

Planet in Rebellion

at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1. Add to this the words of our Savior, “Then look up, for your redemption draws nigh.” Luke 21:28. At that time-look up! Deliverance will come-from the skies!

May I take you back to that glad day at the close of the second world conflict when two thousand prisoners of war were delivered from enemy hands. Two of the prisoners had built a little radio and secretly listened to the news. One day they heard a familiar voice. “This is General MacArthur speaking. I have returned!”

What marvelous news! The months had dragged wearily into two and a half long years since the day the general left behind him the promise to return. Now he was returning amid a thunder of guns, with an armada of ships and an air force the like of which had never before been seen in the Pacific.

In the meantime, the news filtered through the camp that the enemy, sensing the hopelessness of its own situation, and possibly in the spirit of reprisal, had actually decreed the death of the prisoners. Among the prisoners was one who had been asked to serve as a camp official. One evening the guard informed him that at seven o’clock the next morning he was to call the prisoners together. Could this be the time when they would hear the long-feared death sentence?

Terrible were those hours as he watched the hands of the clock moving toward that fateful moment. Then he went out with the bell ringer to call the camp. The steel bar was raised, ready to strike the gong. Would this be the camp’s death call?

But suddenly they both looked up. Each saw the same thing. In unison they exclaimed, “Look! Planes!” But were they friendly or enemy planes? The bell ringer, his hand still in the air, watched in breathless anticipation. Nearer and nearer they came. No, they were not enemy Planes. As they roared overhead, paratroopers leaped out into the prison yards. Deliverance had come at last!

Make no mistake about it. The forces of evil are intent on destroying the human race. The enemy of God and man has his hand raised, ready to strike the death gong. The great controversy between Christ and Satan, between good and evil, between right and wrong, is on the verge of its last titanic struggle. But it is written, “At that time thy people shall be delivered.” At that time – “look up for your redemption draws nigh.”

“Down the minister aisles of splendor, from betwixt the cherubim,
Through the wondering throng, with motion strong and fleet,
Sounds His victor tread approaching, with a music far and dim-
The music of the coming of His feet.

“Sandaled not with sheen of silver, girded not with woven gold,
Weighted not with shimmering gems and odors sweet,
But white-winged and shod with glory in the Tabor light of old-
The glory of the coming of His feet.

“He is coming, O my friend, with His everlasting peace,
With His blessedness immortal and complete;
He is coming, O my friend, and His coming brings release-
I listen for the coming of His feet.”

-Lyman W. Allen.

Footsteps in the sky! Deliverance at last! The Savior face to face! Eternal life with Him!
Just think of taking hold of a hand and finding it God’s hand! Just think of feeling invigorated and finding it immortality! Just think of waking up and finding it home!

9. The Hinge of Time

I WATCHED in England with the coronation crowds. All London was a spectacle of fantastic preparation, for royal splendor defies description. As early as twenty-four hours before the dawn of Coronation Day, eager thousands began their struggle for a vantage point along the streets where the

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procession was to pass. Through the long night they waited patiently. What mattered the cold, or the hardness of the sidewalks, or the light rain that fell? Were they not to see their queen?

Then as the morning came, those early watchers were joined by multitudes of others banked tier upon tier. Big Ben ticked above them as they watched. Occasionally their patriotic chatter was interrupted by the whisper, "She's coming!" At this every eye strained eagerly. Again and again the whisper rippled along the sidewalks, "She's coming!" But always there was disappointment.

Big Ben had struck high noon before the coronation was completed at Westminster Abbey. Finally in the distance the trumpets were heard, and the waiting throngs moved with justifiable pride, their eyes filled with tears of joy passed the cry from mouth to mouth, "The queen is coming! The queen is coming!" I shall never forget how that vast mass of humanity rocked with enthusiasm as at last their newly crowned sovereign appeared. Elizabeth II was queen!

Down along the centuries has echoed the promise of the Savior, "I will come again!" Hardly had He disappeared into the skies when His followers began to look for His return. Again and again a lone voice has whispered, "He is coming!" But always there has been disappointment. God's clock has not yet struck the hour.

The feeling of thousands might be expressed in these words: "I can understand the disappointment of those who waited for Elizabeth II to appear. For that is exactly the way I have felt about the second coming of Christ. Father and mother expected Christ's return, and they were disappointed. My grandparents before them were taught the second coming, but never saw that day. How can I know that I too will not be disappointed?"

Can men know when the hour will strike?

It was in the early days of preparation for the hydrogen bomb that men realized their need of larger and better computers. A computer that could remember only twenty-seven facts was hardly capable of the fantastic calculations that must now be made to determine the probable behavior of millions of atomic particles within the new bomb.

Then came Von Neumann with his MANIAC-Mathematical Analyzer, Numerical Integrator and Computer. MANIAC could handle 40,000 bits of information. At the console of such a computer, men who wanted to know the chances of war could divide the resources of a country into the panic and despair of its population or multiply those resources by the country's inventive capacity and its obsession with victory and come up with an intelligent answer. It was said that "for the MANIAC even the end of the world was only one more question to be answered by calculation."

But is the hour of Christ's coming and the end of the world a secret that will yield to the computations of men? Can men feed world conditions into an electronic brain, along with the thinking of great men, and come up with the answer?

The disciples of Jesus were first with the question, "When shall these things be?" Jesus answered, "Of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Matthew 24:36. Yet He qualified His answer with these words: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh: so likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."

It has never been God's plan to take men by surprise. He said through the prophet Amos, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. The great catastrophe of Noah's day was preceded by the preaching of Noah. The ministry of Jesus on this earth was preceded by the work of John the Baptist. Will no prophet warn men that the hour of Christ's coming is upon us?

The difficulty is not that Scripture is silent on the subject of when Christ will return. For it is not. The difficulty is that men are unwilling to accept what the Scriptures say about the future.

A certain prophecy was once explained to Kaiser Wilhelm in the days when he was at the height of his power. As he began to get the drift of it, as he began to see what its fulfillment would mean to him personally, he said, I can't accept it! It doesn't fit in with my plans!"

Nor did it fit into the plans of the ancient king to whom it was first spoken. Watch the intriguing drama as it unfolds!

Absolute monarch of his golden day, the king lies in troubled sleep. As he tosses and turns on his royal couch, shadows of anxiety steal across his face. The cares of world dominion have weighed heavily upon his mind. He has looked questioningly into the future. Would his kingdom pass into ruins as had those before him?

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Now God takes note of what this man has been thinking and gives him a strange dream. And then He allows him to forget it. Morning comes, and the king's desperation to recall the dream brings confusion to the court. His counselors, even under threat of death, are unable to suggest what might have been the subject of his dream. But out of the confusion there arises a man of God—a captive from a conquered land.

The king—Nebuchadnezzar. The time—six hundred years before Christ. The hero of the hour—the prophet-statesman Daniel. Listen as in unmistakably clear language Daniel reveals first the dream and then its meaning:

“Thou, O king, saw, and behold a great image.” Daniel 2:31. Eagerly the king watches the noble face of the young prophet as he speaks. “This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.”

Absolutely spellbound, Nebuchadnezzar, proud monarch of the mighty Babylonian empire, looks at the youthful Daniel in amazement. Here an unassuming servant of God is reporting with uncanny accuracy the dream that only a few hours ago had flooded his mind.

“Thou saw till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.... And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”

The king relived the startling scene. He saw again the stately image with its head of glittering gold, its breast and arms of polished silver. He saw again the body and thighs of burnished brass, the legs of solid iron, and strangest of all, the mixture of iron and clay of which the feet were formed.

But why was the gold replaced by silver, and the silver by brass? What was the meaning of the great stone that came thundering upon the feet of the image to grind it to powder? What was this rock that would become a great mountain and fill the whole earth? Would Daniel tell him? Leaning to the edge of his throne, the monarch breathlessly awaited Daniel's next word. And how it pleased the king as Daniel said simply, “Thou art this head of gold.”

Here was flattering news. He—Nebuchadnezzar—the head of gold! After all, were not historians already calling Babylon the golden kingdom? Were not his hanging gardens destined to become one of the wonders of the ancient world? Would not future generations read his proud claim written in stone, “For the astonishment of men I have built this house. May it last forever”?

“Thou art this head of gold.” Any clever politician would have stopped there. But Daniel continued with the interpretation exactly as God had revealed it to him. “And after thee shall arise another kingdom.”

Babylon was not to last forever. Was Babylon, then, only the first of a series of kingdoms that would succeed upon the ruins of one another? Could God be tracing the rise and fall of nations to the end of time? Was He answering only Nebuchadnezzar's questions about the future? Or was He answering yours and mine? We shall see as we read on.

“After thee shall arise another kingdom.” These bold words were enough to interrupt anyone's thoughts of grandeur. Here was anything but a happy revelation. More perplexing still, the proud king was to be succeeded by an inferior power. This did not fit into his plans. His kingdom must not be succeeded by another. No wonder that some time after this, in defiance of the God of heaven, he made a great image, all of gold, and set it up in the plain of Dura.

But the gold was replaced by the silver—and in Daniel's lifetime, at that! You remember Belshazzar's feast, when in a drunken revelry the kingdom was overthrown, conquered by Cyrus the Persian.

The dual monarchy of the Medes and the Persians, represented by the two silver arms, ruled for about two hundred years. Today it, too, lies in ruins. The prophecy had said, “And another third kingdom of brass . . . shall bear rule over all the earth.”

Climaxing his conquests in the famous battle of Arbela, 331 years before Christ, the young and ambitious Alexander had swept to dizzy heights of victory in five short years. At the youthful age of twenty five he was master of all he surveyed. Seven years later he was dead! So swiftly does earthly glory fade. The brass kingdom toppled.

“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron,” Daniel had continued in verse 40. That fourth kingdom was Rome—the iron monarchy of history. It was in the days of Rome that Christ lived and died. Roman soldiers officiated at the crucifixion. A Roman seal closed His tomb.

Four world empires! And would you not naturally expect that if there were four, there might also be a fifth, arising upon the ruins of the fourth?

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But no! The divine forecast says in verse 41, "And whereas thou saw the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided." Something new here. A change was to take place, a division to set in. And did it happen?

Yes, during the fourth and fifth centuries several distinct nations came into being within the boundaries of Western Rome. Rome, the mighty empire of the Caesars, disintegrated before the onslaughts of barbarians, and in her place we see the well-known nations of Germany, France, Switzerland, Portugal, England, Spain, and Italy.

I ask you, Could man in his own wisdom predict the future with such accuracy? No! Fulfilled Bible prophecy stamps the Word of God as divine. But now listen to verse 43: "And whereas thou saw iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: 'but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.'" What do you think of that! Europe will not stick together!

Just as the prophecy predicted long ago, men have repeatedly tried to unite the segments of ancient Rome into one mighty empire again. They have attempted to reestablish the dictatorship of the Caesars. But God says in seven crisp words of prophecy, "They shall not cleave one to another."

These are the words-the seven words-that form a barrier to every dictator who dreams of world conquest. No plan to rule the world will ever succeed for long. For the God who knows the end from the beginning says that the broken pieces of Rome will not cleave together. They will not stick!

We begin to see the reason for history's uncanny repetition. Nebuchadnezzar had no trouble ruling the world. Nor did Cyrus and Darius, or Alexander, or the Caesars. But then all was changed. Since the days of the Roman Empire, history, like a broken record, tells the story of every would-be dictator in one persistent word: "Defeat-defeat-defeat!"

That one word tells the story of Charlemagne, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler, and every dreaming dictator who yet may follow. And back of it all is a power-packed prophecy.

Napoleon had seemed the master man of destiny. "Only five feet, two and a half inches tall, thin-faced, sallow-complexioned, and round-shouldered, he developed one of the most rapid, clear thinking, tireless brains ever to function in a human cranium." In 1799 he seized France and set out to unite the remaining segments of the old empire in Europe. But you remember how the prophecy was magnificently fulfilled through the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo, and Napoleon's idea of world empire was finished.

The Kaiser set out with the same idea in 1914, and I think we all know the end of that story. But even while the news of fresh disaster came in from every front, a corporal in action on the crumbling German lines was taken to a hospital. There seemed to be nothing seriously wrong with him, but he looked so completely prostrated that he was assigned to a cot. Patriots were roaming the hospital wards asking for signatures as the surrender was being signed. This man defiantly turned his face to the wall and refused to listen to the news of the new republic. It did not fit into his plans.

Two days later Adolf Hitler got off that bed and left the hospital with a feverish desire to marshal the world under his banner. And that story, too, has been written on the world's nerves with the blood, the sweat, and the tears of millions of men and women the globe around.

Many powerful peace agencies have attempted to bring about a United States of Europe. But no man, no group of men, no nation, no combination of powers, can ever long succeed, for it is written, "They shall not cleave one to another."

And now the climax of it all, the destiny of the nations-your destiny and mine-is found in the words of Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed."

Not in the days of Baby on, not in the days of Persia, not in the days of Greece, not in the days of Rome, but down in the days of these kings, in our time, God will set up His kingdom. And Revelation 11:15 adds impact to the words of Daniel: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Wonderful news! I bring you no sensationalism, no wild or fanciful predictions. Rather, I bring you the sure and certain message from God that the next great event on the stage of human history is destined to be the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom earth's crown belongs.

His coming kingdom is the stone that would strike the image on the feet-not in the days of the head of gold, or the silver, or the brass, but in the days of the feet of iron and clay-and become a great mountain and fill the whole earth.

There need be no confusion here. Just as surely as there was a Babylon, a Medo-Persia, a Greece, a Rome; just as surely as there came a breakup of these mighty empires into the nations of Europe as we

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see them today; just as surely as these nations have attempted to unite, and failed-just so surely will the next great event be the second coming of Jesus Christ, your Lord and mine, as King of kings, and Lord of lords!

And there need be no fear. Men may talk of a switchboard of annihilation, triggered by some fumbling finger. But the God of heaven places barriers before nations, dictators, and men. To all He says, "Hitherto shall thou come, but no further."

Through these perplexing days you may have the settled assurance that the Hand that made the atom is controlling the hands that discovered its secret. God will permit men to go only so far, for the kingdoms of this world are not to be totally destroyed by man's ingenious devices. According to the Word of God, they are finally to surrender, not to each other, but to the scepter of Christ Jesus Himself.

If this were a political book, if these were ordinary times, you might appreciate what you have just read and merely remark, "Well, that's interesting. It has added to my store of information." And all would be well. However, I sincerely believe that we are brought face to face with the most important decision a man or woman can make -that of placing ourselves on God's side.

The great coronation is about to take place. The King is coming! If it does not fit into your plans, then change your plans! God will help you.

The King is coming! No thoughtful man or woman interested in his own eternal welfare dare let this information go unnoticed. Some may not like it, may not care to adjust to it. But none dare ignore it. There is not time to ignore it!

You may recall the visit of Queen Elizabeth to Lord Leicester's proud castle in the Midlands of the British Isles. Rippling through the ranks of her eager, waiting subjects was the whisper, "The queen is coming!" Then as she stepped across the threshold into the castle, in her honor the great timepiece of the castle was stopped, never to be started again, forever marking the moment of her arrival.

The King is about to step across the threshold of time. Every clock, every watch, every timepiece the world around, will be forever stopped, never to be started again. Time will turn upon its hinge and become eternity.

Will you place yourself on God's side? This is the moment to decide. Eternity has no clock. Decision belongs to time. And time is now!

10. Race to the Stars

IT WAS on October 4, 1957, that men everywhere stopped their hurrying, their loitering, their worrying, their contemplations, their competitions, to learn that man had made a moon.

It took a little time to realize what had actually happened. Then the truth dawned upon even the dullest of us. That tiny moon had rocketed us into a new age, a space age. Man at last had weakened the gravitational hold of this planet upon its restless inhabitants.

America was a nation in shock. Gradually she recovered enough to lift her own satellites into orbit. We realized that we were actors in a technological revolution that would dwarf every other revolution into insignificance. And then came Lunik II, smashing into the bleak surface of its target barely eighty-four seconds off schedule. It had been only fourteen years from Hiroshima to the moon!

Like it or not, we were in the center of a moving, cosmic drama. What yesterday was fantasy, today was fact. What yesterday was elusively intriguing, today was dangerously near. We were in it! We had touched the universe, and its broken secrets had plunged us into nuclear and moral fear. These were the days to which Jesus looked when He spoke of "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." (Luke 21:26.)

The future filled men with terror. In fact, we had not yet recovered from what we saw on the morning of our first atomic test at Los Alamos, when we got our first glimpse of what we were really handling.

Everything happened faster than it could be understood that morning. No one saw the first flash of atomic fire. It was only possible to see its dazzling white reflection on the sky and on the hills. Those who ventured to turn their heads saw a bright ball of flame growing steadily larger and larger. One member of the Theoretical Division actually thought-though his reason told him it was impossible-that the ball of fire would never stop growing till it had enveloped all heaven and earth. And a senior officer shouted in terror, "The long-haired boys have lost control."