

What Next In Bible Prophecy

“The books were opened. The judgment was set!” This is the scene in heaven as the last days come on earth. No wonder the closing gospel message cries to every people and tongue: “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come!” Revelation 14:7.

The Movement Came

As these latter days came, the movement of the prophecy came. It is a missionary movement rapidly spreading to every nation, preaching this very message, “The hour of His judgment is come.” The people of the movement are called Seventh-day Adventists. Their first church building still stands in Washington, New Hampshire. They rose in 1844. But today their work is known on every continent and in the islands of the sea.

The report for 1938, from their General Conference headquarters (located in Washington, D.C., U.S.A.), showed them preaching this special gospel message in 714 languages and dialects, with a new language added about every eight days.

The prophet describes the rise of the movement in the last days, preaching, “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.”

Here the movement is, as foretold. The movement lifts up the standard of God’s law, the ten commandments, as the rule of life, to be kept only by faith in Christ, who alone is able to work out the righteousness of the holy law in the believing heart. The prophecy foretold this feature, when it described the people of the movement: “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12.

That must mean that they keep also the fourth commandment, which declares, “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” Thus it is that this people are called Seventh-day Adventists-observers of the seventh day and preachers of the near approach of the advent of Christ.

The Everlasting Gospel

The special message for the judgment hour is declared in this prophecy of Revelation 14 to be “the everlasting gospel.” And the gospel is always “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes.” Romans 1:16.

With what power does the judgment-hour message work in the lives of men! A few years ago, to cite but one example, a missionary launch landed on a South Sea island and left some island teachers from another group. The island where the teachers were left was in desperate savagery, far on the road to utter physical degeneracy. A few years later a British government officer visited the island. He exclaimed later: “I am astonished at what I have seen. I cannot realize that such a change is possible. The people have taken hold of your religion with a fervid zeal that cannot be described. I have never seen, read, or heard of such a movement before. What is it that you have done to the people? They are changed. They seem to be living now for something which I cannot understand. I marvel, and I say, It is a miracle!”

That is what it is--a miracle of the grace of Christ. The hope of Christ’s soon Coming changes men. “Every man that hath this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure.” 1 John 3:3. So ever onward, from land to land, the movement goes--as symbolized by the angel of the prophet’s vision, flying “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”

As the time came, the movement rose; and it is bringing the fruitage foretold, a people everywhere “that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,” preparing by His grace to meet Him when He comes.

11. Christ’s Second Coming in Power and Glory

WHEN the gospel message has been carried as a witness to all the world, then Jesus comes. Listen to His words again and again: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:14.

The Gathering of the Saved

Let Christ’s great prophecy from the Mount of Olives tell what follows the completion of the

What Next In Bible Prophecy

missionary task: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matthew 24:30,31.

The angels gather from the four quarters of earth not only the believers who are alive when He comes, but the saved of all time, who are awakened by the resurrection trump as Jesus comes. Said Paul: "Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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." 1 Corinthians 15:51,52.

This day of Christ's appearing is the joyful day toward which the children of God have been looking through all the ages.

He Comes in Glory

We are to mark this: Christ's Second Coming is to be visible to all. There is to be no secret or mystical coming. There will be no secret "rapture," or snatching away of the saints, as we sometimes hear it said. The prophet John, in the Revelation, says: "Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." Revelation 1:7.

Some think He comes at death. But Christ takes particular care to warn us against all such views, and against false christs. All manner of false claims will be devised. Satan himself will transform himself into an "angel of light" at the very last, and seek to persuade the world that he is the one who was to come. Christ forewarns us: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert, go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24: 23-27.

Such a scene as mortal eye has never looked upon will attend His return in glory. The heavens will open. The sky will be rolled back as a scroll. Mountains and islands will be moved out of their places. The powers of heaven will be shaken. And with all the holy angels escorting Him, Christ comes to take His kingdom.

True, before He comes, His mediation work closes in the heavenly sanctuary. The word is spoken, "He that is holy, let him be holy still." Every soul is saved or lost, and human probation is closed eternally. No one will know when probation will close. This is where the great day of the Lord comes "as a thief in the night." But when the Lord appears, it is with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of God, and amidst glory beyond all words to tell or human mind to conceive.

To Take His People Home

The coming of Christ is the time of giving the rewards to His children of all ages past. The apostle Paul knew that he was to be slain. Nero's sentence was already given. Death was near. But the apostle looked to the day of Christ's Second Coming as the time when he would live again. He wrote from the death cell in the Roman prison: 'I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.'" 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

The redeemed of all the ages are waiting for "that day." What a glorious day! The saved of all generations will ascend with Christ together to the heavenly city which He has gone to prepare. He said when He went away: 'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.'" John 14:2, 3.

We must watch and be ready when the Savior comes to take His children to the heavenly city.

"Even at the Doors"

The signs which were to show the coming of Christ near at hand, have appeared-signs in the heavens, and in the earth, and among the nations, as foretold by Christ. The great movement of modern missions arose as the time of the end came, and in these last days the special gospel movement has come that was to bear the closing message of the judgment hour to the world. Revelation 14:6-14. These things

What Next In Bible Prophecy

have come.

Of the coming of the signs of the end, Christ said: “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws nigh.” Luke 21:28.

But of the time when these signs shall all be seen fulfilled or in process of fulfillment, the Savior said: “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. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.” Matthew 24:32-35.

In this generation we see these things fulfilled in the past or in process of fulfillment in our time. We know, then, that the generation has at last appeared that is to see the Savior coming in power and great glory. “Of that day and hour knows no man,” but we may know “that it is near, even at the doors.”

“This Same Jesus”

The Savior who is soon coming in power and glory is the one who loves us and died to save us. How persistently the Scripture stresses this thought that the one who is coming in power and glory is none other than the Savior and Redeemer whose presence and loving care have all along been over His children.

The patriarch Job, in the early morning of world history, rejoiced in this thought: “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not a stranger.” Job 19:25-27 margin.

It is He Himself, and not a stranger—the same who had been with the patriarch all the way. He is coming at last to gather His own. The apostle repeats it: “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and, the dead in Christ shall rise first.” - 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

“The Lord Himself.” He is the one who is coming. It is He Himself. No angel could lead man back to the lost Paradise and the tree of life. Only the Son of God could do it. No angel could pay the price of our redemption from sin. Only Jesus Himself could do it. And as He comes He leaves to no other the leadership of the angelic hosts who are to gather the redeemed of all the ages. “The Lord Himself shall descend.”

When He went away, at His ascension, leaving the disciples gazing after the form of the Savior they, so well knew and loved, the angels that appeared beside them in white, left for them and for us the promise:

“This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.” Acts 1:11.

He is coming again, visibly, bodily, the “same Jesus” who ascended. And the spread of the gospel into all the world is the great sign that His coming is close at hand. As we have found Him a Savior from sin, a Comforter and Helper who is closer than a brother, so as we think of that great and truly awful day of His coming, may we recall ever with joy the blessed truth that this King of kings and Lord of lords, who is coming in indescribable glory and power, is the “same Jesus” who loved us and died to save us.

When He appeared to the eleven, after His resurrection, He showed them the pierced hands and feet, saying, “It is I Myself.” Even so, as He comes in glory, most glorious of all will be the light shining from the pierced hands and side, the marks of His dying love for us, as the prophet Habakkuk saw it in vision: “His brightness was as the light. He had bright beams out of His side; and there was the hiding of His power.” Habakkuk 3:4, margin. Or, in Adam Smith’s translation, “bright rays from each hand of Him.” The marks of the crucifixion are the badges of glory and power.

“I shall know Him,
I shall know Him
By the print of the nails in His hands.”

“Be Ready”

With the parable of the ten virgins, Christ closed the prophetic outline on the Mount of Olives. That is the lesson for us. All were waiting for the bridegroom. All expected to go in to the marriage feast. They had to wait longer than they had expected. Then, suddenly, the cry came, “Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him!” Matthew 25:6.

What Next In Bible Prophecy

All rose, expectant. But some were not ready. The oil had burned out from their lamps. That is, some of those who had been waiting had lost out in Christian experience while they waited. The oil of His love and grace had burned out. They were not ready when, suddenly, the bridegroom came.

“They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage.” And those who were almost ready, who had still to go and get ready, were left out. “The door was shut.”

Those that were- found ready had kept ready all the time. Every day they kept right with God. Every night they retired to rest knowing that they had confessed every known sin. And as surely as we come to Christ with every sin, repentant, abiding in Him, so surely is the blood of Jesus cleansing away all sin. He makes the sinner whole. He makes us ready and keeps us ready, by His grace, to meet Him with joy as He comes.

“Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that great day;
O, wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away!