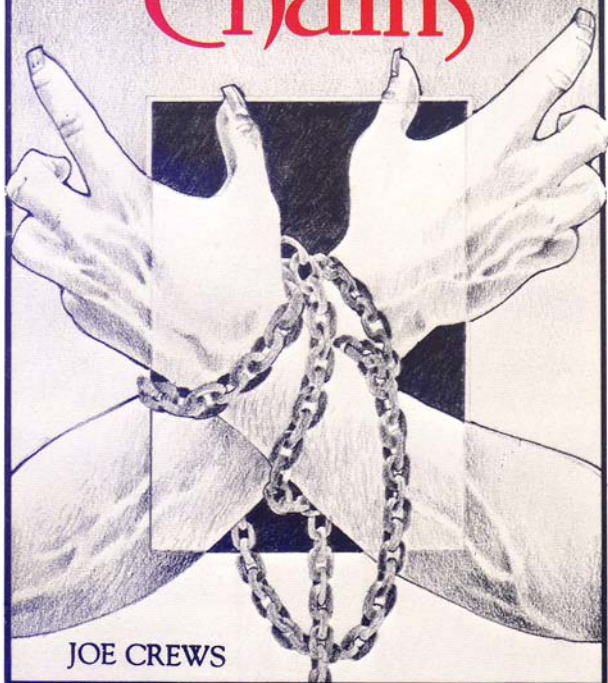


Satan ⁱⁿ Chains



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Satan in Chains

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1 Introduction

How would you like to be seated before a gigantic stage about 2,000 feet wide and actually watch the play-out of human history before your eyes? There you could see the final destiny of every man, woman, and child who has ever lived in this world. God, indeed, gives us such a panoramic preview in one of the most dramatic prophecies in the Bible.

Some people have harbored the dream that society will eventually correct itself and will develop into a golden age of millennial peace. In this grand Utopia everyone is supposed to be converted and will cooperate in building a new world of brotherhood and peace. I wish this could be a true picture of the future, but it is exactly the opposite of what the Bible portrays. Jesus said, "As it was in the days of Noe (Noah), so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." Luke 17:26. Paul said, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." 2 Timothy 3:13. No, this dream of a temporal millennium is just a vast delusion, and we are not interested in dreams or fancies. We want to know the facts about the

future and what will happen to every person who has been a part of this earthly scene. So we turn to the Bible subject of the millennium.

Most people know that the word "millennium" is not even found in the Bible at all. It is taken from two Latin words: "milli," meaning a thousand, and "annum," meaning a year. But even though the word is not mentioned in the Scriptures there are references to a thousand-year period of time. Invariably, they are clustered around the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead.

2 Two Resurrections

Jesus taught that there will be two general resurrections: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And 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 5:28, 29.

Before giving further specific proof on this point, we must note that Christ referred to the resurrection of life and the resurrection of damnation. This seems to indicate that the saved and lost do not arise at the same time.

Two separate resurrections are described. The book of Revelation confirms this fact. John wrote, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:6.

The use of the term “first resurrection” is proof that there must be more than one. If I say, “This is the first house I built,” you know that I had to build at least one other.

Two points are established in this text. First, only the good people will have any part in the first resurrection. It plainly says, “**Blessed and holy** is he that hath part in the first resurrection.” Second, we learn that the resurrection of those saints is the beginning point of the millennium, because after being raised they “shall reign with him a thousand years.” According to this verse, none of the wicked will have any part in the first resurrection. This is also established by verses 4 and 5 which describe the resurrection of those “which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived (came to live) and reigned with Christ a thousand years. . . . This is the first resurrection.”

This leaves no doubt about the class who will be included in the first resurrection. It is only for those who remained faithful to Christ. But in the midst of that text we find a very significant, parenthetical sentence: “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” Verse 5.

Obviously, the “rest of the dead” can only be in reference to the wicked. They will come forth from their graves at the end of the millennium—when “the thousand years were finished.”

Now we have a clear picture before us of two resurrections separated by a thousand years. The good people are raised at the beginning of the millennium, and the wicked are resurrected at the end.

3 Christ’s Coming Introduces the Millennium

Can we now find from the Scriptures when this first resurrection takes place, which introduces the millennium? Yes. Paul declares that it happens at the coming of Christ. “For 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.

Here are the saints being raised “first”—in the first resurrection. And it takes place amidst the glory and grandeur of the second coming of Jesus. This marks the beginning of the millennium.

When Jesus comes there will be only four groups of people for Him to deal with: the righteous dead, the righteous living, the wicked dead, and the wicked living. All who have ever been born will fall into one of those categories. The Bible gives a fascinating picture of what happens to each of these classes when Christ returns in His glory. First, the righteous dead are described as rising first to meet the Lord. Then Paul continues with these words: “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Picture that scene of transcendent joy and rapture. The saints are raised from their dusty beds and changed into glorious immortality. At the same moment, the righteous living are translated and are given immortal bodies just like the resurrected ones. Paul writes: “Behold, I shew 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 this mortal must put on immortality.” 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

Possessing those new bodies that will never suffer pain or die, all the saved ones will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air. His feet will not touch the earth at that time. He has come to honor the promise made to His people just before leaving this earth: “In my Father’s house are many mansions... 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 ye may be also.” John 14:2, 3.

4 With Christ a Thousand Years

Where will Christ take those redeemed ones who meet Him in the clouds? To the mansions of His Father where He has prepared a place for us. Can there be any doubt as to where He ascended after leaving this earth? Peter had been curious and actually questioned the Master about those mansions and that place. Jesus was answering Peter’s question in John 14:1-3. Go back three verses into the pre-

vious chapter: “Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.” John 13:36.

Here is interesting proof that Peter will someday go to the place where Jesus was about to go. And where was that? Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you.” Did He not ascend to His Father’s house, in the heavens, where the mansions were? Christ told Peter that he could not follow Him then, but that someday he would follow Him where He was going.

There are those who say that no one from this earth will ever go to heaven, but this would be contradicting the words of Jesus. It would also be contrary to John’s description in Revelation 19:1: “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.”

John’s vision of the future places the saints in heaven. That is where Jesus promised to take them—to His Father’s house and the place He had prepared. This will not be the permanent home of the saved, but it is surely the place where Christ takes them to spend a thousand years with Him.

Now, let us find out what happens to all the wicked when Christ returns. We have already established that the wicked dead do not live again “until the thousand years are finished.” They simply remain in their graves during the millennium. No change takes place for them until a thousand years later.

But what about the wicked who will live until Christ’s return? How are they affected? Paul answers: “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.

Notice what happens to sinners at the same time the saints are glorified. Sin cannot exist in His presence and the wicked are destroyed by His glory. “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

John describes the desperate attempts of the wicked to escape from Christ’s presence

when He returns. They will hide in the dens and rocks of the mountains, and pray, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Revelation 6:16, 17.

The sinners will be cut down by the bright glory of God as though a thousand volts of electricity had fallen upon them. Jesus spoke of that moment in these words: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is there will the eagles be gathered together." Matthew 24:27, 28. Christ indicated that the bodies of the wicked dead will be scattered as a result of the blazing glory of His return.

John described the wicked that survived the battle of Armageddon. "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." Revelation 19:21. His words parallel those of Jesus. The bodies of the lost will be food for vultures, immediately upon the appearance of Christ in the heavens.

Now we are prepared to answer a question that has puzzled many people. Can anyone

repent and be saved after the coming of Jesus? Absolutely not. The Bible is very explicit on this point. John records the actual words of a mighty decree that Christ declares just before His return to this earth. "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. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11, 12.

This indicates that every case has been settled for eternity. Probation is ended. Christ lays aside His priestly robes and leaves the heavenly sanctuary where He has been interceding as our great High Priest. Now He returns as King of kings to execute judgment. There can be no more opportunity to repent. All will remain as they have been found in the books of heaven. In fact, who could repent and be saved during the millennium? The righteous are already immortalized in heaven, and the wicked are all dead. It would be just as logical to think of someone rising up in the casket and repenting, as to think of anyone turning to God after Jesus comes.

Jeremiah beheld this earth in vision following the return of Christ. He described it thus:

“The slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.” Jeremiah 25:33. Of course, they won’t be gathered. Nobody is here to do it. No one can weep for them, because the earth is entirely emptied of all its inhabitants. The dead bodies of the wicked will be scattered all over the earth, in the same places where they were cut down by the glory of God’s presence.

5 The Earth in Ruins

The earth itself will be a shambles during the thousand years, as a result of the devastating earthquake which attends the coming of Christ. “And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great... And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.” Revelation 16:18, 20.

The physical results of this convulsive earthquake are alluded to by both Isaiah and Jeremiah. “Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste... The land shall be

utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word... The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.” Isaiah 24:1, 3, 19.

The shocks and the after-shocks of that earthquake will spread desolation to every corner of the earth. Inhabited islands will disappear into the sea; great mountain chains will disintegrate and vanish. Jeremiah wrote: “I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord and by his fierce anger.” Jeremiah 4:23-26.

At the coming of Jesus, every work of man will be humbled to the dust. Skyscrapers are leveled to the ground, the sky darkens, and even the birds disappear. The righteous are removed from the earth and all the wicked are slain. No wonder the Bible says that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. To be unprepared in that day is the greatest tragedy to be imagined.

6 Satan Bound

Now, the question arises, “Where is Satan during all this great manifestation?” Going back to Revelation 20:1-3 we read about the Devil during the millennium: “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.” What an amazing scene! The Devil is bound for that thousand years and cast into the bottomless pit.

Fortunately, we do not have to speculate about the location of that bottomless pit. The Bible makes it very clear. The original Greek word for “bottomless pit” is “abussos,” from which we get our English word “abyss,” meaning “a deep place.” That same word is used again in the Greek version of Genesis 1:2: “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” The

word “deep” here is the Greek word “abussos” which is translated as “bottomless pit” in Revelation 20:1. In other words, this earth was called the “abussos” after God formed it; before He called order and design out of it. Lying in disorganized darkness it was referred to as the bottomless pit.

During the millennium, this planet will revert to a similar state of desolation and chaos. Jeremiah describes it in the very same words, “without form and void.” Again, it is designated by the prophet John as the “abussos,” or “bottomless pit.” Satan will be confined right here on this torn-up, destroyed world for a thousand years while the saints are in heaven.

Someone may ask, “But what about the chain?” Just remember that Satan is a fallen angel, and spiritual beings cannot be bound with literal chains. The Bible speaks about the evil angels being bound with chains of darkness. The purpose of the binding is “that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled.” The only possible way to accomplish this is to take Satan away from all the people, or take the people away from him. Even putting him into a deep, literal pit would not prevent him from deceiv-

ing the people, because he has millions of imps to carry on his work.

The fact is that the Devil is bound by circumstances that forbid him access to any human being during the thousand years. Recently, a man told me that Satan is already bound and has been ever since 1914. That struck me as one of the most incredible of all statements. Surely if he is bound today, somebody is doing his work for him. And if the world is in this shape without his evil scheming, we had better pray that he doesn't get loose, or we really are in for trouble. If he is bound now, it would have to be with a rubber chain that stretches from New York to Moscow and all around the circle of the earth.

No, he is not bound today, but he will be while this earth is in confused disorder. Unable to deceive a single soul, he will inhabit this desolate planet for a thousand years contemplating the havoc his program has produced. The righteous are in heaven, the wicked are all dead, and he has no one to work on till the end of the millennium.

I have tried to think about the Devil during this period. What is he going to do? The earth is covered with darkness, dead bodies are everywhere, and all is absolute confusion. For six

thousand years, Satan has been plenty busy. He has followed folk around trying to devise their destruction. His chief employment for centuries has been to accuse, mislead and destroy. Suddenly, though, he has nothing to do. They are all taken away, and he is left with his own thoughts. What will the Devil do? That will be the most miserable punishment that Satan will have to suffer. Forced to live with himself for a thousand years! No one to deceive at all; just thinking, thinking, thinking.

I am sure he will think about the past and remember all the terrible deeds of darkness he has committed. He will think about the future and the prophecies of God concerning his own destiny. Listen, the Devil is a good Bible student. Do not fool yourself. Give him credit where it is due. He knows the Bible better than you do. Oh yes, holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, but the Devil was looking over their shoulder and memorizing every bit of it. The Devil knows better than we do that every word of the Bible is true. He knows that everything about heaven is true, because he used to live there. He knows that it is just as beautiful and wonderful as the Bible describes it, but he doesn't want anybody else to believe that. So, he is desperately working to

keep people from studying this Book and to keep people off their knees.

If people can once understand what the Bible teaches about the great plan of salvation, Satan knows that his power will be destroyed at that very moment. So, I picture him as thinking of these things and looking ahead to the future, knowing that his utter destruction has already been determined. The Bible itself declares that he will be burned and brought to ashes.

I suppose, also, that he will think about many of the people he tempted while the earth was still standing. Perhaps his thoughts will go back to the poor alcoholic who was struggling to be free. Time after time he crawled out of the gutter, determined never to take another drink. But Satan waylaid the man with constant harassment and temptation, and down he would go into the gutter again. Finally, the desperate alcoholic dared to lay hold of Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour, and he was delivered from Satan's power. Now Satan knows that the man is forever beyond his influence, and he will never be able to assail him again.

Yes, I picture the Devil wandering over this depopulated planet and stumbling over the

decaying bodies of those who were slain by the glory of God. And perhaps one of those bodies will attract Satan's special attention because he recognizes and remembers the man. He was a good, moral man with a fine family. Everybody liked him. He was honest and paid his debts. People were attracted to him. He was a good neighbor and a good citizen. There were times when the man was drawn to make a decision to follow the Lord all the way. His wife pleaded with him to do so, and his little girls prayed for him every night. Only one thing really stood in his way, but somehow he could not surrender his will fully to the will of Christ. It was always in his mind to do so someday, but the Devil kept supplying him with excuses for waiting. Then suddenly, unexpectedly, the clouds rolled back like a curtain and Christ returned. The man was not prepared. He was cut down with all the others who were living for self.

Now Satan looks upon the tortured features of the dead man, and a hideous grin spreads over his face. His strategy was successful, and this man, at least, will never have another opportunity to be saved. He is lost forever.

Oh, the utter folly of failing to decide for Christ while the moments of probation linger! Some are toying with sin and trifling with the

convictions of God's Holy Spirit. You may be a church member and a professed Christian, but if there is one cherished sin in your life right now, you are playing games with God. Confess and forsake that sin without another moment of delay. Could our eyes be opened for one second to the awful consequences of sin, no one would dare hesitate to follow Jesus all the way.

7 Dramatic Close of the Millennium

Now we come to the closing events of the millennium. What dramatic developments will mark the end of the thousand years? "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." Revelation 20:7.

This loosing of Satan is easy to understand when we read verse 5 again, "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." All the lost of the ages will be raised out of their graves at the end of the millennium. This is what releases the Devil to begin his work of deception once more.

Perhaps you are wondering how he could further deceive those who have already passed the point of redemption. Here is the way John

answers that question: "And (he) shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Revelation 20:8, 9.

Several important things are brought to view in these verses. After the wicked are resurrected at the end of the millennium, Satan leads them in an attack against the New Jerusalem. He deceives them into thinking they can actually capture the dwelling place of God and the immortalized saints. That Holy City descends from heaven, following the thousand years. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Revelation 21:2.

This is the event described by the prophets of old, when the saints will return to this earth from Paradise. According to Zechariah, Christ's feet will touch the earth, and some spectacular things take place. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of

Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the north, and half of it toward the south... and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.” Zechariah 14:4, 5.

Please notice that Jesus will make contact with the earth when He returns with the saints. When He came for the saints at the beginning of the millennium, His feet did not touch the ground. All were caught up to meet Him. But now as the great, heavenly space city approaches this planet, the Mount of Olives splits under the touch of the Son of God. A mighty plain is created for a landing spot, and the New Jerusalem settles to earth.

8 Resurrection of the Wicked

At the same time that the City descends, the wicked are raised, and this releases Satan to deceive them into attacking. Again he has someone to work on. I have tried to imagine how the great deceiver will address that host of lost souls. Perhaps he will even claim that they were resurrected by his power. Charging God with unjustly throwing him out of the city, he now urges the army of the wicked to help him reclaim his former position. No doubt, he will

make flattering offers of honor and power to those who excel in the battle.

I suppose that Napoleon, Alexander, Sennacherib, Hitler, and Stalin will be there. Oh, I am not sure, of course; I am just using these as examples. Maybe some of these repented before death, but there will be plenty of great generals and military leaders in the ranks of Satan’s army as he goes up against God. Many of those men died with curses on their lips; and now, when they are resurrected, they are still cursing, and they are still in the frame of mind to fight. It won’t be hard for Satan to get them in line as they march against the City of God.

Sometimes people ask me, “How long will they fight? How long will it take them to get ready for that battle?” I do not know, because the Bible is silent here. I am certain, though, that the Devil will not try to win by just throwing rocks at the Holy City. He will surely devise some terrible, devastating weapons to use. He has a mighty, ingenious mind when it comes to preparing instruments of war. No doubt, there will be atomic weapons involved. They will set a D-Day. There could be a countdown at which time they plan to blast away at the Holy City. From all earthly viewpoints, it seems that the

saints are doomed. The explosive, destructive weapons will be able to shatter the walls into smithereens. But then, suddenly, God intervenes. He turns His own fiery power loose upon that assembled army of the wicked. Read it in verse 9 of Revelation 20: “And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” And that is the end of the wicked. There it is. Right here on this earth the fire of God descends. The wicked people are burned up as they launch a final, desperate attack against God. This is the hell fire of the Bible.

9 The Transparent Wall of Separation

Listen, one of the saddest pictures of all, I believe, is revealed in Revelation 21:11. In describing the Holy City it says: “Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” The walls of that City will be like glass. The wicked will be able to look right through and see everything on the inside of that City. Have you ever thought of some of the

sad meetings that will take place by those walls of the New Jerusalem? Talk about the famous wall of China or the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem! But this wall is going to reveal some of the most heart-rending scenes that have ever taken place on this earth.

I picture the resurrection of that man who had such a wonderful family, and who almost made his decision for Christ—the one who intended to do it later. As he comes forth in the second resurrection, he looks around for his wife and two little girls. Nothing but open, empty graves meet his vision, and his ears are assailed by the cries and curses of the lost. He is swept up in the maelstrom of frenzied preparation for the battle.

As he approaches the gleaming, transparent walls, he is overwhelmed by the splendor of the scene. Far in the distance, he sees the outshining of the glorious rainbow surrounding the throne of God. The River of Life flows forth from the throne, and great branches of the Tree of Life arch over the river, bearing their magnificent fruit of immortality. The man is transfixed by the beauty. Glorious, radiant angels move around inside the City. He gazes at the streets of purest gold and the indescribable mansions on every side. As he stands, spell-

bound, he thinks, “What a fool I was to lose all of this.”

Then, I picture this man as his eyes try to encompass all the grandeur of the landscape. Moving figures inside begin to come into clearer focus. Suddenly, his heart skips a beat, as he catches a glimpse of some familiar forms on the other side of the wall. His eyes light up with recognition of his wife and children as they draw nearer. The man waves and beckons. He cries out to catch their attention but the words bounce back as an empty echo from the shining walls.

Then, and only then, will the true horror of his situation be realized. A flood of memories will fill his mind. He remembers so vividly the prayers of his little girls for their daddy to be saved. He lives over again the tender convictions that brought tears to his eyes, the struggle with conscience, and the decision to wait. The words of his wife now return to torment him. “Honey, why don’t you surrender to Jesus? Don’t worry about your job. I will work, and we will get along. The Lord will provide. I love you so much, and Jesus loves you.” He had fought the stubborn rebellion but slowly yielded to the practical demands of his job and his carnal friends. Now he would give anything in the

world to return to that moment. If only he could take his little girls in his arms again, and kiss his dear wife, assuring them that their prayers have been answered.

Oh, the remorse of that moment! The man stretches out his arms and cries out, “Please pray for me once more!” But it is too late, and before the jasper-clear wall, I can see that father and husband fall on the ground, screaming and pleading for one more chance that can never be granted. Surely, this will be the greatest punishment for those who finally realize what it means to be lost.

10 “What Shall It Profit a Man?”

Oh, how I wish I could paint this picture so graphically concerning surrender and its importance that every person would settle it with God before going to bed tonight. We must know that we have given ourselves completely to the Lord Jesus Christ. I know there are some who would rather hear you say, “Let’s not get fanatical, let’s not do anything extreme. Let’s just wait, and things will take care of themselves.” The very same people who say that now will some day be crying out on the other side

of the wall of the New Jerusalem and saying: “Oh, why didn’t someone tell me? Why didn’t somebody make me do it when I had the opportunity?”

I am amazed at the way people are influenced by their friends—by the words of those who are very well-meaning. What comfort will those words be when the friends are also on the outside of the wall looking in? Sometimes people are held back by possessions, or jobs, or bank accounts; but what comfort will it be to have a great, heaping pile of earthly treasure and still be on the outside looking through the walls? What about the religious leaders and teachers who have comforted people by telling them not to worry about keeping the commandments? The same religious teachers are also on the outside.

Every one of us should now be searching the Word of God in order to know what to do. The Bible is the blueprint for salvation. The most powerful, motivating forces in society today will soon be exposed as less than worthless. Finally, men are going to throw their gold and silver into the streets to the moles and the bats. At last, people will have to give up those things that meant so much in this life. If it is going to come to that finally—if men are going

to throw them away as Isaiah 2 describes it—why won’t they throw them away now in order to make their calling and election sure?

If you wait, refusing to make a decision to follow Christ all the way, I can promise you one thing, someday you are going to know that the still, small voice of the Spirit has made its final plea. The Bible will be closed up forever on the pulpit, and the pews will be completely emptied of all the people. Suddenly, every man, woman, and child will be called to face God. The busy life of this world will grind to a crashing halt. The jazz will suddenly be turned off, the bright lights will go out into darkness forever, and the radio and TV chips are going to melt together. No one will go about his or her business, because God will suddenly intervene and call every man, woman, and child to account. The world will be torn by the devastating earthquake we read about in Revelation 16. The sea will be lashed to a fury by the voice of the hurricane. The inhabited islands of this earth will move, turn slightly, and drop out of sight. Great mountains will twist and turn, and then be thrown out onto the plains disintegrated by the mighty, volcanic action of the earth. Dark, angry clouds will fill the sky, clashing against each other. The lightning will reach out

from those clouds to envelop this earth in a great sheet of flame. Men, white as ghosts, will run to and fro, hither and yon, seeking for some shelter; and they will find none. And then, amidst the screams of terror, the great hailstones of God will come crashing down with a sickening thud, making kindling wood out of all the buildings and houses of this earth.

In the midst of all this, there will appear in the distant heavens a tiny spot of glory that will draw nearer to the earth, getting larger and larger. At first, very few will observe it, but then as it comes closer, the dazzling light of it will attract every eye. Inhabitants of every continent on earth will look up and behold the glory of Jesus and all the angels. What a solemn moment it will be! For the first time since the flood there will be no fun-making, no giddy laughter, no levity. Every mouth will be closed, and a solemn, sober spirit will fall upon every heart.

How cheap the dollar is going to look then. How ridiculous it will seem that man allowed the mockery of some friend to hold him back from making that decision. On every side voices will be heard crying out, "Too late! Too late!" And those words will echo all around the earth, while the redeemed look up

and say, "Lo, this is our God. We have waited for Him and He will save us."

So the story of this lost planet closes just exactly like it began. After the fire has destroyed the wicked, and burned out all the curse of sin, God will make it over again. This earth, delivered from all the blighting effect of transgression, will be recreated into the original paradise that God intended it to be. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13. Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5. And so they shall!

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