerning the "bottomless pit"

**"You say the 'bottomless pit' of Revelation 20:1 is the hearts of men. Where do you find support for this in Scripture?"**

We must realize that the language of Revelation 20 is symbolic, and therefore the term must have some symbolic meaning. A representative "dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan" could not be cast into a physical pit—and what physical pit could be physically *bottomless*?

The term "pit" does suggest a place of confinement. The prophet Zephaniah tells us that sin will not be allowed open manifestation during this time, for "thou shalt not see evil any more" (Zeph. 3:15). But the Devil, representing all sin and sinners, is not to be destroyed until the end of the thousand years, hence must be surviving within confinement. The hearts of men, being "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" according to the Prophet's definition (Jer. 17:9), seems to be a fitting comparison for the "bottomless pit." Evil will be confined within the hearts of men and not allowed open exercise as it has today. In this way, it will not be able to "deceive" the nations during the thousand years (Rev. 20:3).

Furthermore, the human heart is given as the source of all evil (Mark 7:21-23). Every man is tempted "when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (Jas. 1:14); hence men who commit evil are the devil, and their hearts may fittingly be the "pits" which will confine evil (though unwillingly) during the Millennial reign of Christ and the saints. ●●



*An open book before me lies;  
I sit alone in dimming light,  
While evening shades fall o'er me.  
Day's brightness changing into night,  
Shuts out the world before me.*

*The stars are shining in the skies;  
Each in its orbit, glorious, grand;  
The firmament doth show me  
The mighty work of Ail's hand  
In those bright worlds above me.*

*I see the work of Jesus Christ  
Whose coming was so long foretold  
By prophets through the ages.  
He reigns in majesty and might;  
All people sing His praises.*

*While thoughts like these engross my mind,  
I glance upon the open Book  
Where Wisdom speaketh to me;  
And in my mind's eye, as I look  
A picture is before me.*

*At last the age of peace has come,  
The age when righteousness shall stand  
To rule earth's conquered nations;  
I see them humbly bow before  
The God of all creation.*

*This picture greatest pleasure gives;  
It fills my heart with joy and peace,  
Those happy forms before me;  
No sadness, but a constant feast  
Of blessings looking toward me.*

*No sight of battle horror here,  
No deadly feud, no jealous hate,  
Is shown the wide world over;  
No need of wall or bar or gate,  
Each trustful of the other.*

*A scene in Kingdom fair I see,  
Oh, sight of joy and gladness!  
Beyond earth's pain and anguish;  
A scene within the pearly gate  
When Christ His foes hath vanquished.*

*I hear the happy shepherd's song,  
And see the fields spread wide and long  
Where flocks and herds are feeding.  
No serpent bite, no beast by night,  
No fear of thieves molesting.*



*At peace are all the tribes of earth,  
Such peace as never was before;  
The Lord of Hosts hath spoken,  
And men shall study war no more,  
His oath cannot be broken.*

*Beyond the watching, waiting,  
Beyond the time when wars shall cease,  
Beyond death, chill and icy,  
Beyond the thousand years of peace—  
Beyond it all—Eternity.*

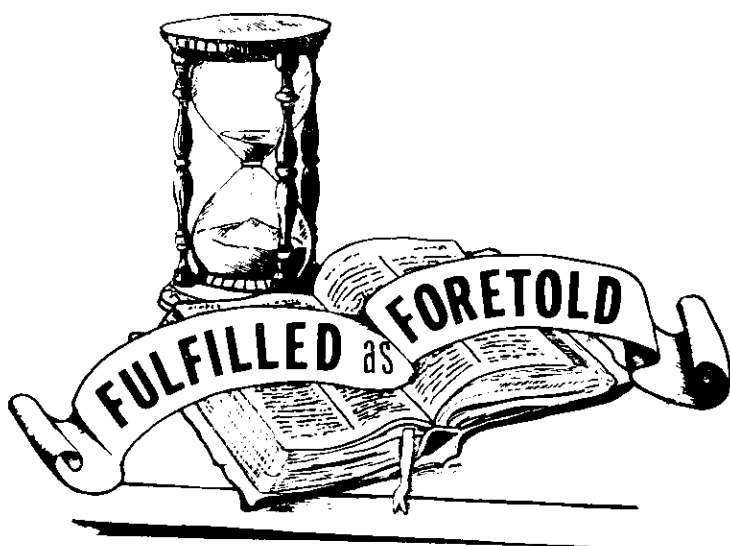
*With pleasure in full measure  
My heart wells up, unmixed with fears,  
At scroll of golden letters;  
My happy eyes o'erflow with tears  
As there I read, "A Thousand Years."*

*I see it dimly; mortal eyes  
May not behold the radiant light  
Of that fair golden City;  
Its brilliancy dispels all night  
And fills the earth with glory.*

*I forward gaze through earth's dark maze  
And see beyond this dreary night,  
Beyond the sowing, reaping,  
Beyond where age shall dim our sight,  
Beyond the sorrow, weeping.*

*Oh! joyous Day when Christ shall come  
And take His Kingdom and His throne  
And reign in power and glory!  
A thousand years from sorrow free,  
And—after all—ETERNITY.  
—Contributed.*





"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." —Isaiah 55:10-11

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" —Numbers 23:19

**S**OME ABIB will mark the beginning of the most important year ever, the year which will bring the end of all things past and the opening to all things future. Some New Year we will welcome the beginning of the year in which Jesus will return. We may be welcoming that year right now. Never before has there been so much evidence pointing to the end of the age. Never before has there been more to support our confidence that we *are* nearing the end. As one believer has said, "Christians never had more reasons to believe that the coming of Christ could occur any day than they have in the present prophetic crisis in the world."

One of these days something dramatically new will occur. The events forecast for the endtime all fulfilled, the heavens will open and down the parted skies will come the King with all His retinue of shining angels. Then will follow the Judgment of His servants and the crowning of the saints, the inaugurating of the new government, and the ensuing battle of Armageddon. Then there will be worldwide programs of rehabilitation, re-education, restoration, and reconstruction. There will be the glorious Millennium, a thousand years of peace, progress and prosperity while the populace of the Kingdom are developed. Then will follow the final Judgment and the dawn of the Eternity beyond. All this is forecast in the Word of God—it is enough to overwhelm the human mind!

Incredible as it all may seem, it will surely come to pass—the God of heaven has decreed it. It will come to pass, and *right here in our world!* The ground on which we now stand will be under the jurisdiction of the new Kingdom; so will the

land that is now under the dominion of every other government on earth today, whether China or Egypt or Germany or Spain. "All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." All people everywhere shall bow before the new King, "all nations shall serve him." His dominion shall "extend from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

Quite naturally, there are unbelievers who scoff at all this. They look upon Bible prophecies as mere fancies of human imaginations. They reason, just as Peter prophesied they would, that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Pet. 3:4), so why should they look for anything different?

But such reasoning is sheer folly. For whatever men believe or disbelieve, "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," and what He has foretold *will* come to pass, the vain objections of lowly mortals notwithstanding.

How can we know? Because we have prophecy upon prophecy that has been **FULFILLED AS FORETOLD**.

The accurate forecasting of future events is one of the strongest evidences of the existence of God and of the authority and integrity of His Word. He who can foreknow the future with certainty and accuracy and have it prove true in time must speak by divine inspiration. And he who speaks as the interpreter or spokesman of God, whether it be a message of duty or warning, or a prediction of future events, has concrete assurance that the prophecy will come to pass.

Both the Old and New Testaments abound with predictions of the future that were accurately fulfilled years—even centuries—later. For example,

consider the prophecies relating to the birth of Christ. Hundreds of years before it happened, the prophets of the Lord saw in vision or were told by Him when, where and under what circumstance the Messiah should come into the world. Moses says, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me" (Deut. 18:15). The apostle Peter, addressing his countrymen after the healing of the impotent man, confirms this had happened (Acts 3:22), "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear." Then Peter continues in verse 24, "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days."

We have the record of the prophecies, which were spoken or written centuries in advance, and we also have the record of their accurate fulfillments. Christ's birth, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension were all vividly and exactly foretold—and fulfilled. Some of the fulfillments are recorded by secular history as well. Coupled with these fulfilled prophecies are other forecasts yet *unfulfilled*. There are prophecies of Jesus' future work, His Kingship, the worldwide government He will establish, and many particular details about that government. There are also prophecies telling of the times and seasons when all this will begin to happen. This unique combination of fulfilled, fulfilling and soon-to-be-fulfilled prophecies—often within a single passage—gives us a faith, surety and conviction which can withstand the darts of the most skeptical. Our words may not convince them, but let them live and they shall *see*. "These things shall be," because the God of heaven has spoken; and just as surely as *part* of a prophecy is fulfilled as foretold, so surely shall the *remainder* be fulfilled. Nothing and no one can hinder the plan of God. What He has begun, He will finish, He who knows the end from the beginning and in whose hands are the destinies of all men and nations.

God meant His prophecies to be convincing; perhaps that is why He saw fit to give us a mixture of fulfilled, fulfilling and yet-to-be-fulfilled prophecies. He knew we would need faith-stimulators as no other people ever needed them, and this may be His way of supplying our need. Perhaps this is also why He has not told us *when* any particular prophecy shall be fulfilled; He prefers that we live in expectancy always. He prefers that we be always looking, living, longing for what He has declared shall be.

God's prophecies are an invaluable stimulus;

they are so designed that they move us to alertness. There is no escaping their message. The attitude of the five wise virgins must be ours—alert, expectant, prepared.

No doubt the parable of the Ten Virgins has warned believers in many generations. It was designed to stimulate believers in any age, for no people ever had longer to prepare than the length of their lifetime. But it has even greater meaning for those who will be living in the age when the Bridegroom shall return. Jesus may have spoken it most especially for us, who in the closing hours of the Day would need special warnings as we face special perils—perils of material goals and satisfactions (Luke 21:34), perils of self-indulgence (Luke 12:45), perils of "drowsiness" when we should be exceedingly watchful and alert (1 Thess. 5:6).

We today need the warning of God's prophecies as they have never been needed before. There is warning upon warning that the end is near. There is warning upon warning of the conditions we see in the world about us. How desperate our need for that stronger faith to grasp them and never let them go, not even for an instant. We want to be stung with a new awareness of our hope so that we may be fully awake as the reality unfolds before us. On the strength of what has been fulfilled, we can cling with new certainty to that which is still only promise, while we deepen our realization of the intrinsic value these prophecies hold for each of us personally. We are the blessed inheritors of the blessed hope. The prophecies are God-given foundation stones on which we can build a stronger faith at this time when faith is in desperate demand.

As we take another look at them, let us also look inward upon ourselves: Do we believe them? Do we *fully* believe them? Is the "blessed hope" of the glorious appearing of our Saviour a reality in our thinking? Are we so gripped by it that it is with us constantly, lending strength and stimulus to our living?

Our Lord may not come in this year that is now dawning. On the other hand—*He may!* ●●

---

#### To Delay—

—*About doing right is to do wrong.*

—*About putting your resolutions to work is to weaken them.*

—*About battling a bad habit is to give it time to grow stronger.*

—*About seeking God is to make Him harder to find.*

—*About defending the truth is to become the ally of error.*



## New Year Resolutions

### I WILL

- like Enoch, walk in daily fellowship with my Heavenly Father;
- like Abraham, keep in mind the better country, that is, the heavenly;
- like Job, be patient under all circumstances;
- like Joseph, know that God will exalt when the time is right;
- like Moses, choose rather to suffer than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;
- like Aaron and Hur, uphold the hands of my spiritual leaders;
- like Caleb and Joshua, refuse to be discouraged though multitudes disobey;
- like Gideon, advance whether my friends are many or few;
- like David, strengthen myself in the Lord, from whom cometh my help;
- like Isaiah, consecrate myself to do God's work and answer the call of Christian duty with "Here am I, send me";
- like Jehoshaphat, prepare my heart to seek God;
- like Daniel, be faithful to God and commune with Him often, come what may;
- like Peter, keep faithful in my commitment to Christ, even though He rebuke me; and have the courage to try again each time I stumble;
- like Stephen, manifest a right spirit even to those who oppose me;
- like Paul, forget the things which are behind and press forward to that which lies before;
- like Timothy, study the Word of God and give myself to it wholly;
- like my Lord Himself, look beyond the cross to the joy that is set before me so that I may endure without flinching, and someday find rest in His Kingdom.

## Letters

### Deceased

On January 26, we went to see Sister Henshall. She seemed a bit weaker than she had been before; she asked me to read the Bible to her.

On February 4, Sister Henshall was taken to the hospital with thrombosis, and placed in intensive care. I made arrangements to see her at the hospital on Sunday. But Saturday evening, Spencer Henshall, her son, came to tell me his mother had passed away.

Sister Henshall leaves one son, two granddaughters, and five great granddaughters. On leaving Sister Henshall the last time, I said, "Remember our password, Maranatha!" She smiled wanly.

I am very sad about her; I will miss those readings and Bible discussions we had together.

*Crewe, Cheshire, England*

Miss Nellie Turnock

NOTE: Sister Henshall was 90 years of age in April, 1977, and had been an active and energetic corresponding member of the Megiddo Church for 48 years. She distributed much literature and tried to make her life a representation of what she believed. All who knew her knew of her sustaining hope and faith; the good news of the Kingdom went with her wherever she went.

### Looking Ahead

I will be so glad when the Kingdom comes, because no one anywhere will be able to plead ignorance of God's law, because from the least to the greatest they will know the law of liberty (Jer. 31:34). What we see in the world is a terrible mess. God's law will have teeth in it—it will be enforced to all.

It is too bad that people today cannot realize the great universal plan of God. But if they did, they would also have to realize that God will not permit a man to rule over others until he first has learned to rule himself, as in II Sam. 23:3. Jesus Christ will fill the position of the Chief Ruler on this earth (Luke 1:31-33). And Zechariah foretold this: "The Lord shall be king over all the earth." Can you and I live then? We can, so don't ever give up. The odds may seem to be against us, but we must not give up. I will try to do my very best to continue the battle for righteousness.

*Romeoville, Illinois*

J. K.

## Behold A New Earth

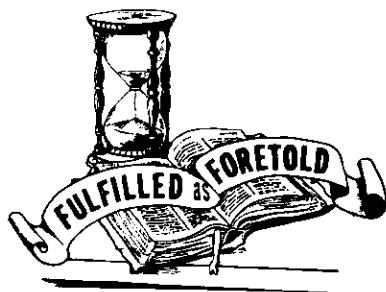
*(Continued from page 5)*

shall be done here as in heaven; and when it is, earth shall become a part of heaven!

"Behold I create new heavens and a new earth." If you are there, you will experience firsthand the fullest meaning of perfect love, perfect peace, perfect beauty, perfect harmony, perfect joy, perfect contentment. You will be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, when He has come to dwell forevermore among men (Rev. 21:3) in that glorious, bright new world. The former shall "not be remembered, nor come into mind"; all things shall be new forever!

THE END

MEGIDDO MESSAGE



# O Little Town of Bethlehem

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting\*"  
—Micah 5:2

**T**HESE words were spoken by the prophet Micah some seven centuries before the Christ-child was born in Bethlehem. "The word of the Lord that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (Mic. 1:1) included this special message about the birthplace of the Messiah.

Micah, whose name means "Who is like Jehovah," was of Judean birth. His home was in the small town of Moresheth-gath, located about twenty miles southwest of Jerusalem, about half-way to the Philistine city of Gaza. Little is known of his personal life, but it must have been influenced mightily by the "word of the Lord that came to" him. His prophecies were directed both to Samaria and Jerusalem, and—like all other Scriptures—to us.

It appears that the prophet Micah was a younger contemporary of the prophet Isaiah and also of the prophet Amos. It is quite likely that Micah knew both of them personally, and there is a striking similarity in their messages. Each was sent to deal with the moral conditions of the time. Each received direct revelation from God and spoke boldly in His name; and each looked ahead to the coming of the Messiah and His long-promised Kingdom.

Micah's was essentially a message of Judgment at that crucial time in human history. But also included was the glorious promise that Israel's Messiah would come and ultimately bring a new government with all the blessings promised to the fathers.

The coming of the Messiah was the undying hope of Israel, the time when "there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite . . . and destroy. . . . Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion" (Num. 24:17, 19). Believing Israelites lived in abiding confidence that the "sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver" from his line until "Shiloh come," and "unto him shall

the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10). Many of these ancient prophecies combined forecasts of His first and second advents, which the people of that time could not distinguish; but their expectation was aroused, and they looked forward eagerly.

We today, looking back upon the prophecies and seeing what has been fulfilled, can read the prophets with clearer understanding. The first part of Micah's forecast met its literal fulfillment; Jesus was born in Bethlehem Ephratah. But He was not at that time made "ruler in Israel"; the fulfillment of that part of the prophecy is yet future, when the earth shall be filled with "the glory of the Lord," a faithful Israel, a people glorifying His name (Num. 14:21; Isa. 46:13; 45:17-18). This is our lively expectation. The words of Micah shall be fulfilled: He who was born in Bethlehem shall become "ruler"—"He shall be great, and . . . the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; . . . and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33).

As certainly as the first of Micah's prophecy was fulfilled as foretold, so surely shall the remainder be fulfilled. Shall we be ready to have Him rule over us? ●●

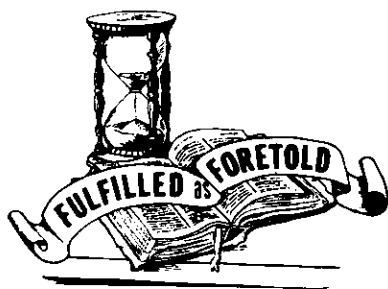
---

\*Does this passage suggest that Christ pre-existed? Does it say Jesus existed with the Father from the beginning? Consulting some modern versions whose translators penetrated deeper into the sense and idea of the Hebrew, we find this verse to read as follows: "But you, Bethlehem in Ephratha, small as you are to be among Judah's clans, out of you shall come forth a governor for Israel, one whose roots are far back in the past, in days gone by" (NEB). The American Version is much the same: "And you, O Bethlehem Ephratha, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you, one shall come forth for me who shall be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient days." The Prophet was referring to His long ancestry. Luke's gospel confirms this, recounting 76 generations all the way back to Adam. Surely Jesus' "roots" were "far back in the past."

# A Child and A King

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this"

—Isaiah 9:6-7



## He Will Be Great

"The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a maiden who was betrothed to a man called Joseph. . . . The maiden's name was Mary. . . . The angel said to her, 'Fear not, Mary, you have found favour with God. You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must call his name Jesus. He will be great, he will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father; he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and to his reign there shall be no end'"

—Luke 1:26-27, 30-33, Moffatt.

WE HAVE in the Bible record this remarkable announcement to the shepherds who were in the fields of Judea watching their flocks by night: "I bring you the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone! The Saviour—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born to-night in Bethlehem!" (Luke 2:10-11, TLB).

The angel making this announcement is joined by a heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (or "among men of good will," *Margin*).

The shepherds hurry off to find Him. We see their adoration—a type of the day when all kings shall bow down before Him and all nations shall serve Him.

Some time later, "wise men from the east" come to Jerusalem, asking "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star . . . and have come to worship him." We can picture the anxiety caused in the halls of Herod's

palace as he hears this. Gathering the chief priests and scribes, he demands of them where Christ should be born. They answer, "In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel" (Matt. 2:5-6). The prophet Micah prophesied this centuries before (Mic. 5:2).

All had been fulfilled just as foretold.

We see Jesus at thirty years of age, forsaking the saw and hammer to be about His Father's business. We see Him submitting to John's baptism, and the heavens opening unto Him, and lo, a voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Follow Him through His short but eventful ministry of three years. His gospel is plain, to the point, uplifting, civilizing and enlarging. He does not use enticing words flavored with the wisdom of this world. His message comes from



lips unfeigned, and rings with power and might that can pierce the depths of the innermost soul and expose the human heart with its deep-seated roots of undesirable behavior.

Jesus speaks to His listeners of purity, of kindness and righteousness; of patience and gentleness; of never compromising with evil; of service to others and love to God above all else; of freedom from worry and anxiety; of intense enthusiasm for the right and the just; if any has ought against his neighbor, he must forgive, and ever seek God in prayerful communion for strength and courage to do His will.

The people sense the difference in His speech and marvel at His wisdom, so gracious and so entirely unlike anything they had ever heard.

Jesus goes about doing good unto all: "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:5).

The people "were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28-29).

Not once did He preach simply to gain the approval of His hearers; never once did He resort to trickery to gain a point against the crafty Pharisees. His example before them was flawless.

And yet the world rejected their King. We see Him arrested by order of the Sanhedrin, undergoing the indignities of a mock trial with false witnesses and a bloodthirsty judge.

We see Him before Pilate for questioning: "So you are a king? You!" "Certainly," says Jesus, "I am a king. This is why I was born, this is why I came into the world, to bear testimony to the truth" (John 18:37, Moffatt).

See how patiently He endures the physical violence and death of a common criminal. Never once through this ordeal does His strength of character fail Him.

But this is not the end of this great and godly life. Behold Him on the morning of the first day of the week, bursting the bands of death asunder, rising from the tomb, bringing with Him the promise of life beyond the grave to those who live as He lived. Forth He comes, a living witness to the power of God, proving that life beyond death is a possibility for him who has found favor with God.

Forty days He is with His people, comforting and strengthening them; and then, His work completed, He is suddenly taken up from them into heaven, there to receive His reward.

And what of the words of the angel spoken to Mary before His birth? "He shall be great, and

shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). What of this promise? He is not yet on the throne; His Kingdom is not yet a reality. He is not even dwelling on earth.

No, but He is coming soon, coming as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5), and He shall "reign over the house of Jacob," *just as foretold*, "and of his kingdom there shall be no end." ●●

## "I Will Come Again"

"And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"

—Acts 1:10-11

MUCH had happened in the six weeks since the Passover of Abib—so much that the apostles could scarcely take it in. They had seen their Master and Friend betrayed by one of their own, given a mock trial and crucified as they watched helplessly. But the empty tomb had revived their sunken spirits; and now as they again walked, talked and ate with their risen Lord, their joy was full.

During what turned out to be their last meal together, Jesus told them many things, reminding them that they were to wait for the Holy Spirit at Jerusalem. When He had finished, He led them from the room, and out over the narrow path that led to the little town of Bethany at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

Bethany was a town familiar to them all. Here lived some of Jesus' dearest friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus; and here He had sometimes sought respite from the multitudes. Now, as they reached the outskirts of the town, Jesus turned and faced them. He raised His hands, and "as he was blessing them, he departed from them and was taken up into heaven. . . . and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9).

As the host of heavenly angels bore their Master heavenward, they stood staring after Him in shocked disbelief. The words of two angels who

suddenly appeared at their side shook them to their senses: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Instinctively they fell to their knees in prayer. Then they turned back toward Jerusalem, reviewing the events of recent weeks and rejoicing in the hope that their Master would return. Now they understood some of the things that Jesus had spoken—words that meant little at the time. "Must not Jesus suffer such things and enter into his glory?" He had said. "Yet a little while I am with you. . . . Whither I go, ye cannot come; . . . And if I go . . . I will come again."

The words of the angel seemed to ring in their ears: "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"! He would come again! They *knew* He would!

The promise was for them—and it is for us. This same Jesus will return as He said and as the angel confirmed. But "why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" The message was for them—and it is for us. Don't just stand there gazing skyward—do something! They must not linger, but be on their way. They had a great work to do, to carry the Gospel to the then-known world. Ten days later, endued with the power of the Holy Spirit, they went forth with bold and fearless confidence to establish the Christian Church in enemy territory.

"This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come." He shall come. The prophecy is yet unfulfilled, but it is now more than nineteen centuries nearer fulfillment. And as we watch and wait it is for us to heed the angel's words: Don't just stand there—do something! It is for us to prepare to meet our King who will surely return, we know not when. His coming will be sudden; we will not have advance warning to prepare, hence we must be ready. The time is short!

Let us heed the words of the apostle Paul, who went about "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that [he might] present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28). Let us "put on the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and never think how to gratify the cravings of the flesh" (Rom. 13:14, Moffatt) because "it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). We shall be like Him if we are pure "as he is pure," He who said, "I will come again." ●●

## It's Time to Look Up

"And there shall be signs 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; 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 21:25-26

THESE are Jesus' words; they are words of prophecy; they describe a world troubled to its very depths.

Are they fulfilled today?

To answer this question we need perspective. What has happened in the last fifty years? What is true today that was not true a generation ago? In which direction is the change, if any, tending—toward peace and settled security, or toward unrest and instability?

The answers to these questions focus quickly on the main trends so obvious today which are tremendously significant to those who have placed their faith in Bible prophecy. Most important is what may be called "the continued relentless advance in these major trends."

What type of trend might we expect from Jesus' words? He does not foresee a time of peace and serenity, of peaceful co-operation between nations, and universal goodwill; but just the opposite. And do we not see it, as life is crowded with more peril for more people than ever before?

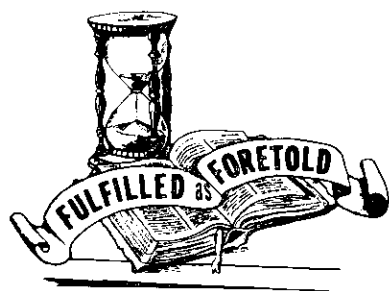
"The word 'distress,' in its original form," a Bible scholar points out, "has the meaning of 'being completely hemmed in,' while 'the word for 'perplexity' has the meaning of 'without a passage out.' These two words taken together reveal world complexities from which even the wisest of earth will be unable to find a solution. It is precisely so today."

\*In Scriptural phraseology, the political powers of earth are repeatedly referred to as "heavens," and the people as "earth." Sovereign governments are classified as "sun, moon, and stars" in symbolic language, depending on their position among the family of nations. A nation wielding a broad influence may be alluded to as a "sun," the powers of lesser importance being "moon" or "stars" (see Isa. 1:2, 10).

As for the "waters," we read in Revelation 17:15, "The waters which thou sawest . . . are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." So when Jesus speaks of the sea and waves roaring, we need not think of a storm at sea with breakers and waves pounding a rock-bound coast, but rather a state of unrest among the nations.

Writes another thoughtful contemporary scholar, "The world today faces an international crisis unparalleled in all the history of man. A tremendous revolution is under way in the international scene, in science, in economics, in morals, in theology, and in the religious structure of the church. The world is aflame with the raw passions of men ambitious for power and desperate to be freed from poverty and frustration. An ominous cloud hangs over the hearts of men and nations. The nations are indeed at the crossroads, and impending events cast their shadow on every aspect of human life. The world is moving faster and faster like a colossal machine out of control whose very power and momentum inevitably will plunge it into ultimate disaster" (John F. Walvoord, *The Nations in Prophecy*). This was written ten years ago, but it is as true now as it was then.

Mr. Walvoord says further: "The colossal problems of the world as a whole, such as atomic warfare, worldwide pollution, population explosion with attendant starvation, and almost a universal



breakdown in morals and law and order, are all fateful omens of a crisis that may not be far away. The world is ready for the prophecies to be fulfilled that relate to the end times. These are not small items open to question, but large movements and trends that anyone can observe which fit into the prophetic picture of the climax of world history culminating in the second coming of Christ."

Can we read this and not be reminded of the words of Jesus: "There shall be signs . . .?"

Observe the following, about which we hear daily:

Wildcat strikes among coal miners; union members using violence in an attempt to shut down non-union mines.

Farmers striking.

Teachers striking.

Students striking.

Strikes among construction workers, steel workers and carpenters.

Bread strikes, milk strikes, hospital and fireman strikes in Great Britain, bringing fear and consternation throughout the country. Writes a friend

in South Wales, "What really chilled us most was the doctors and nurses going on strike with the hospitals full of sick and injured people. Firemen may leave the scene of a blaze. Those coming to the victim's aid are not allowed to use firemen's equipment, so many homes, large stores, and lives are destroyed. . . . It is a time of great distress."

In our fair land, crime stalks by night and by day. Morals have so degenerated that many couples live together outside wedlock without even a feeling of guilt. The use of dangerous drugs has become so prevalent that those in authority no longer know how to cope with the situation.

Are we not reminded again and again of Jesus' words, "There shall be signs, . . ." words fulfilled as foretold?

A cover picture of a current national magazine depicts a bomb ready to explode. Underneath is the caption: "Young blacks out of work: Time Bomb for U. S." Experts admit they are baffled by the failure of massive public and private efforts to solve one of the nations most perplexing problems. "Angry at society, poorly educated and lacking job skills, their numbers (the young blacks) are reaching explosive proportions."

Another news heading reads: "How Washington Winks at Corruption in Unions."

Nuclear power is as much a threat as ever—and more. In the early 1960's, when disarmament talks began between the United States and Russia, there were about 400 nuclear missiles in existence. Now, the estimate is 2400 each. World War I fighter planes cost \$5,000 each; Vietnam War fighters, \$4 million each; some fighters today as much as \$20 million each. And the destructive potential of modern weapons is inconceivable. The United States atomic bomb that killed 85,000 people at Hiroshima was the equivalent of 13,000 tons of TNT; today's nuclear bombs include one which has the force, it is said, of 59 million tons of TNT.

The present stockpiles of nuclear power are said to contain explosives equivalent to a hundred tons of TNT for each inhabitant of the earth.

The latest report tells of "Russia's New Surprise Weapon" that is "sounding alarm in Washington." Is there any question as to the meaning of Jesus' words: "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth"?

An evangelist has expressed it thus: "The fear complex holds nearly our entire nation in its grip. Everybody is scared to death."

Jesus' words are a prophecy fulfilled as foretold. Did Jesus not say, "I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe"? (John 14:29).



What shall be the outcome of the tragedy that hovers over the horizon today?

**"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."**

Does the world in the hands of men seem doomed to collapse and failure? It is time to "look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." This is what we have prayed for a thousand times: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Knowing as we do from the Word of God that the Kingdom on earth must needs be introduced forcibly and in the midst of great man-made troubles—troubles not foreordained of God but clearly foreseen—must we not accept the preliminary disorders as solid confirmations of our faith?

There is no question about the future; our redemption draws near and ever nearer. Christ is coming; His return is breathtakingly near, even at the door. Are we preparing for it as fast as it is approaching? Are we straining forward to capture the priceless boon God has so graciously offered? How rapidly are we perfecting ourselves in the common, everyday things of our lives?

Our days for spiritual growth are passing rapidly, and more and more the prophecies portending the end are fulfilled. Is our determination to complete the work intensifying? Are we leaving all those old sins and failures behind us? Do we have a new set of ambitions, a new priority in our values? Are we like a runner in a race who strains lungs and heart and muscles as he sees the prize coming nearer and nearer?

Are we giving God our strength, our time, the vigor of our body, the acuteness of our mind, the devotion of our heart? Are we actually straining to be ready to greet Him with joy? Are we so living that even now we can look up and lift up our heads, assured that we shall have part in the redemption that is drawing nigh?

It will call for vigilance and watchfulness, for vision and faith to look beyond the day's good or bad news and keep through it all a straight course toward the City Eternal, whose gates shall never close and where "violence shall no more be heard."

When doubts, discouragements, and forebodings threaten, let us remember those words of Jesus which are even now fulfilled as foretold, and know that just as surely as we see the fear and perplexity, so surely shall we see the "Son of man

coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:27-28). ••

---

## **"Remember Lot's Wife"**

---

TO THE smug and complacent residents of Sodom and Gomorrah, the morning dawned as every other morning. Already the sun cast its long shadows in the streets, and here and there signs of early activity were visible. Where was the doom forecast by those strangers who visited Lot the evening before? No earthquake had shaken their fair cities. Why, there wasn't a cloud in the sky!

But in a modest dwelling near the edge of the city, all was astir. Lot, his wife and two daughters were busily gathering the last of their belongings together for immediate flight. Constantly urging haste, the two angels took them by the hand and led them outside the walls of the doomed city. Their words were sharp and decisive: "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed."

Divine judgment bided its time only long enough for them to reach safety. Then the awful moment arrived, and fire and brimstone streamed down from the heavens, reducing the prospering cities of the plain to smoldering ruin. And what of Lot and his family? Alas, Lot's wife had not made it to safety. Her heart still knit too closely with those she had left in the doomed city, she disobeyed the warning of the angel and turned back to take one more longing look toward the home she was leaving—and perished in her disobedience.

Weary centuries came and went, but the story of the untimely demise of the wicked cities of the plain was not forgotten. Jesus, speaking prophetically of events which should precede His Second Coming, declared emphatically, "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot. . . . Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

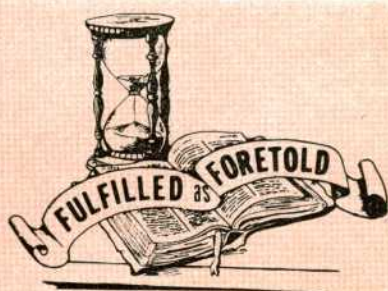
"As it *was* . . . thus *shall* it *be*." In these words is prophecy of the surety of His return. It declares first that Jesus *is* coming. Then it tells what conditions will be in the world of that time by comparing them with those in the city of Sodom that perished long before. "As it *was* . . . thus shall it *be*." In this way He does not leave us in ignorance

of the era of His return—we can know that when we see the sins of Sodom widespread, the time draws near.

But this prophecy contains even more than a statement of coming events. Coupled with it is a special warning to those who would be living down at the close of man's day of misrule. Listen! These are Jesus' words also: "Remember Lot's wife."

With such great events hovering over the horizon, why such a warning as this? Because our situation is so comparable to hers; because we too must escape; because our temptation will also be like hers. And just as surely as destruction fell upon the wicked Sodom—and also upon the disobedient one who had been delivered—so surely do we stand in danger of falling with the doomed world around us. We need to say it again and again, "Remember Lot's wife."

That we are living in a modern Sodom no thinking individual will deny. We used to read of the wickedness and immorality of ancient Rome, but now we find ourselves surrounded on every side by the same. Year after year the crime rate soars, while morals plunge to new depths and the



search for pleasure (or temporary forgetfulness) accelerates. And midst it all the fate of Sodom of old stands forth to alert us that God's endurance of iniquity has a limit and the end shall come.

The important question before us now is, Are we making our escape from the doomed city? Are we listening to the voice of God, or are we paying heed to the voice of men? It is so easy to say, by our actions if not by words, "There's no need to be that serious about it. Things have been bad before. There's time enough yet." There is time—this minute. But who can say what the *next* minute will bring? And what is there to define "enough" if we are wasting the time we *have*?

Remember how the angels hastened Lot as he lingered on the plain? How that voice should ring in our ears today. Haste, escape for thy life! Why are we so inclined to keep putting off, always waiting for some better opportunity? Why are we not severing those ties with the fleeting, in-

significant things of here and now? What are we waiting for?

We are rapidly running out of time. On every hand prophecy is meeting its fulfillment, declaring to us that the end is near. And the promise is, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

Let us redouble our efforts, grasp the hand of the angel and flee from this modern-day Sodom, knowing her downfall is imminent. And as we run, let us never, never look back, for "Remember Lot's wife." ●●

---

## Seconds Till Eternity

*(Continued from page 9)*

But what about the other possibility—eternal life? *Life* through millions and billions and quintillions of—not years, but—ages, life that goes on and on and on—forever! Every human attempt to describe this immeasurable boon God has set before us is necessarily feeble. As mortals we are neither mentally nor spiritually equipped for such a task. Even man's most scholarly dissertations must sound like child-prattle in the ears of the Infinite. Superlatives of language, or philosophy, or mathematics are wholly inadequate.

But let us think about what is ahead: eternal life, eternal growth, eternal expansion, eternal improvement. These are terms that will someday be understood by all the inhabitants of this planet. How shall we attempt to understand them now?

The simple expressions of John the Revelator are as equal to the task as language can be. Let us try to visualize his meaning as he attempts to describe the duration of the age that is coming:

"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" (Rev. 10:5-6).

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

"And the gates of [the city] shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there" (Rev. 21:25).

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, . . . heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that

sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).

Life without death; happiness without sorrow; day without night; time without end; the present moment forever present; life, *life*—LIFE! And love and joy and happiness and bliss in a glorious new world of ever-expanding knowledge and ever-widening horizons of challenge and achievement. This is God's Eternity.

#### And Now, What of Us?

As we find ourselves at the beginning of another sacred year, we feel grateful to God for giving us a new measure of time, a new lease, as it were, one day at a time. But the beginning of the New Year is also a reminder that time for us is shorter than it has ever been before. One more year is behind us. We have one less year to live in the present arrangement of things than we had last year at this time. The dawn of eternity is nearer than it has ever been before.

Do we realize the seriousness of the issues before us? Only seconds, seconds until—and the choice is ours.

Here is the perspective we need to keep constantly in mind through all the days which God may grant us. We need to keep it in mind and to build our lives around it. We need to practice looking at time and life as our Creator sees it. Real life is not an endless struggle for that which sustains it, interspersed with brief periods of pleasure and pain.

*"To breathe, and wake and sleep,  
To smile, to sigh, to grieve,  
To move in idleness through earth,  
This, this is not to live."*

All this is merely existence. Real life is on another plane. We cannot fully describe it, for we have never experienced it; but it is a reality. Countless myriads of angels already possess it. And someday, we can also!

What will it be like? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9). More than eye has seen, or ear has heard, or heart has imagined! Imagine, if you can, the thrill that must belong to perfect beings in a perfect realm. And the perfection in God's realm will be unsurpassable. What perfect beauty can be expressed in the graces of perfect design and color and tone? What music can swell from the perfect blending of harmony, rhythm and tone? What about the bodily vigor that will result from perfect health that will never decline? What about the joy and happiness of know-

ing that we have achieved the highest moral excellence of which we were capable? Real life is all this—and more.

Can we expect God, who has all this to give in ever-expanding measure through all eternity, to accept men and women who are only half-heartedly interested in what He offers? Can we expect Him, who has all eternity in which to select the best from the human family, to accept those who are so preoccupied with themselves and their own small circle of existence that they cannot give their first thought to Him and what He has offered?

We need to remind ourselves often of our measure of time as God sees it—only seconds. How the thought should arouse us to renewed and multiplied effort in the perfecting of our lives now! Only seconds, and how swiftly they are passing. If we are using each to its maximum spiritual good, the rapid passing of the seconds is our greatest joy and blessing; the sooner they are spent, the sooner we can know the joys of the greater life which is beyond.

If, on the other hand, we are neglectful, if we are not redeeming the seconds but are letting them slip through our fingers unclaimed while we absorb ourselves in the petty pleasures of the moment, we are this very moment only seconds from the bitterest disappointment, sorrow, shame and unending nonentity. While the saints and angels enjoy the life and magnificent glory of the new world, we will be a forgotten bit of dust. Forever.

*It makes a difference to all eternity whether we do right or wrong today.* It makes a difference, and that difference is the difference between eternal life or eternal death.

When we must make a decision in some temporal matter, a decision which will affect us for weeks or months or years to come, we weigh the issues carefully; we search out and consider every contributing factor. How can we give any less concern to the momentary decisions which are deciding our destiny for all eternity!

How seriously we should consider the little choices of every hour—choices of what we should think about, what we should talk about, what we should read, what we should do, what attitude we should assume. How seriously we need to learn to consider all these, for *all eternity depends upon them*. This is the word we have from the Lord, delivered through His prophet Haggai: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways" (Hag. 1:5). And just in case we didn't feel the full impact of this message from the Eternal, the Prophet repeats it a second time: "Thus saith the Lord



of hosts; Consider your ways" (v. 7). Consider, and act wisely. "Consider these things, ye that forget God, lest he rend you, and there be no deliverer" (Ps. 50:22, Septuagint).

If the ancient lawgiver of Israel were among us today, would he not yearn for us as he did for his people: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always. . . . O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deut. 5:29; 32:29). Just so are the angels pleading for us this very moment.

Oh, let us feel the impact of this warning. Let us take it to heart, and act upon it. Only seconds, seconds till eternity. The thought should not discourage us; rather, it should awaken every latent power within us. It should warn and stimulate us to action, to heed the words written aforetime for our learning: "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life" (Deut. 32:46-47). How this warning should put to death our inborn tendency to procrastinate. Only seconds, and it will be either eternal death or eternal life: our destiny will be sealed. This is because we are committed. We have pledged ourselves to God, to be not our own but *His*—His, through every moment now, and on through the ages of eternity; *His*, to speak as *He* would have us speak, to think as *He* would have us think, to live as *He* would have us live. In return He has given us His pledge: eternal life, if we win; eternal death, if we fail.

Only seconds in the meanwhile; only seconds to determine whether we win or whether we lose. No wonder the apostle Paul ran the race with unfaltering determination. No wonder he left this flying testimony for all who would follow after: "I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come; I am racing for the finish, for the prize to which God calls us upward" (Phil. 3:13-14, Jerusalem Bible).

Only seconds till eternity! No wonder the first and greatest commandment of the law is God's demand for wholeness: *all* our heart, *all* our soul, *all* our mind, *all* our strength (Mark 12:30-31).

Only seconds! Do we feel the urgency of the time? "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door" (Jas. 5:8-9). This was not recorded for the brethren of James; it was written for us in the "last days" when the end of the age is but a

single step away. Just one more step, and the Judge will be in our midst.

When that Day arrives, and we must look back, how worthless will seem the little rivalries that threatened to divide us, the jealousies and hurt feelings that stabbed us, and all the little goals that caught our eye. How trivial will seem the irritations which vexed us, and the small thoughts and chitchat which so easily distracted us. As we look back, the picture will seem entirely different. And if we mastered all these little things, how indescribably happy we will be!

The clock is ticking, a quiet reminder that the seconds are passing. Life is slipping by. And what are we doing? God's eternity is a reality, whether we choose to believe it or not. If we close our minds to the facts, they remain unchanged; we ourselves will be the only losers.

God has fashioned a plan that shall go on and on forever. Time and progress and motion and expansion in His realm are all eternal. Eternity is, and eternity *will be*—right here on earth. Eternity *will be*, with or without us. Our presence or absence matters little to Omnipotence. But oh, what does it mean to us! If we fail, God will not suffer; someone else can take our place. God's resources are inexhaustible; He can make more material, just as easily as He made us. But *our* opportunity will be gone forever!

Oh, how we should feel the thrust of things eternal, things grand, things noble, things divine! They are just ahead, almost within our grasp. A few more seconds, and they can be our very own!

But oh, the seconds in between, those seconds that still separate us from eternity. What are we doing with them, those precious seconds? What destiny will they determine—for you, for me? ••

## Twelve Booklets

HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION  
THE COMING OF JESUS AND ELIJAH  
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?  
GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION  
THE KINGDOM OF GOD  
THE GREAT APOSTASY  
HELL AND THE DEVIL  
AFTER DEATH, WHAT?  
TRINITY OR UNITY?  
THE HOLY SPIRIT  
THE ATONEMENT  
THE SABBATH

ALL for \$3.00, Postpaid.



## *Our Perfect Example*

*JESUS was very patient, very kind.*

*JESUS knew no jealousy; Jesus made no parade,  
gave Himself no airs,  
was never rude,  
never selfish,  
never irritated,  
never resentful;*

*JESUS was never glad when others went wrong,  
JESUS was gladdened by goodness,  
always slow to expose,  
always eager to believe the best,  
always hopeful,  
always patient.*

*Now He lives forever.*

*Can we not follow Jesus--  
all the way?*