

2010 Winter Newsletter
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*“After this manner therefore pray ye:
Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”
Matthew 6:9, 10*



Reuters

“Thy Kingdom Come!”

The devastating earthquake in Haiti has recently dominated the news. The horrible loss of life and general destitution of the people appalls us and spurs many to join in humanitarian efforts to alleviate the suffering. Not so long ago, the miseries suffered from hurricane Katrina was the main topic in the news, and going back further, the Tsunami in south east Asia shocked and dismayed us. These were events with massive loss of life, but everyday there are also accidents, illnesses, homicides, wars. Is there any end to trouble? Is mankind to go on forever in such a perilous state?

The Bible, which was written thousands of years ago, foretells events which are happening in our day. This is possible because the Bible was written by holy men of God who inscribed in it what God wanted to reveal to mankind. Inspired by God, who

knows the end from the beginning, these prophets were unanimous in their prediction that though ages of suffering and distress would intervene, the time would come when God would establish a Kingdom on earth for the purpose of restoring mankind to life, health, and happiness. This happy time is referred to in Acts 3:21 as “the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of *all* his holy prophets since the world began.”

When Jesus was on earth, he told his disciples that he would be crucified, raised from the dead and go to his Heavenly Father, and then return at the end of the Age to set up the long-promised Kingdom of blessing upon the earth. His disciples naturally wanted to know when this would happen. Thus we read in Matthew 24:3, that they asked Jesus, “Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be

the sign of thy presence and of the end of the Age?" [The Greek word *parousia* translated "coming" in the King James Version of the Bible, more precisely means "presence"]

In response, Jesus gave them many signs by which his followers living at the time of the event would recognize that it had come. Among these signs is a prophecy which could apply to no other time than the present and the immediate future. It reads, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." (vs. 21, 22)

This prophecy could apply only to the present day because there has never before been a time since the flood when it was possible for all flesh to be destroyed. Plagues have swept the earth destroying millions, but the human race survived and increased. World wars, fought in the conventional manner, killed millions, but humanity lived on. But with total nuclear warfare with its poisoning of the air which we and all animals must breathe—now, for the first time in history, complete and absolute destruction of the human race is threatened. Now we realize the import of this prophecy, written two thousand years ago. "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." But the Bible assures us that those days shall be shortened and that the human race will not be destroyed.

The threat of atomic warfare is a cause of great anxiety and perplexity in the world today. Great fear is generated by each new nation that acquires atomic capability. The nations are in distress, and this present situation in the world is in fulfillment of another prophecy of Jesus as recorded in Luke 21:25, 26; "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring. Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."

Another descriptor of the last days is found in 2 Timothy 3:1-4; "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." Who can deny that much of society has lost

the values of honor, duty, and virtue. Today the mantra is, "If it feels good, do it." Where are the standards of behavior? Where is the moral sense? Where is the sense of commitment? What has happened to everyday manners? Families are fragmented and communities estranged from each other. Crime fills the streets, people isolate themselves from their neighbors, and science has replaced God. Do we not see these conditions fulfilled today?

As strange as it may seem, the fulfillment of these predictions is a positive sign of the nearness of God's glorious and benevolent Kingdom under Christ. The Bible has told us that there would first be a time of trouble before the Kingdom of peace and righteousness takes full control, to bless the world.

The very fact that we can understand some of these prophecies is further evidence that we are living in the days known as "the time of the end." When the prophet Daniel was given the prophecies regarding this time, he did not understand them, but he wanted so much to understand. We read his words in Daniel 12:8, 9 "I heard, but understood not. Then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed *till the time of the end.*" And the Lord's words to Daniel, in Daniel 12:4 tell us just how "the time of the end" can be identified when it has come. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end. *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*"

Has there ever been a time when there was so much rapid and world-wide travel? We not only have supersonic travel by jet plane within the earth's atmosphere, but also travel in outer space at fantastically higher speeds. Whereas in Daniel's day travel between countries took months, it now takes only a few hours. Beside fast railroad trains, there are great highways over which high-speed automobiles constantly run to and fro.

Daniel's prophecy regarding the increase of knowledge has also been spectacularly fulfilled. This is one of the most amazing phenomena of modern times. Man has existed on earth for six thousand years, and yet, practically all the modern conveniences and scientific achievements we today take so much for granted were developed within the past one hundred and fifty years. Within this comparatively short period of time there has been a

sudden awakening, and a tremendous upsurge of knowledge. One scientist has estimated that man's total body of knowledge doubled between 1775 and 1900, doubled again between 1900 and 1950, again between 1950 and 1958, and is now doubling every five years! It is hard to grasp such a rapid rate of acceleration. This is another proof that we are now living in what is termed "the time of the end."

Since, as we have seen, the prophetic descriptions given in the Bible are such amazingly accurate descriptions of present day conditions, can we not reasonably expect the Bible prophecies concerning the future to be equally accurate? That would be the only logical conclusion to draw.

So what does the Bible tell us will come to pass in the near future? Bearing in mind that, in Bible usage, a "mountain" represents a kingdom, we read in Isaiah 2:2-4: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, 'come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Because we are now living in the period called "the last days," this prophecy is in the process of

fulfillment. In symbolic language, it describes God's Kingdom on earth under Christ, the Kingdom for which we have so longed prayed, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

In that Kingdom there will not only be peace, but there will be life—the offer of life in its fullness, everlasting life in perfect health, to all who have gone down into death. This was secured by Jesus' death on the cross as a Ransom for Adam and his race. Romans 5:17-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21,22

God's Kingdom will soon be revealed to all mankind. When the current time of trouble has run its course, the Kingdom of God will take complete control of earth's affairs and there will be a resurrection of the dead when "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth." John 5:28-29 The world is now in turmoil, but soon the blessings of God's kingdom will dry the tears of the world's weeping and bereaved ones.

For many, it is hard to conceive of a world in which men will no longer die. Nevertheless, such a time is really coming, and is now near at hand. We read, in Revelation 21: 3-5, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

***"And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion
with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads:
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
Isaiah 35:10***

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