

# The Word of Truth Ministry Presents

## Special Full Length Studies

### #SS11

## THE CONCLUDING DAYS

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After forty-two years of assiduous Bible study it is now my conviction that we are living in the concluding days of God's dispensation of grace. This fact need not disturb or distress anyone for nothing better could happen to the world, the nations, mankind, and the believer than that God should end His long display of grace and impose His righteous government upon this earth. As a grandfather, who deeply loves his grandchildren, I could ask nothing better for my four grandsons than that they should grow up and live in a world that is governed by God. Having learned from the Word of God that an administration of divine government is to follow this administration of grace, it is my desire that God's method of dealing in grace shall end and a new method of dealing in righteousness, justice, and equity shall begin.

In beginning this study there is a temptation to write upon the difficult and dangerous times in which we live. But these are well known to every informed reader, and anything said about present difficulties and dangers is apt to be obsolete by tomorrow (Ed. Note: this was written in 1962)

There are those who strongly insist that present world conditions are nothing more than facets of one of those crises which are not uncommon to mankind, and are the same kind through which Western society has passed several times in every century. They believe that all present maladjustments can and will be corrected, that some of the present evils can and will be eradicated, and that we can expect in the near future to return to the bliss of bigger and better prosperity, and to the sunshine of a reasonably secure and lasting peace. This is the present optimistic view, but it has no basis except wishful thinking.

It becomes clearer every moment that these hopeful thinkers are wrong. There is manifest evidence on every hand that mankind has reached a cataclysmic junction in his history from which there is no point of return. From this point on we will be on more solid ground if we anticipate that "**wicked men and swindlers shall wax worse and worse**" (2 Tim. 3: 13). We would like to anticipate a great moral reform, but

there is no basis anywhere for such hope. It has to be admitted that if wicked men and swindlers get much worse than they are now, life for a decent and honest person could easily become unbearable.

The present times are fraught with perils of every kind. We live in the most dangerous and explosive days in which men have ever been called upon to live. These times are especially difficult for the active believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is part of a society to which he does not really belong, and he faces the problem of remaining true to God's Word as he seeks to fulfill his role of being a believer in an unbelieving world.

Many questions arise. What shall we do? Which way shall we take? In what way can our time, our strength, and our means be best used for the glory of God? Hundreds of voices clamor for our attention. Many of them present worthy causes and projects. They call for us to join with them in a fight against this or that evil. But can we as believers permit any further fragmentation of our already badly fragmented lives? What attitudes shall we take toward all the dangers and difficulties that surround us? Does the Bible have some message that is directly applicable to the situations and conditions now existing?

If the Bible has no positive message concerning this present time, then one would need to feel it to be inadequate as a revelation from God. It would seem that He failed to anticipate the dire need for specific guidance for those believers who should be living in the most difficult and dangerous time in all of man's long history.

But this cannot be true! **It is not true! God has spoken!** I believe He has spoken in regard to the time in which we live. The question which now faces us is whether we as believers are willing to give the time and effort required in order to comprehend His message. Once comprehended we will face the further task of taking God at His word and responding accordingly.

The portion of God's Word which is most applicable to the present time is found in **2 Timothy, chapter three**. Here will be found a most instructive message which has been badly misunderstood, only partially interpreted, and tragically misapplied. Exhaustive study and faithful interpretation of this passage will reveal it to be a source of guidance, instruction, and encouragement for the time in which we live. Let us examine it statement by statement.

**THIS KNOW ALSO.** Introductory words such as these emphasize the importance of the message that follows. We must know the truth revealed here as something that is actually related to us, that affects us personally and toward which we must assume a personal attitude. The use of the Greek word **ginosko** here indicates that this is knowledge that affects in a personal manner the believer living in the concluding days.

**THAT IN THE LAST DAYS.** The term "the last days" has always been a favorite one of those prophets of doom who feel their chief mission in life is to frighten people. Few indeed have made a study of this term.

In **Isaiah 2: 1-4** we read of a period of time called "**the last days**" and in it everything is wonderful. The government of the Lord's dynasty has been established as the head of all other governments, and nations are seen flowing unto it. The Lord is seen judging among the nations and enlightening many peoples, with the blessed result that they beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, a nation shall not threaten another nation, neither shall there be any plan for war or any study of it. Nevertheless, in the Timothy passage we find that in "the last days" nothing is as it should be, everything seems to be stamped with iniquity. Thus Isaiah's prophecy of the conditions of the last days and Paul's declaration concerning them are contradictory statements. This makes it plain that the term "the last days" can be applied to more than one period of time.

"But how can this be?" someone is sure to ask. "A man's last days are his last days, and there cannot be more than one period called a man's last days."

This is quite true if "last" always means "final", as it certainly does when we speak of a man's last days or his last dollar. But does the Greek word translated "last" here always mean final, as if no more days were to follow these? This word needs to be studied.

The word is **eschatos**, which Cremer says is generally used of that which concludes anything. This word is found in Matthew 27:64 where it is plain that the Pharisees argued that if the body of Christ were stolen from the tomb the resultant or concluding error would be worse than the first. In Luke 11: 26 it is evident that our Lord meant that the resultant or concluding state of the man would be far worse than his previous condition. In Hebrews 1:2 the period of time during which Christ ministered while upon the earth is called "these last days." This should read "in the result (or conclusion) of these days." See also 1 Peter 1:20, 2 Peter 2:20 where *eschatos* is translated "last", but must be understood as meaning resultant or concluding and not as final.

The period of time before us in 2 Timothy is the time of God's long display of grace. He is now displaying His grace by means of an administration of grace in order to write into the record of His long dealings with mankind a complete and absolute record of the grace that is inherent in His character. God's present administration will certainly have its resultant and concluding days. It is these concluding days of which Paul speaks in 2 Timothy 3: 1. The "last days" of which Isaiah speaks are not the outcome of God's display of grace. They are the result of all of God's works since the fall of man.

At the very beginning of God's long display of grace, a display that has now continued through 1900 years, a revelation was given through Paul in regard to the character of the times and the character of men in the concluding days. If God's description fits the present time, then we can know that we are living in the concluding days of God's dispensation of grace. If so, then earth's long dark night is about over and the day is ready to break. We have every right to expect that at any moment God will break into human history and reverse its godless flow.

**PERILOUS TIMES SHALL COME.** The word "times" here is plural. It should read "perilous periods", that is, one period of peril following another.

Recently, on the same day, two of the best informed men in the world had something to say apropos of this. Former President Eisenhower declared that Americans "must learn to live under the threat of nuclear aggression, possibly for decades"; and President Kennedy said "we are destined - all of us here today - to live out most if not all of our lives in uncertainty and challenge and peril".

What we today call crises, the Bible more accurately calls periods of peril. Mr. Kennedy is right in saying we are destined to live out our lives in peril. The Bible says the same - one period of peril following another with no breathing space or resting place in between. And it is quite evident that the perils of the concluding days are related to the character of men.

**FOR MEN SHALL BE.** This passage does not deal with what men have been through the centuries that precede the concluding days. That is not dealt with here. Nor is it a declaration concerning all men without exception. Neither is it limited to a few men. It is a declaration of what men in general will be in the concluding days of God's long display of grace. These are the characteristics that dominate the scene as God's display of undeserved favor reaches its conclusion. No more accurate indictment of the times could be given than is found in this passage. At the turn of the century sixty years ago, few would have believed that present conditions in the world would be what they are today. Yet Paul, 1900 years ago gave us this accurate picture.

**LOVERS OF THEIR OWN SELVES.** This phrase is one word in the Greek, *philautos*. It means self-lovers, and designates those who care unduly or supremely for their own selves, regarding their own comfort and advantage in disregard or at the expense of others. The egocentric religions that are so popular today are a manifestation of this self love. All who are guilty of excessive love and thought of self, who live for self, who feel that any desire within themselves justifies any moral action, come under this classification.

**COVETOUS.** The Greek word here is *philarguros*. It means lovers of money, or money lovers. It speaks of those who are avaricious, those who are excessively eager to obtain and hold money. This love of money is sometimes camouflaged under such

euphemistic terms as ambition, drive, and zeal. Its manifestations are seen in many things, an extreme case being those who put bombs on planes killing all passengers in the hope of collecting insurance. It is also seen in the great rash of gambling that is so prevalent all over the world.

**BOASTERS.** The Greek word (*alazones*) means boastful, ostentatious, empty pretenders, given to pretentious parades. A whole book has been written on this by Vance Packard under title of "The Status Seekers."

**PROUD.** The word here is *huperphanoi*. It means haughty, arrogant, a disposition to claim or take to oneself, often domineeringly or aggressively, more consideration and honor than is warranted or justly due. Many world leaders are afflicted with this malady.

**BLASPHEMERS.** The word *blasphemoi* means a calumniator, one who accuses falsely and maliciously, who seeks by aspersion and villification to destroy the name or reputation of another. This seems to be normal practice in political warfare. There are many fanatical extremists who defame and slander for the purpose of injuring those whom they oppose.

**DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS.** The word for "disobedient" is *apeithes* which means stubborn or unpersuadable. It speaks of those who have no regard for the advice and teaching of parents; the parents whose very flesh and blood the children are, from whom the children receive countless benefactions. Inasmuch as parents were the rulers over children at the time Paul wrote, this may have reference to those today who are stubborn in regard to all authority and who refuse to be persuaded by it. Nevertheless, disrespect for parents, especially the male parent, is one of the frightful signatures of our present time.

**UNTHANKFUL.** The word here is *acharistoi* which is the word for grace with the negating prefix "a" (alpha) before it. It means ungrateful, and speaks of those who have no proper sense of feeling for favors received and no willingness to acknowledge or repay a benefit. This word may also describe those who are without any sense of what is right, and it can also be used of that which lacks attractiveness and charm. Most art, music, and literature of today is devoid of grace.

**UNHOLY.** This word (*anosios*) means unbenign, malign, or malignant; disposed to do harm, inflict suffering, or cause distress. The dope pushers and peddlers of pornographic literature are prime examples of this malignant character.

**WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION.** These three words are one word in the Greek (*astro gos*). This word means calloused; that is, hard; hardened in sensibility and feeling.

**TRUCEBREAKERS.** This is a poor translation of *aspondos* which means implacable, unrelenting - an absence of pity or any feeling that would cause one to relent and restrain through compassion the fury or violence of one's rage, hatred, or hostility. More people are being beaten to death today than at any other time in the past two thousand years.

**FALSE ACCUSERS.** The word is *diabolos* which is probably familiar even to those who know no Greek. It is usually translated "devil", but literally means slanderer. It speaks of those who are scurrilous, coarsely abusive, . and vituperative. These are too numerous to need pointing out, but Khrushchev can be pointed to as the present prime example, with Castro in the number two spot.

**INCONTINENT.** A continent person is one who exercises restraint as to the indulgence of desires or passions. The incontinent are those who do not restrain the passions or appetites, particularly the sexual appetite. The Greek word *akrates* means uncontrollable, without self-control. This is seen in the alcoholics, the compulsive gamblers, the impulsive killers, and the sexual perverts who know no law but their own desires.

**FIERCE.** The word *anemos* means brutal, inhuman, cruel. J. Edgar Hoover says there is no way of understanding or explaining the senseless brutality of present-day criminals. A reflection of this is seen in the brutality that characterizes so many sports, also the programs on television and in motion pictures.

**DESPISERS OF THOSE THAT ARE GOOD.** This phrase is one word, *aphilagathos*. It means averse to the good, without love of goodness, haters of goodness. This aversity to goodness has permeated the youth of our land, as any schoolboy or schoolgirl who has tried to maintain a moral code will testify. These "haters of goodness" not only practice evil but applaud all others who do the same. They reject the very notion that some acts of men are immoral.

**TRAITORS.** The Greek word here is *prodotes*. It means betrayers, and includes all who are treacherous, disloyal, or perfidious. To cite examples would be pointing out the obvious.

**HEADY.** Rash or headstrong would be a more literal translation of the word *prophetes* which is used here. Seen so often in the youth of today - the teenager who has not yet found himself, yet thinks he has found a girl to be his wife. This word describes all who rush into acts under the influence of passions or emotions.

**HIGHMINDED.** The Greek word is *tuphloo*, which means conceited, self important, failure to see oneself truly. Wuest says that the participle here is perfect in tense, and speaks of a person who in the past has come to a state of such pride, and is so puffed up, that his mind as a permanent result is beclouded and sotted with pride.

**LOVERS OF PLEASURE MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD.** In this final specification we arrive at the climax which deals with God. Paul's indictment started out with two "lover" terms, lovers of self and lovers of money. Now it ends with two "lover" terms, lovers of that which is pleasant but not lovers of God. Paul proves himself a prophet, declaring 1900 years ago what men are able to describe only today as they face the fulfillment of his words. Recently the Roman Catholic Bishops in the United States issued their annual statement. In part they said:

Ignorance of moral principles and the rejection of the very notion of morality are on the *rise* today and threaten to undermine our nation and its most sacred traditions.

The evidences of our moral decline are everywhere to be seen: in the alarming increase in crime, particularly among the young; *in* the sensational treatment of violence and sexuality in literature, on the stage, screen and television; *in* the disclosures of greed and cynicism in government, labor and business; in the stubborn continuance of race prejudice and injustice; in the multiplication of divorce and in the rapid disintegration of the family; *in* a harsh and pagan disregard of the sacredness of human life concealed under the mantle of science.

This present moral deterioration cannot be interpreted as a mere temporary relaxation of standards which will be followed by the sort of moral reform past experience would lead us to expect. The conditions we face are unique; of them, the past gives neither precedent nor guide. Many men are questioning and often denying the objective distinction between good and evil and the ability of human reason to know with certainty what is right and wrong. They are *cutting* themselves off completely from moral *traditions*. For the first time in history, they find themselves without a moral law to break.

These Catholic Bishops find the moral climate of today to parallel the description given by Paul at the beginning of the Christian era. However, Paul goes on to deal with a matter in which the Catholic church itself is deeply involved.

**HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS BUT DENYING THE POWER THEREOF.** This sets forth a way of life that is more evident today than ever before. One is no longer surprised to find among professing Christians a complete and total ignorance of everything that is Biblical. This seems to be quite normal. If they believe anything that is true to the Word it is a mere accident and not based upon any conviction that comes from having searched the sacred Scripture. Six months ago a newspaper article provided dramatic proof of men having a form of godliness but denying its power. It was written by Mr. Louis Cassels and was distributed to newspapers by *United Press International*. He said in part:

John and Ellen Jones are active church members. They get up early every Sunday morning to bring their three children to the 9:15 Family Worship Service at the Suburban Heights Presbyterian Church. John was raised a Baptist, and Ellen grew up in the Episcopal Church. But they joined the Presbyterian Church when they moved into their new neighborhood, because it is close to their home, and most of the children's playmates go to Sunday school there.

They have become, in their Pastor's favorite phrase, deeply "involved" in the life of their congregation. John is an usher and was chairman of the every member canvass last fall. Ellen teaches a Sunday school class, and never says no when she's asked to help with a church supper or a bake sale.

Recently one of the Jones' children was seriously injured in an accident. The Pastor joined John and Ellen in their anxious vigil at the hospital. It was the first time he had had occasion to talk with them, on a deeper level than polite conversation, about life and death and the meaning of Christian faith.

He was startled to discover that John did not believe in life after death, and that Ellen was strongly attached to the idea of reincarnation. Neither of them had more than a vague conception of the Christian teaching about Resurrection and Eternal Life.

The Jones are not an actual couple. They are a composite of 1,000 typical American Protestant families whose religious attitudes were studied in a four-year, nationwide survey initiated by the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

The survey was based on depth interviews conducted by professionally trained workers under the direction of Profs. Roy W. Fairchild of San Francisco Theological Seminary and John Charles Wynn of Colgate Rochester Divinity School. The findings have just been published by Association Press in a book entitled "Families in the Church: a Protestant Survey."

This is the most careful and comprehensive effort *yet* made to answer a question that has long haunted clergymen: How real and how deep is the Christian commitment of the millions of Americans who have joined churches in the postwar "Religious Revival"?

The people covered by this survey were mostly young or middle-aged parents who had, in a classic American pattern "followed their children to church."

They were not casual members on the fringe of parish life. They were unusually faithful in church attendance, and willing workers in all kinds of congregational activities. Many were church officers or Sunday school teachers.

In such a group, if anywhere, one would expect to find thorough knowledge and profound personal commitment to the essential doctrines of the Christian Faith. But the researchers encountered mature and articulate faith in relatively few of the persons interviewed. The vast majority were "vague and confused about the church and its beliefs."



"Misunderstandings about the distinctiveness of Christianity were rife", the authors report. "For many, if not most, the Christian faith was either coincidental with moralism, or else about the same as communion with nature. "

Many equated Christianity with "the American way of life." And there was a prevalent view that it is important to "have faith" but that it doesn't matter much in what or in whom.

A large majority looked upon the church as "a building with an employed staff and a scheduled program engaged in the same basic business as other character building agencies." Some said they joined the church because they wanted "a sense of belonging" or wanted to get their children into wholesome activities. Others gave their time and effort to the church in the civic-minded belief that it was "a good thing for a community to have - like substantial banks, swim clubs or a city dump."

The authors summed up the lesson of the survey in one sentence: "It graphically showed how much additional Christian education is needed by even the active adults of our parish churches today."

Having examined the book, my own summation would be that the survey graphically shows that most persons who have joined churches in the so-called postwar revival must be classified as those who have put on the form of godliness but who deny the power of it. This is a fair appraisal when there is a "prevalent view" that is it important to have faith but that it matters not in what or in whom.

What attitude shall the active believer in the Lord Jesus Christ take toward these? Paul provides the answer:

**FROM SUCH TURN AWAY.** Phillips has rendered this, "You must keep clear of people like this," and Moffatt translates it, "Avoid all such." There are many who feel we should get among people like this and work with them to correct these conditions, join with them in whatever service projects we may be able to agree upon. But you will not be able to help them. They will only hurt you. We are to keep clear of any or all who have only the form of godliness. At this point Paul digresses slightly and says: **For of this sort, that is, from these evil men which I have already mentioned, come certain ones who worm their way into homes and find prey among silly women, women who are burdened with sins and being impelled by various desires and gratifications, who are always learning, and yet are never able to come into a realization of the truth. And just as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, these evil workers also are withstanding the truth, men of depraved mind, disqualified as to the faith (Paraphrase of 2 Tim. 3:6-8).**

Following this statement is one of the most important declarations in this portion; a declaration usually ignored by expositors as they do not seem to know what it means or how it can ever be fulfilled. **But they shall proceed no further for their folly shall be manifest unto all men. 2 Tim. 3 :9.**

This answers the question: What is the end of all such men? Do they go on forever? Do they in time coalesce and prevail over the whole of mankind? Are they visited with great wrath and wiped from the face of the earth?

According to Paul, nothing set forth above describes their end. He tells us that a time comes when they are stopped in their tracks - not by a visitation of wrath but by a visitation of light. There is a destined limit to their evil activities and beyond this they cannot go. A time comes when their folly (or madness) shall be obvious to all, even the ones who are guilty of all the things listed above. At some point in the history of evil men, God will break forth in light and truth and make obvious to all the senselessness of those who practice these evils, especially the senselessness of those who lead others along these same paths. The only way this can be accomplished is for divine truth and light to break upon the earthly scene in such fullness that it touches every member of the human race.

When all the facts set forth in 2 Timothy 3:1-9 are taken and woven into a pattern of truth they bring the conviction that in the concluding days of God's long display of grace, the recurring periods of peril will make it seem as if the whole human race will be living on the slopes of an active volcano which constantly threatens to erupt. Men will wish to move away from it and be done with it but there is no place they can go to be safe from its major and minor threats. There will be rumblings, flashes of fire, small eruptions, fissures, and the constant falling of volcanic dust to remind them of the nearness of the threat. The volcanologists will warn men that all signs indicate a major eruption that will wipe out everyone. And yet the eruption never comes. The threat of it never lessons, yet it never comes.

This, I firmly believe, illustrates the truth set forth by Paul in this portion of Scripture. He predicts recurring periods of peril, one following another with little or no respite in between. These are fraught with danger for the individual, and many will personally feel their harshness as they run their course. These dangers are so great that if they should ever fuse together it would result in a holocaust that would mean the end of the human race. However, the Bible does not predict any such end for mankind. It does predict periods of peril and the presence of evil men, but it predicts no holocaust that will wipe man from the earth.

In fact, as noted before, Paul in one brief statement shows what the end will be: **"They shall proceed no further: for their folly will be manifest unto all men."**

Since these men will not come to the light, then God will bring light upon them. This will mean that God will break into men's minds and man's history in a supernatural manner.

Paul does not need to go into great detail here. The great truth of divine intervention is one that is fully taught in many places in both the Old and New Testament. In fact one Psalm is almost parallel in truth with 2 Timothy 3:1-9. Let us consider this. In **Psalm 25:8 we are told: Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will He teach sinners in the way.**

This passage is much stronger in the Hebrew than it is in English. It has troubled expositors, since it speaks of God doing something very wonderful and gracious for sinners. Few indeed can allow any such idea as most men are implacable and unrelenting and they feel that God should be the same. They hold that frightful punishments are all that await sinners. But God has spoken concerning this, and we need to carefully consider just what it is that God plans to do in regard to the world of sinners.

The word translated "teach" here is *yarah*. It does not denote a long or continuous process. It is translated teach 46 times, shoot 19, cast 5, direct 1, and inform 1. It speaks of an instantaneous work of God. Once it is accomplished, the object of this work is taught, that is, informed. The result of this is set forth in another Psalm.

In Psalm 64, which parallels in truth 2 Timothy 3, we read about "the workers of iniquity." In this phrase we have all the eighteen classifications spoken of by Paul. The Psalmist mentions the calumniators and the slanderers even as does the Apostle. He declares that "they search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search", which shows they are averse to goodness. Then a revelation is given as to what the end of these workers of iniquity will be.

**But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. Psalm 64 :7.**

This may sound terrible, yet it is one of the most gracious acts God will ever perform. The word translated "shoot" here is *yarah*, the same word translated "teach" in Psalm 25:8. Both passages refer to the same act of God. The arrow they will be shot with is an arrow of truth. This truth is related to "the way" and has to do with absolute light concerning the One who is the way (John 14:6). This act of God will fulfill His promise of a time to come when Christ shall be manifested (**Col 3:4**). This happens with great suddenness - "**suddenly shall they be wounded**", even as Paul declared, "**they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifested to all**"

The results that come from God shooting the workers of iniquity with an arrow of truth is hard to believe.

**So shall they make their own tongue to fall upon themselves; all who see them will wag their heads. Psa. 64 :8.**

Thus they condemn themselves. These men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil, and refused to come to the light lest their deeds should be reproved. Therefore, God brings the light to them. Thus they see the folly of their own deeds. As a further result "all men shall fear." Since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, this is only the start. Men will declare what God has done, and give great study to His accomplishments.

**The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in Him; and all the upright in heart shall glory. Psalm 64:10.**

More than a decade ago, Bertrand Russell declared that before the end of the present century, unless something quite unforeseeable occurs, one of three possibilities will have been realized. These three, he insists, are: 1. The end of human life, perhaps of all life on our planet. 2. A reversion to barbarism after a catastrophic diminution of the population of the globe. 3. A unification of the world under a single government, possessing a monopoly of all the major weapons of war.(Sorry, Bettrand, it is now 2005 - - ED)

Limited possibilities such as these are about the best one would expect from one such as Russell who denies the existence of God. However, these three possibilities, with minor variations, seem to sum up much of the popular thinking of today. Many there are indeed who feel we live in a time when the human race is caught in powerful and fearful destructive forces from which it cannot extricate itself. One widely-read writer suggests that if one nation should make the wrong move, we may be the last generation of mankind.

This can be called the hopeless view. It is one that should not be held by anyone who believes the Bible to be the Word of God. There are two great declarations concerning this:

**For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come into the knowledge of truth. 1 Tim. 2:3,4.**

**This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe. 1 Tim. 4:9, 10.**

Failure to carefully study and to honestly interpret the words of these two passages has deprived most Christians of the solid hope and encouragement that is to be found

in them. The orthodox have left these passages very much alone for fear they would become involved in some form of universal salvation, and the universalists have used them to support their idea that off in some far distant future every man who has ever lived upon the earth will be restored to God's favor.

I make no attempt to fully expound these passages as this is not the place for it, but will say that if a study is made of the term "all men" it will be found that it is a Pauline idiom. Out of twenty three occurrences, Paul uses it seventeen times; Luke, his traveling companion, used it four times; and John uses it two times. It means "men as such", that is mankind, humankind, or the human race.

Therefore **I will say** to all those **who profess faith in God yet live in fear that the human race might perish**: O fools and slow of heart to believe what God has said. Do you not know that He has willed the preservation of mankind, and declared Himself to be the Savior of the human race? How then can it perish in some holocaust created by man?

The second possibility, the catastrophic diminution of the population of the globe, is a basic idea held by many who profess faith in the Word of God, but due to wrong division they are ignorant of its real message. Many indeed hold that there is to be a sudden removal of all believers from the earth, after which the earth will be racked by internecine warfare which can do nothing else but wipe out the greater part, if not all, of mankind. This frightful holocaust, they believe, is to be followed by the return of Christ with His saints to rule over the earth. Those who hold this idea fail to see that there would be little left over which to rule, and that those coming back to rule would greatly outnumber those left to be ruled.

The people who style themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses" insist that there is to be one great final battle, "the battle of Armageddon" which will wipe out all of mankind except the members (in good standing) of their sect, after which they will take over and rule the earth.

It seems that Dr. Billy Graham believes there will be a catastrophic diminution of the population of the earth. In answer to a question he recently declared: "The 'last war', the nuclear one, will be so great that all other wars of history will seem as sham battles. There will be no chance of escape as the creeping death of radiation envelopes the earth."

If such a thing as this ever takes place it will mean that the world, that is, the order or system in which men live, will have been destroyed. This would serve only to bring dishonor upon the Lord Jesus Christ, inasmuch as we are told "**the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world**" (1 John 4:14). Will He stand by and do nothing if men ever attempt to destroy the world? Will He fail to do the thing God has commissioned Him to do?

There are those who believe that God will permit a nuclear war in order to punish men for their sins, then at the moment when mankind is at the extreme point and ready to perish God will intervene and rescue those that are left. Such punishment of course would be without discrimination, and those who remain would be the ones who were tough enough to stand up under it. The senselessness of such an idea is apparent. If God had punished each generation in turn for their sins, then it would be just and right for Him to punish the present generation. Otherwise it would be as if a man who had never punished his children, upon seeing how they had turned out, should at long last decide to punish the last one for all the faults of the older ones.

### **In Him Shall the Nations Trust**

Reformed theology saw no future for any nation. At what they called "the day of judgment" a great separation was to be made with all the righteous finding a place in heaven and all the wicked finding a place in hell. The earth was to be destroyed, and then through all eternity men would exist either in hell or in heaven. There was no place in this system for a definite period of divine government during which the nations would be found trusting in Christ.

In the prewritten history of nations there comes a time when as a result of great divine activity the nations of the earth do put their trust in Jesus Christ, yielding completely to His sovereignty, giving up any or all of their own sovereignty if asked to do so by Him. Anyone who does not have a place for this in his thinking is lacking something that is definitely declared in the Word of God.

**Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him.**

**Psalm 72 :11.**

**And men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.**

**Psalm 72:17.**

**So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth Thy glory. Psalm 102 :15.**

**And in His name shall the nations trust. Matt. 12 :21.**

**And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the nations, in Him shall the nations trust. Rom. 15:12.**

In view of these declarations, can any man controlled by the Word of God say that there is no time in the future when nations shall serve Him, shall call Him blessed, shall fear His name and shall rely upon Christ.

But how shall this be? How does this come about? These are questions that are sure to be asked. The Bible gives the answer.

It is declared in the Word of God that if Christ makes request, the nations will be given to Him as His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Psalm 2:8). That He does make this request and that they are given to Him is seen in the next statement:

**Thou shalt shepherd them with a sceptre of iron. As a potter's vessel shalt thou dash them to pieces. Psalm 2:9 (Rotherham).**

The "sceptre of iron" is the symbol or the absolute, resistless force of His government, and He will remake nations even as a potter does a vessel which is not to his liking. See Jer. 18: 1-10 for the meaning of this symbol.

Today there are over one hundred bodies of organized people upon the earth. These constitute the nations. Some of these are really too small to be successful or strong nations, but they can often make out by threatening to become a cipher to some big nation's factor. Other nations are so big that they are unwieldy, and may be fragmented at any time. Some companies of organized people that are nations today may not be nations tomorrow, and other people who are not nations may emerge upon the scene and qualify as such.

All nations upon the earth today are made by men and by circumstances. None of them can claim divine origin, not even the nation that styles itself as "Israeli" (the Israel). There is a common myth about good and bad nations which will not stand up if carefully scrutinized.

At some point in the history of nations, Jesus Christ asks the Father and all nations are given to Him as His portion. This includes those individuals who are not parts of any nation. The phrase "uttermost parts of the earth" should be translated "the ends of the earth." This means those living in the most remote places.

This will seem unbelievable to many. "What would Christ want with all these wicked, snarling, and decadent nations?" someone is sure to ask. They feel all nations must be wiped out and a new beginning made, even as God did in the time of the flood.

It is readily admitted that Christ asking that the nations be given to Him is about the same as if a man should seek to adopt a hundred delinquent, diseased, immoral, undependable and uncontrollable children. No man in his right mind would do this. He would realize his inability to feed, clothe, educate, discipline, and heal such a motley group.

However, Jesus Christ to whom all power in heaven and on earth has been given is entirely capable of feeding, clothing and healing every nation upon the earth. He will ask, and these nations will be given to Him as His possession. He will take to Himself

His great power and He will reign. The nations will be His to do with them as He will. Some nations (as nations, not as people) will be eliminated, others will be merged, some will need to be broken up into smaller nations, and all will need to be radically changed. Thus God becomes the "maker" of nations, making possible the fulfillment of **Psalm 86:9**:

**All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.**

Thus in Scripture we have the beautiful picture of God giving the nations to Christ as His possession (Psa. 2:8, 82:8); of Christ becoming the governor among the nations (Psa. 22: 28); of all nations serving Him (Psa. 72: 11); of all nations calling Him blessed (Psa. 72: 17); of God being exalted among the nations (Psa. 46: 10); of nations putting their trust in Him (Matt. 12: 21 ) . Such blessed conditions may seem impossible, but it needs to be remembered that what Christ did for Paul, He can also do for a nation or all nations.

Nevertheless, there are many who while admitting that the picture above is one predicted in God's Word, yet they insist it will only be fulfilled after God pours out frightful punishments upon the nations; which punishments, they insist culminate in the second coming and personal presence of Christ. I insist that the sacred Scriptures by means of exceedingly plain statements teach otherwise. The realization of the goal that "in Him shall the nations trust" is not to be brought about by the pouring out of wrath, neither is it related to the second coming of Christ.

Matthew 12:18-21 is the proof of this. This passage opens with a declaration of Jesus Christ, after which it says: "**He shall shew judgment to the nations.**" This glorious truth is lost upon those who make "judgment" to be punishment or wrath. How can this be when we are told that "**the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb**" (Psa.19:9-10).

To judge is to determine what is right and to declare what is right. God's judgments, when shown to the nations, will tell every nation what God has determined to be right and what He has declared to be right. This is something of which no nation can be sure today. They are like musicians without a score. They must improvise from day to day, doing that which seems best at the moment. But this is not always to be. The time will come when He will show judgment to the nations.

The Old Testament is filled with statements and predictions concerning this.

**The Lord shall judge (determine what is right) for the peoples (plural). Psalm 7:8.**

**And He shall judge the world in righteousness, He shall minister judgment to the peoples in uprightness. Psa. 9:8**



**0 let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the peoples righteously, and govern the nations upon the earth. Psa. 67 :4.**

**Arise, 0 God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations. Psa. 82 :8.**

**Say among the nations that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: He shall judge the peoples righteously. Psa. 96:10.**

But to return to **Matthew 12: 18-21**. Notice carefully the five things He will **not do** in accomplishing the result of nations relying on His name

1. **He will not strive.** There is to be no wrangle or brawl between Christ and the nations, as is always the case when one human government overthrows another.

2. **He will not cry.** There will be no shouting or clamoring. No mobs will be in the streets.

3. **His voice will not be heard in the streets.** His will, *His* word, His judgments are not made known by proclamation. They are implanted in the minds of men, even as an arrow is shot *into* a body.

4. **He will not break a bruised reed.** He does not intend that anyone shall get hurt. There is no display of fierceness in order to make men afraid.

5. **He will not quench smoking flax.** The tenderness of His methods are beyond the comprehension of brutal men. His work is to heal and not to hurt. However, it needs to be noted that some feel His wrath after He has sent forth judgment unto victory. Wave upon wave of truth and light flowing to the minds of men will result in victory for Him. If this light and truth which He so graciously gives seeps down from the minds to the hearts of men they will be permitted to live under His government. If not, He having gained the victory will be free to break and quench all opposition. But even if some who are unyielding must be eliminated, the final result is that the nations will put their trust in Him. In view of this:

How can this begin with the return of Christ, since He descends from heaven with a shout? (1 Thess. 4:14.)

The idea of a single, supreme, human government being the solution of the problems of this world is the worst patch of quicksand on which man has ever tried to build. The utter dedication of some men to this goal is almost frightening. They would surrender every right, every freedom, and all sovereignty in order to gain this goal. They willingly commit themselves to be slaves of a government that does not exist. They dream of its perfection, of *its* government of perfect equity and justice. But since

men have not shown themselves to be adept in governing their own countries, there is no indication that they would do any better if they were given unlimited realms to govern.

A world government would require a world sovereign, president, king, monarch or some such chief authority. It would require a world parliament, senate, congress, or some such law-making body. There would need to be some powerful system of checks and balances so that no branch of government gets out of line or takes to itself too much authority. Yet such things as these have never worked too well even in countries where people are very much alike. How then can they work among people who are totally unlike? Any nation would be playing the fool to surrender sovereignty to an organization conceived and conducted by fallible and mortal men. But the time will come when all nations will put their trust in Christ. Even nations which are now His avowed enemies will yield to Him, taking the place of submission at His feet.

**Through the greatness of Thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto Thee. Psa. 66 :3.**

This submission is brought about by the skill and perfection of His government, not by some great display of rage.

**For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. 1 Cor.15:25.**

To reign is to govern, and it is by a process of government that His enemies are brought to the place of submission. This governing is done while He is at the right hand of God.

**The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. Acts 2 :34, 35.**

Jesus Christ will never leave the right hand of God until even those nations which are now His avowed enemies have submitted to Him. Nations will yield sovereignty to Christ as a result of His own motivating work.

There are those who insist that the world will grow continually worse, with men becoming more and more wicked until everything amalgamates in some kind of a world empire ruled by a supreme dictator called the antichrist. Passages such as **2 Thessalonians 2: 1-8** are cited in proof of this. There we read:

**Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as**

**that the day of the Lord is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 2 Thess. 2 :1-4.**

This passage deals with the coming of the day of the Lord, and it is evident that Israel's ancient temple must be rebuilt and reestablished as the temple of God before the scenes predicted here can take place. This will not be done in "man's day" which is the present time, but it will be done in Christ's day, a period of time which precedes the day of the Lord. In order to move all this forward and make it the next thing to happen, men have been forced to ignore and cover up the things God has said would happen before the coming of the great and notable day of the Lord. To Israel He has said:

**Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:5, 6.**

While this is applicable only to the people of Israel, think what it would mean to the world as a whole if it were fulfilled to that people. It would produce a spiritual force in the world which would overwhelm all the forces of darkness. Then God could say to Israel:

**Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Isa. 60 :1-3.**

But there is another passage that not only embraces Israel, it takes in every man upon the earth. This too must precede the day of the Lord.

**It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. Acts 2:17-20.**

There are many men who find this hard to believe. Their faith is not equal to it. They insist that since Peter was speaking to "Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem" the term "all flesh" must be limited to Israel. But if this is true, why enlarge it to Israel? Why not be honest and limit it to those Israelites who are Judeans, or who have residence in Jerusalem?

Would these same men insist that "all flesh" is limited to the family of Noah, since "God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before Me" (Genesis 6: B)? Why not compare Scripture with Scripture and get what God means by His words?

In conclusion, let the fact be faced that the Bible declares a time of divine intervention when by a supernatural act of God His government will be established upon the earth. This will be a new and different order of existence for mankind, bringing to all men a new moral law and a new conscience to comprehend it. This new order is to be characterized by God's government, not by His grace. We are now living in the concluding days of God's long display of grace. A record has been written, a fact has been established. He is gracious beyond all human thought and comprehension.

But we can rest assured that His long display of grace will not end in a great display of wrath. His greatest act of grace is yet to be. It will be a fitting and proper conclusion for all His acts of grace. Upon the sinful and undeserving human race He will pour out light, truth, and health. To nations, He will make known His judgments. The world will be rescued from the sin and death that long ago entered into it. Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

**Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Luke 3 :5, 6.**

**The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Isa. 52:10.**

**And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Isa. 40 :5.**

### **The Resultant Day**

While Paul spoke of "the last days" in reference to God's long display of grace, our Lord spoke of "the last day" or the resultant day that will certainly follow the world's long night. Paul also spoke of this day when he said: "**The night is far spent the day is at hand**" (Rom. 13: 12). Our Lord declared He would lose nothing of all the Father gives to Him but would raise him up again in the last (resultant) day (John 6:39). Martha used this same term when she declared of, her dead brother: "**I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection in the last day**" (John 11 :24).

This statement then becomes the context of one of the most wonderful promises made by our Lord:

**Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: He that believeth in Me, though he were dead (that is, even if he should die and be dead at the coming of that day) yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me (that is, should be living and believing when that day comes) shall never die. Believeth thou this?**

In answer I would say, "Lord, I believe! Let the resultant day come!"

**THE END SS11**