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PROPHECY - HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS

Rev. 1:7

INTRODUCTION:

In our last message on prophecy we dealt with the situation as the world would be as predicted in the New Testament. Let me make one parting comment. Everyone was shocked at the Halloween terror that took place in Pasadena, Texas. The community was shocked, surprised, and rattled by the emotions in the tragedy that left an eight year old boy dead from eating poisoned candy. Timothy O'Brian was dead the next day after he ate the contents of a candy-filled straw laced with cyanide. The boy's father, Ronald O'Brian, 30 years old, an optician---claimed that the straws were put there when he knocked on some door in the community. Laboratory tests confirm that there were four other similar straws given to children accompanying his boy. People went through several days in the neighborhood wondering what was going to take place. It was a state of terror and they would not let the kids out to even wander around, until very quietly the police arrested the boy's father and charged him with the murder of his son. A man said his kids almost ate the same poison and he came close to burying his kids - had it not been for the house being clean. And the mother said she didn't want candy all over everything. And so he put it on the counter and it remained untouched until the police picked it up. It was learned that the father had insured a couple of his children for \$38,000.00. And a house to house canvassed failed to disclose more of the poison. Then there was an unconfirmed report that the father was connected with the loss of \$12,000.00 in the firm in which he works. The police chief said that you would be surprised just what the motive was behind this case and this man arrested.

Now the thing about this story is that this man seemed to be a good man in the front. He was active in a church. He was supposedly a Christian. And he attended church and served in the church and was active. And he even gave a eulogy of his

dead son at a church meeting, in the paraphrase of a hymn - Blessed Assurance. On Sunday night, the day after his son's funeral. He said that Brian - this was Tim's story, this was Tim's song, praising his Saviour all day long. Now this appeared to be given in strong faith. Now the Bible tells us that in these last days, there will be awful violence, lawlessness, and people would be doing things that even some of those who were the very elect, would have their faith brought into question about what was happening in the world.

Dr. Verghese says that there is a form of godliness without the power thereof that exists because we in the church have too often tried to get people to act like Christians, who have never committed their lives to Christ. Instead of reality, we have form. A form of godliness but denying the power thereof.

In one of Hollywood's swinging stars supported by a chorus - gave out these words. "I'm saved, oh yes, I'm saved. My soul is saved." But one cannot help but ask the question. From what?

In The Graduate, a film, it features - "And here's to you Miss Robinson. Jesus loves you more than ye will know. Ho Ho Ho." Heaven holds a place for those who pray. Hey, Hey, Hey."

Now surely this mockery of religion - their conduct denies that it is valid. It is like an autumn leaf - it is dry, it is dead, it may retain the form or a structure. But Jesus cautioned his disciples the love of many shall wax cold. Matt. 24:12. Now Paul describes these people how in the last days folks would be loving all the time what gives them pleasure instead of loving God. Worshippers in whom love for God is replaced by love of pleasures. Now these people are neither hot nor cold. And this generation of ours today, it may seem as straight as a gun barrel but just as empty.

Jude says, but you my friends must fortify yourselves in your most sacred faith. Continue to pray in the power of the holy spirit. Keep yourselves in the love of God and look forward to the day when our Lord, Jesus Christ, will give eternal life. Retreat is not a thing of Christianity. A steady decline in church membership and church attendance, in proportion to the population increase is not really in accord with God's plan. Billy Sunday once remarked, apathy, there wouldn't be so many non-going church members if there weren't so many non-going churches. The world expects the church to have a message. A message too often they simply do not have. Much of the blame of the falling away from the church must be put on the unholiness of the church itself. A condition that Jesus predicted prior to his coming and the end of the age. Iniquity shall abound. Imposters will be in the church. And will go on from bad to worse. Deceivers and deceived.

Now it is a painful thing to have to point out that the fulfillment around us of these predictions simply are taking place.

Now this takes place many times in the church. The church wants to keep up with the methods and the swing of the world. In it's way of life, in it's music style and in every way that the world promotes things - the church is copying. There was news that in Wisconsin a church put on a play - A Paradise Now. Where on the stage, nearly nude performers inspired the audience to strip. Two females and five males did so completely. Now what do we expect society at large to do when this kind of thing goes on in a church. When we are permitted and we are promoting pre-marital sex relations on the church premises. In the final stage, Jude says there will be men who pour scorn on religion and follow there own godless lust.

Now these things are influencing church men and even church members to move toward this. Peter described this, there shall be those who turn back and abandon

the sacred commandments delivered to them. For them the proverb has proved true. "The dogs return to its own vomit. And the sow after a wash to her wallowing in the mire. 2 Peter 2:21-22. Moral lapses and accidents have always appeared in the history of the church. But this sort of thing being sponsored by church men is something that previous generations simply could not have the credit for.

Now God's spirit tells us that in the latter days, I Tim. 4:1-2, there will be teachings given by men who are lying hypocrites." And nothing in the world acts as a stumbling block that makes religion one of the best armours that man can put on - but it may be the worst cloak. A man's character may be like a fence somebody said - all the white wash in the world won't strengthen it. And your weeping in the church will not do it good. And the person who can talk religion and cannot live it is a hypocrite. Now I know many church members who have been starched and ironed, but as they say - they have never been washed. Because they have two faces.

Now somebody said that there are too many people playing guitars. And do not actually believe in God and saving people's souls.

Jesus saw people during his incarnation - as he sees them today. Thinking, scattered abroad without a shepherd. Nothing reflects confusion more than a flock of sheep without a shepherd. As Dr. Nelson Bell once says, we are beset by barking dogs. Frustrated by one another and by the natural obstacles around us. Now leaderless sheep will mill around in indecision - unable to meet the problems that confront them. Now this is why every sheep demands a shepherd. It is why every man needs a Saviour and a Lord.

Now I want to remind you of two or three things here.

Just Jesus said that he was going to come back to this earth. Behold, he cometh.

This is the message that Jesus left, with his Disciples.

Now of course, this is another sermon - but we could turn to John 14 and listen to him say, let not your heart be troubled.

Now the word heart here be troubled in the Sudan an evangelist was preaching and he had an interpreter. And they had no word in their language for the word troubled and heart. And so the translator told them something and later the evangelist asked him how he translated the word heart. And here is the way he translated it - "don't keep a quiver in your liver". Now of course, that was the best translation that he could give and it maybe a good translation for us. A quiver in our hearts. We are always troubled. And this was the thing that Jesus wanted to fortify his disciples about. Think about troubled hearts tonight all around this world. And of course, he goes on to say that I will come again. V. 3. So Jesus emphasizes it here that he is coming.

Second, the angels, Acts. 1:11. Mark 16 - where he gave the Great Commission. The angels stood there and said, Jesus is coming again.

Third, Paul said in Thess. 4 - that the trumpet was going to sound and two things were going to take place. The first thing, the resurrection of the dead in Christ, was going to take place. And they were going to become new.

Second, the translation of all living saints - they were going to be caught up to be with him. And translated.

Third, there would be a meeting in the air. So we have had the Billy Graham Crusade. Now the next great crusade is yet to come. It is going to be greater in

scope, in size, in attendance than any crusade you have ever attended. Because Paul said when that trumpet sounds - that is what is going to take place. In the 4th chapter 18th verse of Thess. - he said comfort one another with these words. So Jesus said, don't let your heart be troubled, I am going to come for you. The angels said don't you worry, I am coming back. And Paul says now comfort one another with these words.

Now let us come to this text in Rev. 1:7 - where the chapter has a message for the seven churches - he begins the book with the second coming. And these blessed men scatter these blessings. And peace be with you. They that are good, and are blessing men, and carrying on God's work in those early verses. And he comes and he says, behold, he cometh - ^{Christ} every one is on his way.

As a workman who moves more diligently when he hears the footsteps of his Master.

Christ is pictured as returning as he went away. The angel pointed this out - he comes with clouds. And he points to the Christian hope of the fulfillment of the angels promise in Acts 1:11. Every eye shall see him - this assures us that the coming will be self-evident that all men will recognize it in its significance. Even those people responsible for his death will recognize the great importance of his return.

I. THE PROMISE HERE IS GIVEN (TO FEED THE SOUL) OF A CHRISTIAN

Christ is promised - and John takes this as his picture of the return of our Lord. And he has soaked and saturated with the Old Testament. And John was living in a time when to be a Christian it was an agonizing thing. He himself knew banishment,

imprisonment, and hard labor. And there were many who knew death in its most cruel form. And the best way to maintain the courage and hope in the situation was to remember the past.

The best way to be certain that God would not fail ~~is~~ in the present - is to remember that God had not failed in the past. John strengthened his soul from the present trial by continuously remembering the greatness and the goodness of God in the past.

God was not, so to speak, an untried God. Hitherto, the Lord had helped. And God's arm was not shortened, and his power was not grown less.

In our passage, John sets down the motto. And the text of the whole book of revelation. He sets down the confidence of the triumphant return - to return which would rescue Christians from distress, from cruelty of their enemy. It was John's conviction that sooner or later - the enemies of God must perish. And the friends of God must enter into Glory.

He takes the vision of Daniel - Daniel has a vision of the four beastly powers. Who have held the world in their grip.

The picture - Daniel 7:1-14.

First, there was Babylon - the power that was like a lion. With eagles wings.
7:4.

Persia, the power that was like a savage bear. V. 5.

Greece, the power that was like a winged leopard. V. 6.

Rome, a beast with iron teeth beyond description.

7: But the day of these savage inhuman empires was over. And the dominion was to be given to a human and gentle power like the son of man. To that kindly and gentle power, God, the ancient day would give dominion. I saw in the night visions and behold one like a son of man. Came with the clouds of Heaven. And came to the ancient of days. And they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom that all people - nations and languages should serve him. V. 13-14.

It is from this passage in Daniel, that emerges this ever re-occurring picture. Of Jesus coming on the clouds.

Matt. 24:30 - And then shall appear a sign of the son of man in Heaven. And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. And they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven. With power and great glory. When we strip away from the temporary imagery - we for instance, no longer think of Heaven in a localized place above the sky - we are left with the eternal and unchanging truth that the day comes when Jesus Christ will be Lord of all. And in the hope that there ever has been the strength and the comfort of Christians for whom life was difficult. And for whom Christianity taking it up - meant certain death for them. So I say, first of all, from our text - we have the promise here that our souls are fed with comfort that Jesus is coming again.

II. THE PROMISE OF A PARTICULAR SIGN

This is no secret - but for all to see when he promises - behold he cometh with

clouds. This is indeed a rich statement which John makes.

Let us first note the word behold. This is a reason for deep and lasting attention for us to linger and to look. This same Jesus that went up is coming again.

Do not be blind to this fact. It shows us that this coming is going to be in this way.

First, vividly realized. John is awake. He has caught sight of the Lord and he is coming.

Have we ever realized it - perhaps, we believe it. Or we have mentally thought about it. Have we ever grasp the thought that he is coming again. Have you heard the chariot wheels approaching, in your mind and in your heart. Behold.

Second, zealously proclaimed. John does not just calmly whisper and say Jesus has been talking about coming back. No, he doesn't say some folks think that Jesus is going to come back again - some of the disciples. It is not with an attitude that he is not sure of it.

But behold - just as a king's messenger is sent out to announce by trumpet.

This is no ordinary message. To bring to us - it is not a common place message. Like you would say, dinner is served. Breakfast is ready. No, John says behold. He cometh.

And third, it is absolutely certain that he is coming. Now this word behold is not something that is indefinite. It doesn't say perhaps. He assures the disciples when he went away that he would come again. And that they were to break

bread until he comes.

What could stop his coming. Who could hold him back.

All his saints are waiting for his return. We might question this if he had not already made his first appearance. If we had not known about Jesus being born in Bethlehem in a manger and there reared in Nazareth. And teaching the multitudes and preaching on the Sea of Galilee. Giving the Sermon on the Mount. Healing the sick. Moving among the people. And if we had not known that they had a trial and they had a crucifixion. That they put him on Calvary's hill and they put him in a tomb. And he arose on the third day. If we had not known about the incarnation and the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Jesus, and the ascension of Jesus - we might have some questions about this. If he had not appeared the first time. So, it has a note of absolute certainty in it.

And fourthly, it gives us the feeling that it is going to be immediate. In other words, it is some event. That captures our interest - that in a sense Jesus is already on his way. He is making the arrangements in Heaven - he is preparing the mansions and preparing a place for you. And he has already arranged it. And as his wisdom permits - the preparation has already been made in history. Of course, the event is at the door.

You may grow uneasy tonight and say, well, Jesus had not come yet. But you do not know what he has made arrangements for.

When our Lord comes it shall be seen that he came as quickly as he could. That is why every Christian ought to be witnessing. They ought to be living a godly life. And if Jesus dwells in eternity a thousand years, it is as a day with him.

And the sixth place, notice his coming by this peculiar sign - the cloud. The first thing I say about that is - there will be no secret. It will be manifest in the cloud. Now, John, like the other writers goes back to the Old Testament. Israel could see the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day that led them across the wilderness journey into the promised land.

When God met with Moses - the thick clouds were dark and covered that mountain.

Now there were a couple of things about that cloud - that cloud denoted terror for the ungodly. But that cloud meant glory for the saints. And when the cloud appears and Jesus comes again - it is going to be terror for the sinner. You who have never settled your personal salvation, with Jesus Christ, and second - it is going to be great for the saint. He is going to be caught up. And of course, the ungodly will have to stand before the great white throne. And those who have trusted - they could trust Jesus, they are going to be gloriously welcomed.

Now if you are one of those who thinks you are going to get by with your sin - you are not going to get by with it. Jesus is coming in splendor, majesty, and in power. So we have said, that first, the return of Christ here means there is a promise. That Christ is going to feed the Christian soul, and bring comfort. We have said second, that he is going to come with the clouds. In the clouds, when he comes.

The third thing I want to say is, when Christ comes, he promises that his enemies will be dealt with.

First, every eye shall see him. Every eye! Now this is literal and actual that every eye. It doesn't say that every mind is going to conceive or perceive something.

It even says that those who look on him in hate and pierced him.

Now he does not say that this has some kind of spiritual meaning that you cannot understand. But above all of this - just as literal as the first, we expect to see him just as the saint who died years ago. There will be a resurrection. We will not go into nothingness or be re-incarnated, or become a shadow. But we will see him.

Every eye shall see him.

That leads me to say that first the most learned, the most ignorant, mind will see him. Now the sinner, the filthy person - he will be seen of those who have been dead.

What a sight this is going to be. And what a time this is going to be. To make his point, John quotes the Old Testament but he uses the words of Zach. 12:10. "When they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child. And weeps bitterly over him as one weeps over a first born."

They shall look on me whom they have pierced. The correct reading is - that it shows, as John knew is him - the story behind this is this - God gave his people a good shepherd. But the people in their disobedience and folly killed the good shepherd. And took to themselves evil and self-seeking shepherds.

The day will come when in the grace of God they will bitterly and sorrowfully repent. In that day, they will look on the good shepherd whom they pierced and they will sorrowfully lament for him and for what they have done.

Now John takes this picture and applies it to Jesus. Men crucified Jesus. The day will come and they will look on him again, and this time he will not be a broken figure on a cross, subject to the hate of man,

He will be a figure of glory and splendor. The universal dominion has been given.

We can think of the sorrow and the terror in the hearts of those who see in his majesties glory the Christ whom they have crucified. Now for such, the coming again of Jesus is a terror and a threat.

In every age, all who sin and disregard Jesus Christ, crucify him again. And the day will come when those who disregard Jesus Christ, those who oppose Jesus will find him who as they thought did not matter - the Lord of this universe and the judge of their souls.

Now literally, what a sight. For Judas.

For Pilate.

For Herod.

For those who turned him down. They will be like prisoners who are troubled by the sight of the judge...sinners even in your grave, you will hear him calling you. Come forth to be judged of the deeds done in the body. You are bound to see Christ.

Those who have pierced him, all the company that nailed him to the cross. The man that put the spear in his side. Those that gambled for his clothes.

Those that pierced him with their lives of inconsistency. There are so many of you that are doing that now. By your neglect. It seems that you would put your sin away and look unto Jesus.

I will be there. You will be there. And you will stand in that great throng.

The question is - how will you feel.

Some of you are not accustomed to attending the place of worship. But you will be there. Some of you have no time for the church today. You will be there. Some of you never give a dime to the Lord's work today - but you will be there. Some of you are living for pleasure - you will be there.

Now you maybe absent from the place of worship and God's service from week to week - but you will not be absent from that meeting when he comes in the clouds.

No one will be able to prevent it.

Every old saint of God longs to see Jesus. And they used to sing, I am going to see my Jesus. Adam, Abraham, Moses, all of these great men of history are going to be there.

In the last place, I want to note, that all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.

All the tribes of the earth.

First, this sorrow will be general and universal. You would think that when Christ came, that he would come to be glad - and make gladness in this world and that all of the world would be ready to welcome him. With music, and with singing, preaching, and praise.

How different - all kinds, all nations, there will be weeping and wailing and

gnashing of teeth.

Second, note this sorrow will be great. Wail. And they will sound at length and it will convey its own meaning.

Now I watch and observed many Jews at the wailing wall. Where they were wailing - some were shedding tears. And I have seen people in great sorrow and in great pain. I, myself, have been in sorrow. I know what it is.

If I could convey the meaning here - I think it means when men ring their hands. And burst out with a cry. And they wail as a mother cries over a dead child. I have seen this so many times.

Have you ever looked on the sight of hopeless grief.

The question tonight is, will your voice be heard in that wailing.

I predict this - unless you now flee unto Jesus Christ, it will.

Third, this wailing will be because of him. Why do they wail. They will see his glory and they will recognize and recall how they despised him.

They will see him as a judge.

They refused the cross and his blood.

They know the sentence - "depart from me, ye are cursed". There is no way that I can preach of pleasant things for you who are living in sin tonight.

And unless you seek his face, there will be wrath that you cannot bear.

I would urge you to seek God's mercy tonight. If you will not have him - Jesus is going to come all the same. He is on the road now. When he comes, you will wail. You need to believe and trust and give him your life at this moment.

You remember when Jesus turned and looked on Simon Peter. After he had sinned by denying him. Peter went out into the night and he wept and wailed bitterly.

The look of Jesus had awakened in him his conscience - the sleeping memories.

And he wept as he had never wept before - and he had burning scolding tears running down his cheeks. And there was no comfort. Those tears would not dry up.

And Peter changed his ways - he repented. Now what are you going to do.

And Jesus told about the ten virgins - and the bridegroom came and five of them were without oil...and Jesus said, when he arrived, the five without oil wanted to borrow some. They were frantic - but the door was shut. And there was no further hope for them - no further opportunity.

The grandest sight in all the world is here in this. But let me close by giving you the interpretation of this last part of our text - V. 7 - Chapter 1 of Revelation. Behold, cometh the clouds and every eye shall see him. And they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Even so - ?? In the Greek, these two words. And in the Hebrew, you have here the point of Amen - for a solemn affirmation. Yes, indeed, so let it be.

And by using the expression both in Greek and Hebrew - John stresses it. He especially underlines it as an awful solemn event. But it is going to take place.

Now for the Christian - this will be the grandest sight in all the world.

Calab was a grand sight as he looked across and studied the promise land.

Dewey on the deck of the Olympia sailing into Manilla Bay saying, shoot when you get ready - was a grander sight than all the Pacific Ocean.

The French officer who had lost all of his men said, "rise up, dead men, and drive back the enemy." And there they were wounded and wretched. He was a grander sight than all of France.

When you think about the sins and the pleasures of this world, and you have the privilege of seeing Christ coming on the clouds - that is going to be the grandest sight in all the world.

We shall be like him. And an African once who was translating this said this is just too much to write, in my language. We shall be like him. He says, I prefer, we shall kiss his feet. We shall bow down to him. One of these days, I shall be like my Lord.

Whom shall I be like you Lord - at your coming. The crowning moment is when he comes. We shall see him as he is. On a cloud, in the beauty and glory of the son of God. To one who said, I am the light of the world, Rose is Sharon - did not Tomb not hold - one look in his Face to work all suffering on this Earth - Best is yet to be - Judge, Examine yourselves - Physical Check up Dr. - Spiritual Check up - in light of God's Word world going to Hell - Even so come Lord Jesus