



### **The Blessed Hope**

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight, and while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee; why stand ye, gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).

Yes, Jesus is coming again. The same Jesus who went away from us "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go." He'll return as He was received up into glory.

### **THE WORLD AT OUR LORD'S RETURN**

The condition of the world will also be as it was when Jesus was taken up to heaven. When our Saviour left the world He had been rejected by men and crucified. His tomb had been sealed by a pagan seal. The vast hosts of the peoples and nations of the world, including the chosen race, had sinned, were living in sin and were unrepentant of their sin. Only a little handful of believers were following the Lord and faithful to Him they were those who saw Him go away. This little band of disciples was alone in the whole world of darkness and iniquity.

When Christ returns He will come as He went away. There will be comparatively a small band of faithful believers among the millions of the earth. Few will be expectantly watching and waiting. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8: "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted,

they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." (Luke 17:26-30).

In the days of Noah the world lay in violence and wickedness. Only Noah and his little family were righteous in the eyes of the Lord. In the days of Lot, Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain were sold to do evil. Only Lot and his little family had any semblance of concern. It will be thus when Jesus comes again. "For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places, all these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:7-12).

### **THE ERROR OF POST MILLENIALISM**

In contradistinction to this revelation of Holy Scriptures concerning the state of the world when Jesus comes, there are many who are persuaded that the world will grow better and better until finally it will evolve into the period of universal blessing which we call the millennium. They also believe, those who follow this strange doctrine, that the Lord will not come until after this thousand years of bliss and perfection. They believe that through the preaching of the Gospel through the operation of the Holy Spirit, through the regeneration of the nations, Christ will rule in the hearts of men and that He will be received as King over all the earth. They are persuaded that the tiger will cease to bare his fangs, that the Leopard will change his spots, that men will grow into perfection through the efforts of organized Christianity.

The indisputable and irrefutable evidence of this, so they say, is to be found in the progress we have achieved through science and culture. In such things as the luxurious automobiles we now drive and the extension of communication from the signal fires of the cave men to the modern

miracle of radio they profess to see a pattern for the conquests of Christianity. They think that the evolution of the natural man along utilitarian lines is harbinger for the spiritual triumphs of the preaching of the gospel which will ultimately ensue in the perfect world that we call the millennium. This teaching and doctrine is most felicitous in its optimism regarding the ability of unregenerate humanity to overcome the terrible afflictions that beset it. It is indeed a marvelous tribute to the innate worth and latent possibilities of Homo sapiens.

There are just two flaws in the doctrine. It has no illustration in history and it is the open denial of the plain and revealed Word of God. Though man has evolved in art, in science, in culture, he is still in his heart and in his soul a rebel against heaven and a transgressor of the laws of God. The cave man fought and killed his brother with a stone or a club. The modern civilized man kills his brother with atomic bombs and liquid fire. But the heart that lies back of the violence filled with malice and hate is still the same.

The earth is thousands of years old and generations have come and gone, but we still are as lost and undone as our first parents. Man has lifted himself out of ignorance and superstition and darkness and has entered almost every glorious area of achievement; but spiritually throughout his generations he is still the same.

(Someone has said, "Man has learned to fly through the air like a bird; he has learned to swim through the sea like a fish; but he has not learned to walk on the earth like a man").

Education, reformation, legislation-all have failed. We are still a helpless and dying people. The scriptures say that the divided, warring race will continue in disobedience and rejection until Jesus comes again. The scriptures say that our hope for a new world wherein righteousness may prevail lies in the personal appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ.

If we are not to look for the return of our Lord until after the conversion of the world, and if, beyond that far away day of the world conversion, we are not to look for the Lord until the one thousand years

of millennial bliss are complete; then for all practical purposes the teaching of the return of Christ has no relevancy to our daily lives.

The exhortation of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 24:42, "Watch therefore; for ye know what hour your Lord doth come," is meaningless. And again, His earnest appeal in Matthew 24:44, "Therefore, be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh," is ridiculous.

When the Lord Jesus comes back it will not be in any sense to walk among the regenerated and perfected people. Rather His coming will be characterized by a series of judgments upon the wicked and the violent who lead the armies of the earth.

In the parable of the fish in the net, Jesus describes such a judgment: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:47-50).

We have the same awesome picture in Matthew 25 of the great judgment. Also in the parable of the pounds in Luke, chapter 19. We are therefore taught then that He could return at any moment. The stage is set universally. The die is cast and we are poised on the threshold of the unexpected. Christ our Lord's coming is at hand.

If He were to come now even now think how relatively few among the millions of the earth stand ready to pray the answering prayer of John.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus." As a people and as a church, we ourselves have almost forgotten His admonition that we watch and be ready: "For in such an hour as ye think not the son of man cometh."