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PROPHECY

PREPARATION FOR HIS COMING

I Cor. 15:52-58

INTRODUCTION:

Everytime the coming of the Lord is mentioned in the Scriptures, we can use it as a basis that God is saying to us -- prepare to meet thy God! The more it appears to me, is that everyone expects to have a show-down with God of some kind, somewhere, at someplace. Even the agnostic expects a show-down.

Two days before Jesus' trial and crucifixion the disciples asked him those questions - when will this happen? What will be the signal for your coming and the end of this world. And Jesus gave an answer - and it was a long one of signs, which when fulfilled, would constitute the signal for his return to earth. The hub of this whole things swings around Matt. 24:44. "Therefore, be ye also ready for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh."

Readiness - that is the key word and it occurs all the way through the New Testament. Jesus, himself, is ready at any moment. Peter states it, he stands ready to pass judgement on the living and the dead. I Peter. 4:5. With his wonderful gift of eternal life, ready to be revealed in the last time. I Peter 1:5.

James exhorts the coming of the Lord is near. "There stands the judge at the door. Chapter 5:8-9.

Often in the Scriptures it is compared to a marriage. Our Lord having gone to prepare a place for us. And he assures us that the wedding is ready. Or again, all things are now ready.

Believers are to expect the return of Christ at any moment. Jesus tells us that your time is short. And that you ought to be ready. You are to live in a readiness.

That was the parable of the ten virgins. They that were ready - went.

Paul begins the last chapter of Timothy with a charge - before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. 2 Tim. 4:1.

Now the crown awaits me. Of righteousness - which the all just judge will award me on that great day. And it is not for me alone but all who set their hearts on the coming appearance. 2 Tim. 4:8.

We find that every prophecy concerning Christ's first coming as a Saviour was literally fulfilled. This gives strong reason for believing that prophecy concerning the second coming will be fulfilled in the same way. There are more than 300 verses that speak of this in the New Testament. Now one preacher put it, now I'm not on the time and place committee. I am on the reception committee. I want to be there to welcome the Lord when he comes.

I. PROPHECY TELLS US THAT HIS COMING AGAIN IS IMPERATIVE

That man is fast degrading within and without. And that he is heading toward destruction apart from the intervension of God. Man simply cannot save himself.

H. G. Wells, and Albert Einstein - have been dead now for some years. But their

observation was that they despaired - this world is at the end of its rope. The end of everything that we call life is close at hand. Later Einstein reasoned, "The ghost like character of this development of atomic weapons is an apparent trend - every step appears as the unavoidable consequence of the preceding one. In the end there beckons more and more clearly general annihilation."

Certainly nothing has happened to reverse this pessimism. Dr. Alan Munn says, this might cause the world and all in it to disintegrate in less than a minute in reference to the nuclear power.

Now Charles Spurgeon spoke of the world - most likely to sink into this sort of a period. Jesus said to his disciples, "then there shall be great misery such as never happened before from the beginning of the world until now. And will never happen again." Yes, if those day were not cut short, no human being would survive. But for the sake of God's people - those days are to be shortened. Matt. 24:21-22. So our Lord promises that when man is about to destroy himself, Jesus will come again.

A chancellor of a Chicago University - where the atomic bomb was developed - said, I cannot see any future to our known world."

The President of Columbia University - "The end cannot be far distant."

Fosdick spoke and reckoned that peace was not something that came down from God - but something to be worked at among men.

Now these things are slightly amusing. But let me give you an illustration

of John Wesley White who told about an experience he had of getting back to his car. His wife was born in Ireland and she was not accustomed to skates, as the people in Canada. And so they were picking their way across a sheet of ice, in front of the church. Now she thought that her husband had gone just ahead of her on her right. But someone had stopped him for a few words and there walked by a man with a black coat like the Preacher's on his way to his car. Reaching out and seizing his arm, the Preacher's wife without looking up - explained darling, let me hang on to you or I will fall on this ice. Over hearing her request - the Preacher excellerated and called from behind - Kathleen, and she thought at first it was something in stereo. Because she was thinking about her apologies. She was startled by the gentleman when he replied - "anyone will latch on to anything on this slippery surface."

There is a truth there - anyone will latch on to anything to keep from falling on a sheet of ice. What about in this world today. That is just what people are doing. Those who do not chose Christ and go to be with him - when he comes again are going to be reaching out in every direction, as the conditions of the world worsen.

John in Rev. - "Then the kings of the earth, the marshall, the rich, the powerful and all men slave or free hid themselves in caves or mountain caves and called out to the mountains, fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the vengenance of the lamb. For the great day of their vengenance is coming and who will be able to stand. Rev. 6:15-17."

Winston Churchill wept in the House of Commons as he reviewed the awful unfolding scene of the future. Only the Christian can stand up and be genuinely confident as Paul wrote - Phil. 1:6 - "One thing I am certain, the one that started the good work in you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."

Paul was certain that there was a day when Jesus Christ was coming and unchange-

able fact - that hope that we hold on is like an anchor for our lives. That is safe and sure.

Now we do not know what automobiles will look like in the year 2000. You never know in which direction the models or styles are going. But Paul wrote in Romans - hope maketh not ashamed. And to Timothy, "I am not ashamed for I know who I have believed. And am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. 2 Tim. 1:12.

Now Dean Matthews of St. Paul's Cathedral in London said - "the world is living on a volcano - not on a rock. Yet Paul said in I. Cor. 3:11 - other foundations can no man lay than that layed in Jesus Christ.

Earl Warren claims he always reads the sports section first in the newspaper. It at least has some cheerful news. The front page has nothing but man's failures. Now in a world of gloom - man can turn to the Bible for the good news of Christ's coming.

A football player went forward in a Crusade meeting. He said, I want to commit my life to Christ. I am getting tired of playing the game without being able to see the goal post. And without the goal post of life - you have no direction. The coming of Christ is a sure fact. And it gives people a goal post.

Now if a compass always points North - so the believer's life always points in the direction of Christ coming again. To me, this is the light for our path.

Campbell Morgan said, "I never lay down my head on the pillow without thinking that perhaps before I awake - the final morning may have dawned. I never begin my

days work without thinking that he may interrupt it and begin his own. Though he tarry past our time reasoned Matthew Henry, he will not tarry past the due time. There is a time, an exact time on God's blueprint schedule for the event of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is imperative that Christ comes back - the immanuel -- God with us. If God is so wonderful - a little Italian girl once said, "why doesn't he show his face." That is precisely what he will do. Behold he is coming. "Every eye shall see him - and among those who pierced him and all the peoples of the world shall lament in remorse. So it shall be. Amen. I am the alpha and the omega says the Lord God. Who is and who was and who is to come. Rev. 1:7-8.

And they shall see the son of man seated on the right hand of God and coming in the clouds. Mark 14:64. The Lord himself shall descend, Paul assures. There were 500 people gazing upwards when he made that point. This Jesus, who has been taken away from you up into Heaven, will come in the same way as you have seen him go. Acts 1:11.

A little girl from a farm riding up the elevator at the Empire State Building, she was a Christian. And when they reached the 86th floor she says, "Mama, will Jesus know we are coming." One thing among others is certain in the Bible. And that is that Jesus Christ knows that we are coming up to be with him forever. Because he personally is coming to get us. Everytime the Christian goes to the Lord's Supper table to celebrate the last supper, he focuses on the return of Christ. This means this due in remembrance until he comes. Everytime we go to work - we hear the Lord's words - occupy until I come. Luke 19:13. For the blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh, shall find watching. Luke 12:37.

II. IMMENSE

The prophecy tells us that it will not only be imperative - but it will be immense. It will be a most glorious trip that man will ever have to take. Paul says looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great Lord, our Saviour Jesus Christ - Titus 2:13 - just when it appears that the world is going up in smoke, Jesus said to lift up your eyes and look and see the son of man on the clouds in great glory and great power.

Now Queen Victoria she was barely 18 when she ascended the throne in the British Empire. Attending officially Handel's The Messiah - she was instructed - the point at which the hallelujah chorus was sung - the entire audience will rise as has been a custom since the days of George I. But you are the Queen - you alone remain seated. The glorious chorus was reached and all stood - her majesty remained seated. But when the thrilling passage - King of Kings, Lord of Lords was reached - the Queen rose and bowed. And not a member of the grand audience missed the significance. "Oh, what a day - one day Christ the secret center of our lives will show himself openly. And when the head shepherd appears you will receive for your own the unfading glory.

Chrysostom a great preacher, was dying. He seemed to see the vision - glorious events. "He called out - easy dying, blessed dying, glorious dying. I have experience more happiness in two hours dying today than in my whole life."

S. B. Bang "the sun is setting - mine is rising. From this bed to a crown farewell."

Martha McCracken rejoiced - "how bright the room - how full of angels."

Margaret Prior - "The chariot has come and I am ready to step in."

Eternity rolls in before me like a sea of glory.

No wonder Jude said, ¹¹ the one who can keep you from falling, in his benediction
- sets you in the presence of His Glory above reproach.

I always thrill when we sing the hymn of Mrs. Breck. Who was blind and yet,
she had an insight - ¹¹ "Face to face shall I behold him. Face to face what will it be.
Face to face in all his glory. I shall see him by and by."

The second coming of Christ is indeed the perpetual light on the path of the
believer which makes the present delightful. If Jesus is not coming again - we should
close our Bibles and our churches. We ought to study about his coming, sing about it,
preach about it, talk about it. And spread this hope everywhere. Jesus said if any
one is ashamed of me and mine in this wicked and godless age - the son of man will be
ashamed of him. When he comes in the glory of his father and holy angels. Mark 8:38.

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III. PROPHECY SAYS IT WILL BE **EMINENT**

That is the event ~~to~~ now to be watched for, waited for, looked for, prayed for,
expected at any moment. And this day that Christ has designed is one that his appearing
is about to take place. Not at this time to all - just to them that look for his
appearing. Heb. 9:28.

Thess., Paul ¹¹ says God has not appointed us to wrath - but to obtain salvation.
He defines Christian as those who have turned from idols to be servants of the living
and the true God. And wait for the appearance from Heaven of the son of Jesus, whom he

raised from the dead. Jesus, our deliverer, from the terrors of judgement to come.

So we are to be blameless in the day of our Lord as Timothy admonished - keep your commission clean and above reproach. One day you will be confronted with the coming of Christ. This will be his own time. Who is the blessed controller of all things. I Tim. 6:16.

Duffield the professor says there are 22 quotations in the epistles alone. Calls to purity, patience, and service in the light of Christ's return. The church wrote 1620 years ago - "with thou for the son of God to judge the quick and the dead. Venture not to declare when, nor on the other hand slumber, for he sayeth watch - we are looking for Christ."

Moody preached this. Wesley preached constantly that Christ's coming was eminent. Declaring no where am I told to watch - but for the coming of the Lord. Each of us must at all times be at our best.)

I Cor. 15:51 - Paul says I want to show you a mystery in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. What has he said - he has said that the trumpet is going to sound. The dead in Christ are going to be raised. The living Christians of that day are going to be changed. He is saying that Christians do not need to be disturbed and worried about those who die in Christ. That the unsaved do not have. So they do not have to worry about death.

For if we believe that Jesus died and arose again, so then them that also sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. V. 14. The bodies are in the cemetery. The spirits have gone to be with the Lord.

11
Listen to it - the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds. The dead in Christ and the Christians in a moment to be with the Lord. That's what it says. The trumpet of the Lord shall sound, the dead in Christ shall arise, and we who are alive and remain will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The trumpet will sound. Now trumpets were used by the Jews in many ways in their worship. It called the people together for worship. They sounded their trumpet on their peace days. They sounded their trumpet when they marched off to war. On great occasions, it was used. In the book of Rev., we are told that the trumpet sounds will announce the judgement.

The great sound of the trumpet will be when the trumpet of the Lord shall sound around the earth. The Bible says that it will be in a twinkling of an eye. An you measure the twinkle of your eye. It will be that quick. The graves of the saved will all be opened and they will be raised with new bodies. And those of us who are Christians will suddenly be caught up to be with the Lord. Matt. 24:40.

Jesus said two shall be in the field - one shall be taken, the other left. Two farmers working in the wheat or corn field, only one of them is gone. Two women grinding at a mill - one saved and the other unsaved. Suddenly the saved person is gone. Now Paul said this was a mystery. And of course you say, this is (fantastic). But Jesus said, there will be two in a bed - one will be taken the other left. It is a wonderful thing to think about if you are ready. Jesus Christ is your Saviour. If you have been born again through faith in Jesus Christ and can say, Lord, I am ready. And it may come at any moment. Matt. 24:44 - Therefore be ye also ready.

There will be no count down for the coming down of our Lord to take us home. As a Greek scholar who is familiar with a twinkling of an eye - which is read at nearly every Christian burial service. That leaves no opportunity for the thief to

repent. Or the prodigal to come back home. Jesus did not say that his coming would be as a clap of thunder but as the lightning. As the lightning flashes. But lightning comes without the ability to really time it.

Now Jesus used as a thief, and the apostle, John, Peter, and Paul also used this same comparison. In Rev. - Behold, I come quickly. So hold fast to what you have.

Jesus said to his disciples - the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God and those who hear will live. The hands of the clock are moving on towards midnight. And the brief day left to us - the clock of destiny. Which tells of the faithful hour.

When does one become a citizen of the kingdom of Heaven. When a person is born again. Are citizens of Heaven and from Heaven expected to be delivered - he will transfigure the body and belong to him. In Phil. 3:20-21 - We never cease to be comforted so long as we are at home in the body, we are exiles in the Lord. We are confident, I repeat, and would rather leave our home in the body and go and live with the Lord. (2 Cor. 5:6-8.) Indeed we know that if the earthly frame of the houses that houses us today should be demolished - we possess a building which God has provided. A house not made with human hands - eternal in Heaven. In this present day we do indeed groan - we yearn to have our Heavenly habitation put on over this one. In the hope that being just clothes, we will not find ourselves naked. 2 Cor. 5:1-4.

Paul wrote in Romans, the redemption of the physical order.

As some folk singer said I wish I knew how it would feel to be free. I wish I

could break all the chains holding me. I wish I could say all the things that I should say. And say them loud enough so that the world could hear."

Omar Bradley - the American military general, said, we know more about war, than about peace. More about killing than about living. This is our 20th century claim to progress. Knowledge of science out skips the capacity for control. We have too many men of science - too few men of God. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom. Power without conscience. A world of neucular giants and ethical infants.

Will the world get ethically and spiritually better. Yes, but not until it gets worse and Christ comes. Man simply cannot better himself. The only answer is - for Christ's return.

IV. PROPHECY SAYS IT WILL BRING IMMORTALITY

Jesus Christ comes to bring life and immortality to light the Gospel. When a person receives Jesus Christ, he says, I give them eternal life. And they shall never perish. John 10:28. And we lay hold on that eternal truth.

Now people long to know what is going to be happening in the year 2000. We are living in a sad world - somebody says. "If I were God, this world of sin and suffering would break my heart."

"Now if there is a God, why doesn't he show us" - somebody says. And he will. Jesus is coming. 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. Rev. 20:3. And God shall wipe every tear from their eyes and there shall be an

end to death and to mourning, crying and pain. And the old orders shall pass away.
Rev. 21:4.

Only immortality is the way to God - and it can provide us with a wonderful life. A new body, will be given. Jesus said yes, I am coming to men. I'm coming again. He stresses this even to the final chapter in the Bible, And bringing about reckonsense to everyone according to his deeds. Rev. 22:12. Christ appears for his church. The first item on the agenda will be the review of believers works. There upon crowns and rewards will be distributed. For we must all have our lives layed open before Christ. Paul exhorts the Christians where each must received what is done for him - for his conduct in the body - good or bad. 2 Cor. 5:10.

Therefore, my beloved brothers - stand firm and immoveable. And work for the Lord always. Work without limit, since you know that in the Lord, your labor cannot be lost. " I Cor. 15:58.

"May the God of peace make you holy through and through. May you be kept in soul, mind, and body in spotless integrity until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
I Thess. 5:23.

You remember Peter had concern when he said - what sort of people ought you to be. Surely men of good and holy character who live expecting and earnestly longing for the coming of the day of God. " 2 Peter 3:11.

John said, little children remember to live continually in him.

When someone asked Daniel Webster the question - what is the greatest thought that ever crossed your mind. "My accountability to Almighty God."

There is no such thing for an incentive to evangelism like that. The coming of the Lord emphasizes what God has emphasized. It is the pattern and the mission of the church.

V. PROPHECY SAYS IT IS IMPENDING

Finally the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is not only imperative, immense, immediate with immortality - but it is an impending event. So shall it be in that day when the son of man is revealed. There shall be two men in one bed - the one taken and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together - one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field - one shall be taken and the other left. Watch ye therefore, warned our Lord. For you know not when the master of the house cometh, at evening or at midnight - or at the cock crowing - or in the morning. Less coming suddenly, he finds you sleeping. And what I say unto you - I say unto all. Watch. Mark 13:35-37.

Christian (never) let the realization fully escape you any conscious moment - that at any moment, Christ may return. Be always and do always those things which please your Lord. Were he to come this moment.

The (prophet) said there were multitudes in the valley of decision. And the day of the Lord is near the valley of decision. And it shall come to pass that who so ever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered. Joel 2:32.

Now (Neil Armstrong) stepped on the moon. He said one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind. "The old Chinese (proverb) - the journey of a thousand

miles begins with one step.

Surely today the step of faith is the place where you put your foot - on the promise of the word of God. And this will take you to your eternal home.

Are you saved? If Jesus were to come today, if the trumpet were to sound, would you be left behind - or would you go out to meet the Lord in the air. If you are saved, if you are a child of God, then when the trumpet sounds and the saved are taken out, you will go with them in that great moment to meet the Lord Jesus Christ. But if you are not saved, then you will be left behind. The glorious things we have seen, are not for you. Instead you can look to dreadful things, that will happen beyond death.

come forth and all the cemeteries of the world would yield up it's Christian dead at this request.

The Apostles Creed has these remarkable words from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

The Apostles warned that Jesus was coming back again.

Bishop Ridley, (burned at the stake) at Oxford, exclaimed - Come, Lord Jesus!

We remember that the Wesley's rekindled the fires and there was a great appeal about the return of Jesus Christ, which was included in 5000 of the 7000 hymns and verse that John gave in his preaching.

Bishop Trent used to say that the second coming of Jesus is possible any day and it is impossible no day.

Spurgeon said the coming of the Lord is by far the hope of the church and the remedy for mankind.

Queen Victoria in 1837 refused to come and hear Spurgeon preach but she had great curiosity and she did listen to the Chaplain talk about the coming of Christ.

Dean Farrar finally revealed as she listened to one of the chaplains preach, at Windsor on the second coming of Christ, she said, oh how I wish that the Lord would come during my lifetime. Why does your majesty feel that very earnest desire, asked the dean. And she replied, because I should so love to lay my crown at his feet. Queen Victoria had heard of Christ's return at her coronation in 1837. Queen Elizabeth II

in 1953, also heard these remarkable words in a ceremony from the Bishop. "I give

thee ~~is~~ sovereign lady, this crown to wear, until ~~you~~ who reserves the right to wear it shall return.

There may be over zealous people = unbalanced people who announce dates, and who scoff and who are disillusioned. And there may be modern ones who say, I am the master of my faith, I am the captain of my soul. But I feel like the French scientist who in 1860 said, that in ~~side~~ of a 100 years, he said God is going to come down with his big ring of keys and he will say to humanity, Gentlemen, it is closing time.

Now there are people who say there is no escape from the dilemma. But I want to say to you - how shall we escape. Heb. 2:3 - If we neglect so great a salvation.

Kenneth Latouratte I believe that our Lord's return could be at any time and bring this present stage of history to an end. That may well come between now and the year AD 2000.

Now seeing all of these things, we are going to leave this world behind. What ought to be our attitude? What ought to be our concern about the new Heaven and the new earth, v. 14 - Wherefore beloved, seeing the ye look, for such things that ye may be found in him. Not just careless about this thing - but to be diligent. Active. And without spot and without blemish. What does this mean. First it means we ought to be saved. Second.

CONCLUSION

PROPHECY - SOME DETAILS

Live for the Lord - spotless - blameless.

✓ What a joy working in His church.

✓ What a joy using your talents.

✓ Can you sing, teach, preach, give, witness.

If he were to come this hour where would you stand?

Are you busy - The King is coming!

Park Harve expressed his delight ^{about} news that ^a ~~the~~ gospel song moved back to center of stage.

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more,
and the morning breaks, ^{glorious} bright and fair.

When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore,

And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.!"