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## Present Distress of Nations and God's Answer

Louis T. Talbot

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The Present  
Distress of Nations  
and  
God's Answer !

An Address by  
LOUIS T. TALBOT, <sup>hampson</sup> 1889—

"The Bible Institute Hour"

A Coast to Coast Broadcast of the Gospel  
Over the MUTUAL NETWORK, Representing  
THE BIBLE INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES  
558 South Hope Street, Los Angeles 13, Calif.

n/LC

THE PRESENT DISTRESS OF NATIONS  
AND GOD'S ANSWER

MY RADIO FRIENDS, it is my desire to devote the next eight or ten broadcasts to a consideration of the present world conditions in the light of the prophetic portions of the Word of God. First, I want to consider with you world conditions in general, as they are foretold in the Bible, and as they are being fulfilled literally before our very eyes. Following this, I want to discuss with you world conditions as they relate to individual countries. I believe with all my heart that we are standing on the edge of vast and far reaching events that will make an impression on this old world such as has never been made before.

It is extremely interesting to me that during the last several months men who make absolutely no profession of interest in Christianity are being mightily impressed with the inevitability of great upheavals in our civilization today. Newspaper men and radio commentators have taken on a deeper vein of thinking and are doubting the ability of statesmen and governments to bring the world back from its danger of ruin. Of course, we who are students of the Bible have long possessed that knowledge because, as well as noting world conditions, we have had our eyes on the prophecies of the Word of God. We feel sure that the events which have come to pass concerning the Jewish and Gentile nations and the Church of Christ are but the fulfillment of prophecy. The hour in which we are speaking these very words is, indeed, a solemn one. But for us who believe the Bible it is also an hour of hope; for we know that the Lord Jesus Christ has, in the Word, associated these very events of prophecy with the circumstances of His personal return to the earth.

May I call to your attention an incident which hap-

pened in the life of our Lord? His enemies had gone to Him, hoping to entrap Him in His speech, in order that they might accuse Him. Their request was that He show them a sign. To this Christ replied:

"When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (Matt. 16:2, 3).

Here the Lord bitterly condemned the religious leaders of His time because, though it should have been easy for them to tell that He was, indeed, the long promised Messiah, yet they were totally blind to His presence. Proficient in telling the kind of weather from the skies, they could not tell the signs of the times as outlined in the Holy Scriptures. Not that they did not possess the Scriptures or know them; for from earliest childhood they had been thoroughly drilled in them, as was every Hebrew child. Yet, evidently, they had passed completely over the portions of the Old Testament which dealt with the Messiah's humble birth, His life of miracles, His death, resurrection, and ascension. They had failed to note the great movements and tendencies which were to usher in His life on earth. And so they failed to recognize this long awaited One simply because they closed their eyes to the written Word of God, and demanded another sign from heaven. Thus it was that, to these blind leaders of the blind in His day, our Lord directed His scathing words, "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

Listen to me, my friends, for I want to tell you that these significant words can be applied to tens of thousands of people in the professing church today, who because of

prejudice have tightly closed their eyes to the great prophecies of the Bible in regard to the return of the Lord; while, on the other hand, they are asking from others just what the meaning is of today's world-stirring events. To these blind leaders and blind followers, Christ is saying today, "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" I tell you that it is high time the church of Jesus Christ awoke to the fact that we are rapidly fulfilling all the events that must necessarily intervene between the day in which we live and His second coming.

If the Jews of Christ's day should have discerned the signs of the times in which they lived, surely it is far more possible for us to do so today, with the open Bible before us, and with the blare of world-wide information that comes to us over the radio, bringing us news of happenings almost as soon as they occur. I believe that there should not be a single doubt in our minds as to the swiftly approaching end of this Gospel age. How sad it is that so many of our religious leaders are totally blind to the import of these events! And some are so blind that they are unable to see in the Word of God any promise at all of His sure return. To them, the world will continue on and on in the way it has always gone, until what they call the "leaven" of the social gospel has permeated the whole of the human race. At that time, so they say, a universal brotherhood will ensue, and the earth will truly be a wonderful place in which to live. Do you know, I feel sorry for these brethren; for the events of the last war years have certainly given their theory a tremendous jolt.

**"THIS SAME JESUS SHALL . . . COME"**

But you, my friends, with your open Bible before you, and with the Spirit of God to guide you, can see in the

Word, from beginning to end, the transcendent truth that Christ is surely going to return to this old earth in a personal, visible, bodily manner to set things right. Who else can do it? Therefore, when things look darkest, then we are to look up; for we know that our redemption draweth nigh. And we may find great comfort in this truth.

Not only was this the personal testimony of Christ, but all the writers in the New Testament spoke of this blessed hope and seemingly bound it up with every doctrine they taught and every exhortation they made. In the great Olivet Discourse our Lord spoke to the listening ears of His disciples, saying:

"They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. . . . As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:30, 27).

In regard to conditions that are to prevail at the time of His coming, He said:

"As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37).

To the sorrowing disciples in the upper room He gave comfort by these words:

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).

On the day of His ascension, as the disciples watched His going with upturned heads and straining, tearful eyes, the message of the angels in white was:

"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

As Paul wrote to the recently bereaved Thessalonian Christians, he comforted their hearts with the greatest comfort that can be spoken when he said:

"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:16, 17).

Why, my dear friends, if I had time, I could take you to three hundred eighty-two passages, all within the pages of the New Testament, in which the Holy Spirit speaks specifically and definitely about the return of Christ. This doctrine is taught more emphatically in the New Testament than any other doctrine. In fact, one verse in every twenty-five refers to it. So, for the life of me, I can not see why so many people are indifferent to it. It seems that some can not grasp the fact that Christ is certainly going to return. But this, too, is in line with Scripture; for we read in II Peter 3:3, 4:

"There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Let me go back a moment to refer again to the conversation which Jesus had with the Pharisees. He saw that they were not adhering to the sacred Scriptures, but were teaching for "doctrines" the "traditions of men." And He said unto them, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matt. 15:6).

And this is one of the serious troubles today. Instead of

going directly to the Bible to find out about this important subject, too many people spend their time listening to or reading from the opinions and observations of men. It matters little what "Dr. So and So" says, or what "Professor This" or "Archbishop That" thinks. The final authority is the Word of God; and to this source of all truth we must go.

The old world is in for another great jolt one of these days, when it awakens to the knowledge that all the true Christians have been taken away. I believe that the proper way to interpret unfulfilled prophecy is in the light of fulfilled prophecy. That is, in regard to the prophetic utterances concerning the return of Christ to this earth, we should take as our norm of interpretation the manner in which the prophecies concerning His first coming have been fulfilled. Were the curses upon the Jews literal? Then the blessings will be literal. Was the prophecy concerning the scattering of the Jews among all lands actual? Then the regathering will be just as actual. If the pulling down of Zion was true to fact, then the rebuilding of Zion will be just as true. Therefore, I say that, if the prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ were literally and minutely fulfilled, and the Lord appeared in a real and veritable body, what right has anyone to say that His second coming is going to be a mystical and spiritual one?

Jesus is coming back. And I believe that He is coming back soon. Furthermore, I believe that He Himself is coming back, not in a manner as some affirm, saying that even now He is constantly coming back in all the new inventions and gadgets which go to make life easier. I believe that He is going to make a personal appearance, first for His Church, which is His Bride, and then to set up a kingdom that shall never be cast down. Praise His name!

Now just one more word before I turn to the matter of the general signs of the times. There are a great many more prophecies concerning His second coming than His first. This surely means that God emphasizes it more, and desires that we should know and prepare the way. Jesus taught His disciples to expect Him to return, and they taught it wherever they went. It was the pole-star of the early Church, and has been the "blessed hope" to all those who have come into the true teaching of the Word of God ever since.

I have taken some time to set this foregoing material before you, but I have a purpose in this. I want you to keep this great event clearly in mind, in all its literal and personal aspects, with all the subsequent matters we shall discuss. And as we see the signs of the distress of nations, we should remember that this is one of the things that must come to pass before the Son of God returns. So just as surely as there is unparalleled distress, unprecedented in the history of the nations, just as surely is this fact but one of the unmistakable signs that the return of Christ is nigh; yea, even at the doors.

#### GENERAL CONDITIONS AT THE CLOSE OF "THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES"

Now let me move on a bit and put before you the significance of present-day conditions, especially those which are existing in the world today. We are truly living in desperate times. Never before, and I say this advisedly, have we seen such momentous happenings transpire on the earth as in this day in which we live. The changes that have taken place in almost every phase of life during this year alone are astounding and almost unbelievable. Yet, seemingly, there are greater changes still ahead. Is it not possible for us to see that, as coming events cast their

ominous shadows before, so God is speaking solemnly to the world to remind men that the coming of the Lord draweth near?

In any study of world conditions, in the light of the Word of God, there are some outstanding facts that must ever be kept in mind. The first of these, and one of the most important, is that the time in which we are living, governmentally, is called by our Lord "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). By this expression is meant that period of time during which the Gentile nations are exercising lordship over the earth, and especially over the land of Palestine. A significant statement of our Lord is this, a part of which we have just quoted, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Now the times of the Gentiles had a definite beginning, and they will have a definite ending. They began with Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and they will close with the return of Christ to the earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

In Luke 21:24-27 and in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew, Christ gives a general description of the Gentile nations at the time of the end. Then in the book of Revelation, in Daniel, and in parts of Ezekiel we have presented the times of the Gentiles in particular, showing the three great Gentile confederacies, into which the nations shall form themselves at the end time, and which shall be governed by godless, ruthless, merciless dictators. It is my purpose in these broadcasts to put before you, first of all, the general character of the times of the end; and then to enter into a study of the individual nations composing these confederacies, and the events leading up to and culminating in the battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ to the earth.

What are we to expect at the close of the times of the

Gentiles? How shall we know when we shall have arrived at that time? Let me quote to you the verses in Luke 21:24-28, already referred to here:

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

These verses need little explanation. They are exceedingly plain and forceful in themselves. Here the Lord definitely states that, at the close of the times of the Gentiles, there will be distress of nations and great perplexity. Men's hearts are to fail them for fear. There are to be signs in the heavens. How terribly significant is this passage in the light of the astounding conditions in the world today! Let me ask you, has there ever been a time in all the world's history which these words of the Lord Jesus so aptly describe as they do present-day conditions? Surely the distress of nations and the anguish of humanity are unprecedented. And perplexity seems but a light word to describe the staggering condition of mankind.

Note here, too, that after prophesying upheavals in the physical earth, our Lord gave the climax, saying:

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

Further, He exhorted us to steadfastness in such terrifying days as these by the admonition:

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

The second passage of Scripture, to which I would call your attention in this connection, is one that also describes general world conditions that will prevail at the end time. This passage is found in the Olivet Discourse, recorded in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew. This was our Lord's last extended, prophetic utterance before His death on Calvary.

One day, as the Lord Jesus was departing from the temple, the disciples called His attention to the great stones of which the temple was composed. And in looking ahead two-score years, Christ spoke to them, telling them that these very stones should not be left one upon another. Perplexed regarding this, on their arrival at the Mount of Olives outside the city, the disciples questioned the Lord further about this matter, as we read in Matt. 24:3:

"Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?"

It was in answer to these questions that our Lord, peering down through the centuries to the close of the times of the Gentiles, gave them these unmistakable signs, by which we might know just when the age is to be concluded. Of great moment, therefore, are these signs to us who are living at the end of the age; for they are the Lord's own description of just how it shall end. I want to call your attention to five of these great signs, as they are given in Matt. 24:4-8:

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take

heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."

Let us enumerate these five great signs: (1) religious declension; (2) world wars; (3) famines; (4) pestilences; (5) earthquakes.

Now I am well aware of the fact that these signs were to characterize the whole age from the cross to the rapture, as, indeed, they have done so. But what I want to point out to you is this: these signs are to grow more and more intense as the age draws to a close. So when we see these things in tremendous violence, we know that the end of the age is near. That is, for example, when we see religious declension rampant in the world; or when we see a total war, in which the entire world is involved; when we see earthquakes and other ravages in ever-increasing destruction—then we know that these are the things of which Christ spoke. Therefore, let us now consider each one of these signs separately just here.

1. *Religious Declension.* Our Lord told the disciples plainly, not that the Church would convert the world, but rather that apostasy would increase. These were His words:

"Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."

Now answer me truthfully. Has there ever been an hour in the history of the world which has been so marked by a betrayal of the Word of God and the Christ of God as in this present hour? The tendency to depart from "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints"

(Jude 3) is more marked today than ever before. Cults claiming to be Christian are legion. Christian Science, Russellism, Seventh Day Adventism, Theosophy, New Thought, Unity, the Oxford Group Movement, the I Am Movement, and Modernism in all its forms are only a few of the number which are engaging literally millions of people in all parts of Christendom.

Surely this is a meaningful sign, for the ever-increasing number of these false Christs is one of the strongest indications that the end of the age is near. Living as we do in this land of Southern California, we have but to pick up Saturday's paper and turn to the church page to find abundant verification of the almost innumerable company of false cults, "isms," and deniers of the faith. Now there have been false Christs almost from the day our Lord went away; and there have been false Christs all down through the centuries. But never before have the false systems been so blatant, so subtle, and so vehement in their claims for the worship of the masses as today. It would seem that Satan, knowing that his time is short, were massing all his devilish delusions to deceive as many as he can, as quickly as he can.

2. *World Wars.* I do not want you to think that Christ meant that there would be no wars till the end time. Indeed, the history of every nation has been written in blood and tears ever since Christ was rejected by the world, and thrust out of it at the point of a spear. The Lord was emphasizing here that, at the end of the age, wars would be on a larger scale, more horrible and more devastating in character. They are to be world wide, with many nations rising against many nations. How doubly impressive are the words of Christ in the light of the happenings of the second World War! Yes; it is true that wars have



always characterized this age. Let me quote Novikow, the Russian author, who writes:

"From the year 1496 B. C. to 1862 A. D., in 3358 years, there were 228 years of peace and 3130 years of war. Within the last three centuries, there have been 286 wars in Europe. From the year 1500 B. C. to 1860 A. D. more than 8000 treaties of peace meant to remain in force forever were concluded. The average time they remained in force was two years."

You know that in the war, from 1914 to 1918, there was more carnage than the world had ever seen up to that time. The battle lines were literally thrown around the earth. Statistics tell us that more than fifty-eight million men were under arms. Of that number more than ten million names were inscribed on the death rolls of the field and army hospitals. But that was not all. As a direct result of the war, the deaths reached the appalling figure of thirty-seven million lives, many of them women and innocent children. Truly this was a war of wars. And the cost was set at three hundred seventy billions of dollars, a figure defying our imagination.

But now turn with me to a consideration of the records of the second World War. I want to tell you, the first world war of Europe was but a dress parade, compared with the titanic struggle of the iron monsters and the emergence of that terrific weapon of destruction, the atomic bomb!

It is reliably estimated that, while the number of military dead in this last war is doubled, the civilian casualties including those ruthlessly murdered would be five times the number in the first world war. The story of destruction is even more appalling. Never has there been such terrific waste. The cost in dollars and cents is said to be

one trillion dollars. How much that is, no human mind can adequately conceive. But surely you will agree that this past world war is a new high in horror. Can the Lord's coming be far off. Can civilization survive a third holocaust?

It is next to impossible for the human mind to conceive of the diabolical methods employed to destroy life on the war fronts. And this applies not only to the soldiers, who are done to the death, but innocent refugees are slaughtered without the slightest pity. Think, my friends, of the huge moving fortresses known as tanks, each one weighing up to one hundred tons, belching forth a stream of fire a hundred yards in length, literally burning to a crisp the human beings who are unable to escape! And this is not all. For out of the skies are coming planes which are flying fortresses, dropping like rain great bombs weighing a half-ton each. The sun itself is dimmed by the number of these birds of prey; and as the bombs fall, not only are human beings blown to bits, but everything that man has constructed is leveled to the earth. My friends, it is enough to turn one's hair white with horror even to read the accounts of these shambles. And the only conclusion that we can reach is that all this has been devilishly conceived by "the prince of the power of the air," even Satan himself. He knows that his time is desperately short; and, therefore, he is inspiring men to all the demoniacal acts possible.

And even with this, the experts tell us that the coming of the atomic age has brought the threat of total world destruction to our very doors. It is not today a question of fleets of planes, or millions of armed men. Today it is a question of who gets to enemy territory first with even one plane loaded with atomic death.

Only one whose sanity is open to question can blind

himself to the import of this moment in the world's history, in the light of what Christ said when He answered the question of the disciples, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?"

Can the world survive another war? Can the world continue to exist? Oceans mean little today as barriers. Peoples of every nation are straining every nerve and dollar to purchase and manufacture, not only new defensive armaments, but also offensive means of destruction. God help us! For this old world is certainly doomed unless the return of Christ be very near!

3. *Famine.* Again, the words of our Lord ring in our ears:

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines . . ."

During the last decade, in which machinery has been introduced to facilitate the planting and harvesting of crops, we have had famines such as never before. On the heels of the war of 1914-1918 came the vast Chinese famine. "The London Times" declared then that the grand total of destitute was thirteen million five hundred thousand. How many actually starved to death will never be known. Then came the Russian famine of 1921, when actually the most fertile land in Europe was wilted with the breath of hell. The Archbishop of Canterbury stated then that "never before had a condition of things existed compared with this ghastly death by famine to millions of men, women and children." The cemeteries had to be guarded to keep them from being rifled for cannibalism. Then came the third and yet greater disaster of 1929, when over twenty million faced death in China. In North China alone Famine Relief, with headquarters in New York

City, printed this appeal: "The tragedy of eight millions of human beings having starved to death is one of the most terrible in history." And then there followed the harrowing description of how human beings ate dogs, cats, rats, and the bark of trees to deaden the agony of hunger.

But come with me to the present moment. I do not need to remind you that without exaggeration the entire world came death close to starvation. The populations of Europe, friend and enemy alike, were living on quarter the normal amount of food. And the uncounted millions of Japan, China, Korea, and India just could not be fed. I feel that I am correct when I state that all indications point to more dead from starvation in these famines than in all previous famines combined.

The coming of the atomic age is the greatest threat to production. A recent article in a national magazine described the destruction visited on Hiroshima. What amazed the writer was the total cessation of all life. All were killed. No one was left to carry on. Death was complete.

I am not a pessimist. On the other hand I am a confirmed optimist. But my optimism does not stem from viewing the coming storm. The next famine may be the last one. But let not your heart be troubled about this, for just as surely as famines become more frightful the culminating sign that betokens the soon—yea, the very soon return of "the Lord of the harvest becomes apparent."

4. *Pestilence.* Again we turn to our Lord's words, and read:

"Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences . . ."

Now you well know that these signs accompany one another. Famine invariably follows war, and pestilence

follows famine. I do not have time to go into the pages of history to point out the many great pestilences which have afflicted the human race. I do note that most of these have occurred during a time of war or immediately following war.

Let me call to your attention the great epidemic of influenza which swept over the world following the first world war, actually killing more people in a few months than were killed on the battle fronts in four years. Yet it was a mysterious ailment, and doctors did not seem to be able to cope with it. The strong and healthy were attacked, and died like flies. I read an article by a medical association, stating the uneasiness of the medical profession, lest a new world-wide pestilence sweep over the nations of the world. The men in our armed forces both army and navy contracted many new diseases. While our medical authorities were busy endeavoring to combat these new sicknesses, more and more new ones were attacking our soldiers. And the story of social diseases makes terrifying reading.

Even today the medical authorities of the world hold their breath apprehensive of what may come from the underfed, underclothed, under cared for millions of China and India. With these countries torn and disrupted with the scourge of war, there are not the proper medical or sanitary precautions taken to control the spread of horrible pestilence. Truly the world waits with bated breath for the plague that will most surely follow this war. How earnestly do we, who realize this as a sign of the nearness of our Lord's return, pray, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus!"

5. *Earthquakes.* Once more we turn to Matt. 24:7:

"Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."

It is intensely interesting to note the increase of the sign—"earthquakes, in divers places"—throughout the centuries. Statistics tell us that in the fourteenth century there were 137 earthquakes; in the fifteenth century, 174; in the sixteenth, 253; in the seventeenth, 378; in the eighteenth, 640. A tremendous increase was recorded in the nineteenth century, when 2,119 shook different parts of the earth. And so far, the twentieth century has broken all previous records, and indications point to the immediate future as a time of great and terrifying physical upheavals.

As we scan the reports of the past 10 years we find ever increasing earth tremors in Turkey, in China, in Japan, in Southern California. It is not months since a severe quake demolished a score of cities in the Dominican Republic and a tidal wave rushed in to add more terror. Hardly a day goes by but the seismographs record some quake in some portion of the world.

The explanations of these physical disturbances that can be deduced by scientists are vastly different from the one given in the Word of God. A geologist of note breaks into print with the following explanation of the recent earthquake:

"The earth in its dizzy whirl through space got off center for a few moments yesterday and shifted its position or axis to fix the new center of rotation. Then in order that it might not be travelling on a 'flat wheel,' so to speak, a few million tons of solid rock were thrown off somewhere on the western coast to even up things; and now we go merrily on."

But the Bible gives an altogether different reason for earthquakes, and surely it puts to shame the guesses of many professors. You know that Christ is presented in

the Word, not only as the Creator of all things, but also as the Upholder of all things. In Col. 1:17 we read:

"He is before all things, and by him all things consist (or 'hold together')."

A similar statement is made concerning our Lord in Heb. 1:3, where we read that He is "upholding all things by the word of his power." Let Him for one moment remove His hand from this whirling universe, and everything would go into chaos. This is illustrated in Gen. 1:2, where we read:

"And the earth was (or 'became') without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

This chaotic state was evidently brought about because of the rebellion of Lucifer; and the Lord, by removing His power for a moment, turned the original creation into the unorganized, chaotic mass described here.

The death of Christ on Calvary was followed by a great trembling of the earth. Wicked hands had put the Son of God to death; and the universe, held together by His own power, reeled and staggered.

So also, at the end of this age, apostasy will lift its head in the coming of many false prophets; and the restraining hand of God will be felt less and less with the increase of sin and godlessness. As a result of this, there will come the frightful wrenching of the earth that is described in the book of Revelation. And again, the very increase of this sign points out to us the certainty of the near return of Christ.

#### "THE COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH"

Continually in Matthew, Daniel, and Revelation we find that these characteristic features of the end of Gen-

tile world dominion will reach a climax in the coming of the antichrist. At this time the Jewish remnant will flee to the mountains; for there is to follow a time of tribulation such as never was; no, nor ever shall be, a time of such persecution that our Lord calls it "the great tribulation." And this time of anguish is to culminate in the personal, visible, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth. Here is what Christ Himself said about this great event:

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the 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. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:27-31).

Note carefully that His coming shall be an event viewed by the entire world. Just as the lightning appears in the east and streaks forth to the west, so shall the Lord of Glory be seen. It will be a world-electrifying event, and world-terrifying to those who know not God.

From other Scriptures we learn more details of His coming. He is to come followed by the armies of heaven, in scintillating, white garments. He is to come riding on a white horse, and His eyes will be as a flame of fire. On His head will be many diadems, as He rides forth to assume the place of Kingship over the whole earth, a

place that is rightfully His. My, but what a day of glory that will be!

He will defeat the massed armies of the Antichrist and the Christ-rejecting world in an instant of time. He will bind Satan and cast him into the abyss. He will judge the nations and Israel with righteous judgment, and will establish His kingdom that is to endure throughout eternity.

Oh, my dear friends, what a day that will be! How one feels the paucity of human language when he attempts to describe it! It will be as if all the thrills of time, since the moment of creation, when "the morning stars sang together," till that day—it will be as if all these were rolled into one awe-inspiring experience when we view this climactic event. And to know that it may be very soon!

And how does this concern us? Well, as every instructed Bible student knows, this coming of which I have been speaking is to be preceded by what is commonly known as the rapture of the Church. About seven years before the Lord returns in power and glory, as the "Sun of righteousness," He is coming to receive to Himself His Church. (That seven-year period is called in the Scriptures "the seventieth week of Daniel.") Christ's coming for His Church will be a secret coming, so far as the godless world is concerned. As "the bright and morning star," He will catch His Church away; then after the "seventieth week of Daniel" has run its course, He shall return in power and great glory as "the Sun of righteousness . . . with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2; compare Rev. 22:16). When He comes for the Church, only those who are His will see Him and be caught up together to meet Him. But just as surely as the signs point to His coming

to set up the kingdom that will never be thrown down, just as surely He must first come for us who are His. And during the time when there is great tribulation on the earth, we shall be enjoying with Him our mansions in the skies.

Now let me point out this: if the signs point to His soon return to the earth in glory, then how much nearer is the rapture of the Church. Oh, how I thank God for this knowledge! It is, indeed, the day star in our ministry as we seek to serve Him "till he comes."

In our next broadcasts I want to take up with you the other more detailed prophecies relating to the three great Gentile confederacies, which shall be formed at the time of the end. I hope that you will take time to "listen in" to these addresses. I do thank God for the prophetic Word; for how confused our thinking would be at this present moment, were it not for the prophetic portions of the Word of God! The Lord, who has foretold the happenings of today and tomorrow, emphasizes it with this admonition, "Lo, I have told you."

I close with this thought: I wonder if there is a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, listening to me out there in radio-land, who does not know this One of whom I have been speaking, even the Lord Jesus Christ? Let me beseech you, my friend, for your own sake, for your family's sake, and for the Lord's sake, put your trust in Him today. Receive Him as your own personal Saviour while you still have an opportunity to know His saving grace. God has provided an ark of shelter from the storm that is sure to come, and that ark of shelter is Christ. Have you fled to Him for refuge? If not, will you not do it now? God bless you.

