

Know Your Bible

His Chosen Path for Thee

He chose this path for thee;
No feeble chance, not hard, relentless fate,
But love, His love, has placed the footsteps here;
He knew the way was rough and desolate,
Knew how thy heart would often sink with fear,
Yet tenderly He whispered: "Child, I see This path is best for thee."

He chose this path for thee;
Though well He knew sharp thorns would tear thy feet,
Knew how the troubles would obstruct the way,
Knew all the hidden dangers you wouldst meet,
Knew how thy faith would falter day by day,
And still the whisper echoed: "Yes, I see This path is best for thee."

He chose this path for thee;
Even while He knew the fearful midnight gloom
Thy timid, shrinking soul must travel through;
How towering rocks would oft before thee loom
And phantoms grim would meet the frightened view;
Still comes the whisper: "My beloved, I see This path is best for thee."

He chose this path for thee;
What needs you more? this sweeter truth to know?
That all along these strange, bewildering ways,
O'er rocky steeps, and where dark rivers flow,
His loving arms shall bear thee all thy days;
"A few steps more, and you thyself shall see This path is best for thee."
-Selected.

03. I WILL RETURN

THE cry for a better world is sounding from many lips. Statesmen, churchmen, and laymen are grasping at straws as civilization sinks beneath the billows of total war and world revolution; and they are calling for help such help as no man can give.

Oh, for a mighty commander, supreme in power and excellence, who can say to the willful purposes of man: I will take charge and carry out my purpose to make this world an eternal dwelling place of happy and sinless beings.

Is there such a one as this? Is there a time when man's most hopeful dreams will be fulfilled?

That Christ will return soon is the most certain and hopeful fact of our time. The plan of redemption includes it, all the Bible writers declare it, and a perishing world demands it. Christ's own promise is: "I will come again." John 14:3.

In vain would be God's whole scheme for man's redemption if there were to be no second coming of Christ. It is to the first coming as harvest time is to the seed sowing. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28.

Nineteen hundred years ago He came to this world. He was God in human flesh, "the mystery of godliness." 1 Timothy 3:16. He lived, He ministered, He died. He gave His life a ransom. He paid the awful price of a guilty world's debt. He made it possible that "whosoever will" may be saved. He sowed the seed that will produce a harvest unto eternal life; and with eagerness He is about to reap the harvest of His sacrifice, to gather His sheaves to Himself that He may "see of the travail of His soul." Isaiah 53: 11.

The Bible writers from Moses to John the revelator vie with one another in picturing the purpose, the glory, and the results of Christ's second coming. And as the scores of details given by the prophets

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concerning the first advent came to pass as predicted, so the prophecies regarding His second advent will not fail.

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, said: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds." Jude 14, 15. David cried: "Our God shall come, shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him." Psalm 50:3.

Isaiah visualized a rapturous throng shouting victory as they see the Lord coming to raise the sleeping saints and to translate the righteous living. See Isaiah 25:8, 9.

But of all the scriptures that speak of the second advent, none is better known or more beloved than the words of Christ Himself: "Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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: 1-3.

Some Bible students declare that one out of every twenty-five verses in the New Testament refers to the return of our Lord. It is the New Testament's predominant theme. It is declared to be the Christian's "blessed hope." Titus 2:13.

Let us turn to that marvelous prophecy which Christ uttered in answer to a question that His disciples asked Him regarding His second coming. They knew that someday Christ would take command of world affairs, for the prophet Isaiah had declared: "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, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." Isaiah 9:6, 7.

Christ, too, had spoken much of the kingdom of heaven. He had asked the disciples to pray to His Father in heaven: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10. Daniel's prophecies had foretold the coming of Christ to smite the nations and rule the world.

Thus it was that the disciples came to Christ on one occasion and asked Him: "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The Master did not evade this direct question. To it He gave a direct and clear-cut answer. Immediately He set about describing the signs of the end, signs which would mark the day of His appearing. So definite was He that He could say when He had concluded: "When you shall see all these things, know that it [the second advent of Christ to take over ruler ship of the earth] is near, even at the doors." Matthew 24:3, 33.

In these words we find a key that unlocks the future. We are told that we may know when the coming of Christ is near, so near that He is "even at the doors." What are some of these signs that point out the day in which our Supreme Commander shall appear and take charge of the affairs of men? Here they are as Christ uttered them:

1. The Climactic Increase of War. "And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that you be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." Verses 6, 7.

War itself was not to be a sign of the end. There have always been wars. The disciples were not to consider that the wars that they would see or the rumors of wars that they would hear in their day were a sign of the end. Wars were to increase in great measure until they had reached a climax, and they would appear "in divers places."

Professor Srokin says: "The twentieth century is the bloodiest, most revolutionary in world history." With the introduction of atomic bombs and other nuclear weapons the intensity of war has come to the place civilization and man himself are in danger of being annihilated. Science has created weapons for which there is no defense.

2. The Increase of Disasters. "And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." Verse 7.

There have been famines, pestilences, and earthquakes since sin entered our world. The sign that Jesus mentions refers to their increase and far-reaching effect.

In this day of widespread communication among the peoples of the world, men have to guard constantly against the spread of epidemics. In spite of great care, great epidemics have appeared from time to time, such as the influenza sieges of 1918 and 1919, when the "flu" spread from land to land, leaping across wide ocean barriers. Between fifteen and twenty million persons died as a result of those epidemics.

Scourges to plant life and to animals are on the increase and must be closely watched. In spite of scientific knowledge and the discovery of chemicals that destroy pests, we face grave danger from

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pestilential forces that threaten trees, plant life, and the crops that feed the world's population. North American pests numbering ten thousand "cost us \$ 1,600,000,000 yearly, including crop damage, diseases carried, and a permanent expense." Some writers state that certain insects are building up a physical resistance to poisons now used to combat them.

As to earthquakes, they have been on the increase through the centuries. The old earth now quakes and totters almost constantly. We are told by scientists that there are earthquake impulses and vibrations about every hour somewhere in the world, and that about nine thousand earthquakes are recorded every year on the instruments constructed for this purpose.

Famines are still with us in spite of modern genius. Floods and drought, which most often are the causes of famine, are still unsolved afflictions. The great drought in the central part of the United States and the disastrous floods of recent years in the most modernized nation of the world lead us to believe that the forces of the world which cause much suffering cannot be fully controlled. The more people are brought together in great urban communities, the more the loss of life and property when disaster strikes.

The famines of China, India, and Russia are well known. Millions have died, even in these times, for the want of food, and other millions for the want of proper food.

3. Religious Confusion. "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." Verse 11. Verse 24 adds to this "false christs!"

Christianity began as one body of believers united in faith and in works. To day the Christian church is divided into more than two hundred fifty denominations and sects, all claiming that their faith and doctrines are founded on the teachings of Christ. Many persons are claiming to be Christ or His prophet. Scripture is distorted to bolster the claims of men. Instead of the church's continuing as a united body, it has become more and more divided until, as one has said, this has become the scandal of Christendom. Prophecy pictures the church as a whole, in the last days, as "Babylon" (confusion).

4. Increase of Crime and Moral Laxity. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Verse 12.

Modern progress has not brought about a decrease in lawlessness. It has but invented the means whereby lawlessness may abound. Modern weapons for the taking of life, vehicles for quick movement from place to place, the piling up of immense wealth in a few locations, clever schemes for escaping detection, all have combined to place far more power in the hands of criminals than was ever known before. Thus, in a day when innumerable laws have been enacted for the regulation of society, we know our greatest lawlessness.

Professor Sorokin, who has spent much time in research regarding social trends, says: "Wars, revolutions, crime, suicide, mental disease, and other evidences of deep-seated social maladies flourish apace, some of them on a scale hitherto unknown." - *The Crisis of Our Age*, page 131.

C. E. M. Joad, well-known British philosopher, states: "Here then is an age which is without beliefs in religion, without standards in morals, without convictions in politics, without values in art. I doubt if there has ever been an age which was so completely without standards or values." *Philosophy of Our Times*, page 24.

And all this is in an age renowned for its superior civilization and advanced knowledge. But it was all prophesied long ago. Paul declared: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13.

5. The Gospel Preached in All Lands. "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 gospel of the coming of Christ to establish His kingdom on earth is to be preached to every land. John the revelator saw this same thing and declared: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Revelation 14:6. John also saw that this work was to end in the coming of Christ. Verse 14.

The Bible, or portions of the Bible, which is the basis of all gospel preaching, is now translated into nearly eleven hundred languages and dialects. Missionaries have gone to all lands to preach the gospel of Jesus. The second coming of Christ in our day is now being preached among almost all peoples of earth. With the special blessing of God and the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit, this work could quickly be finished. "And then," said Christ, "shall the end come."

6. Special Signs Marking the Time of the End. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the

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powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and 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.” Matthew 24:29, 30.

It is only after these specific signs here mentioned have been manifested that we are urged to watch for all the signs which mark the day of Christ’s appearing. Furthermore, Christ foretells the time when these specific signs were to be expected. He said they would begin to appear immediately after the tribulation.” This refers to the tribulation mentioned by Daniel the prophet, the 1260 years of papal dominance and persecution. This period ended in 1798. In the Gospel of Mark we read that the sign was to appear “in those days, after the tribulation.” Mark 13:24. This makes the time even more definite. Even before the end of the 1260 years of papal domination, persecution ceased because of the beginning of the epoch of freedom during the last half of the eighteenth century.

May 19, 1780, is known in history as “the dark day.” On that day a remarkable darkness occurred at midday over a large portion of the New World. This attracted great attention and caused many persons to recall what Christ had declared and to investigate concerning His coming.

The sign of the falling of the stars occurred on November 13, 1833. On the morning of this day was witnessed the most wonderful exhibition of ‘shooting stars that men have ever seen. No other shower of stars can even compare with it. Professor Denison Olmstead of Yale declared that it probably was “the greatest display of celestial fireworks that has ever been since the creation of the world.”

These specific signs bring us down close to our day. It was of those who dwell in this time that Christ declared: “When you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.” Matthew 24:33.

There can be no doubt that we are now living in the day of which Christ spoke. “All” the signs are now evident “in divers places.” Wherever we turn we may see these signs which Christ foretold, as well as many other signs of the end prophesied in the Scriptures.

Some may ask: How is Christ to be revealed, and how shall we know when He appears? This question can best be answered in the words of Scripture. Let us note the following:

Christ’s second coming is to be personal, not spiritual. Christ promised His disciples that He would come again. Just before His crucifixion He said to them: “Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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 14:1-3.

Later, at His ascension and after He had departed from the disciples, Christ sent two angels to comfort them with these words: “You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? 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.

Paul wrote: “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

Christ’s coming is to be apparent to all, not secret. “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him.” Revelation 1:7.

“As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:27.

Christ’s coming is to be glorious.

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.” Matthew 16:27.

“Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man: ... coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Matthew 24:30.

The wicked, as well as the righteous, will see Him coming, but with far different emotions. To the righteous it is the time of deliverance, the realization of their hopes, the final answer to all their prayers; and the shout of adoration bursts forth from their hearts and lips: “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” Isaiah 25:9.

But to the wicked and unprepared in heart the second coming is a day of gloom, of wailing, despair, and wrath, a time when they seek in vain for a shelter to hide them from the glory that surrounds the coming King. “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.” Matthew 24:30.

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Yes, all will behold the second coming of Christ. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." Revelation 1:7. This statement from the apostle John is in full agreement with the assurance given the disciples on the day of Christ's ascension by the two angels in the form of men: "While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? 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 1:10, 11.

The second coming of Christ means the end of sin, of tears, of heartache, and, of disappointment, of struggle with want and hunger, and of pain and suffering. It is the time when Christ shall change our diseased, vile bodies, that they "maybe fashioned like unto His glorious body." Philippians 3:21. It is the time when corruption will be changed to incorruption, when mortal will put on immortality, and when death will be swallowed up in victory. See 1 Corinthians 15:51-55.

The second coming of Jesus and the resurrection are inseparably connected. Without the second advent there would be no breaking of the bands of death, no life beyond the tomb. All hope of a future existence is bound up with the second advent of our Lord.

No words of man can describe the joy of that hour. At the call of Him who is "the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25), they come forth a multitude that no man can number. What a shout of praise rends the sky as in unison they cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain"! Revelation 5:12. Fathers and mothers hold to their hearts their long-lost children. Companions long separated fall into each other's arms.

No wonder the revelator, when he heard the promise, "Surely I come quickly," eagerly responded, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Revelation 22:20.

Are you ready for the appearing of Christ? Have you put on the robe of His righteousness? Are your affections fully set on things above? The record is that when He appears, "we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:2, 3.

04. THE ATOMIC AGE

WHEN the first atomic bomb was detonated on July 16, 1945, near Alamogordo, New Mexico, it not only shook the nearby mountains; it caused the whole earth to tremble. With blinding flash and thunderous roar it announced that a new age had dawned.

There was no gradual change, as from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age, or from the Iron Age to the age of steam and electricity. This was sudden, tremendous, overpowering. Like an equatorial sunrise, one moment was darkness, the next was full day.

Some have dated the beginning of the new epoch to Einstein's uncannily accurate calculations at the turn of the century; others to the preliminary work on atomic research by certain French scientists in the 1870's. But, important as were all these contributing factors, it was the swift sequence of gigantic blasts at Alamogordo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Bikini which announced to all mankind that the atomic age had arrived.

Even now, more than a decade later, comparatively few realize the full meaning of this mighty fact. Nevertheless every one senses that man has found access to new resources of power. He has, as President Truman once remarked, reached out his hand and touched the basic secret of the universe. He has uncovered the fundamental principle of creation and opened up a vista of unlimited possibilities in every field of science and human relations.

Some idea of the terrific potentialities latent within every atom of matter has been revealed by William L. Laurence in *Dawn Over Zero*.

"One pound of matter," he says, "contains the energy equivalent of 10,000,000,000 kilowatt-hours.

"If this energy could be fully utilized, it would take only twenty-two pounds of matter to supply all the electrical power requirements of the United States for a year. One third of a gram of water would yield enough heat to turn 12,000 tons of water into steam. One gram of water would raise a load of a million tons to the top of a mountain six miles high. A breath of air would operate a powerful airplane continuously for a year. A handful of snow would heat a large apartment house for a year. The pasteboard in a small railroad ticket would run a heavy passenger train several times around the world."