

Approaching the Return of Christ!



#2878 0913 20P

VIRTUAL

The time approaches when repentance will no longer be an option—2 Corinthians 6:2 “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Daniel was told to Daniel 12:4 “Close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end”—that time is quickly approaching.

Old and New Testament prophecies explain End Time conditions. Isaiah 13:6-8 “Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. Because of this, all hands will go limp, every man’s heart will melt. Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them.”

The Old Testament predicted the First Advent of Christ, omitted the Gospel Age, and went to the End-Time Tribulation. Separating the prophecies that were fulfilled at the *First Advent of Christ*, from those concerning *His Second Coming*, help us understand Scripture.

Isaiah 13:9-11 “See, the day of the LORD is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless.”

When Jesus spoke in the synagogue at Nazareth, He said, the Spirit Luke 4:18-19 “Has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the

blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

Jesus stopped at “the acceptable year of the Lord,” because the next clause describes the Tribulation. Jesus read from the scroll Isaiah 61:2 “To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.” Between those two phrases, over 2,000 years have passed. “All that mourn” have not been comforted, but they will be during the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

The Book of Revelation can be divided into four parts; **Part One** Jesus looks at the spiritual condition of the churches. The seven golden lamp stands represent seven churches in Asia, and the seven stars are seven ministers of those churches. **Part Two** consists of heart-searching letters Jesus sent to the seven churches—containing marvelous principles of faith and trust on God.

No matter how outwardly religious a person may be, or how seemingly moral they may be living, no one will enter Heaven unless they overcome in the faith, and hold true to their trust on God. Satan is constantly tempting God’s people to draw them away from true faith; but the warning is very clear Revelation 2:10 “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

That principle of trust on God is what Jesus meant when He said Luke 14:26, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate”—or is not willing to give up anything, anyone, or even their own life when the choice is between either Him or the world—then “he cannot be my disciple.” That same high standard of Christianity is part of these letters to the seven churches.

Part Three gives a glimpse into Heaven—bringing us to the Gospel Age—and going from the last letter to the Laodiceans to the start of the Tribulation on earth. Things take place in Heaven as preparations are made for the Tribulation—which begins at the end of the Gospel Age—

just before divine judgments start. Mark 13:8 “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows.”

Part Four then is the supernatural judgments—Revelation 8:7 “The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.”

We cannot imagine how serious the wrath of God really is! There will be run-away inflation concerning food, clothing, and other necessities we now take for granted. There is the sounding of a second trumpet Revelation 8:8 when “a great mountain of fire was thrown into the sea. And one-third of the water in the sea became blood.”

Following this Revelation 8:10 “The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great flaming star fell out of the sky, burning like a torch. It fell upon one-third of the rivers and on the springs of water.” This plague destroys much fresh drinking water needed for life—similar to the wilderness journey of Israel Exodus 15:23 “When they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter.”

Other plagues, more horrible than we can imagine, bring global dense darkness and painful sores on people, as an angel proclaims in a loud voice Revelation 8:13 “Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!”

Another trumpet sounding brings locust-like scorpions Revelation 9:5-6 “Their mission was not to kill, but to cause awful agony for five months; and this agony was like that which a scorpion inflicts when it stings a man. And at that time people will seek death, but will by no possibility find it, and will long to die, but death evades them.”

The *reason* for these horrible plagues is divine *judgment* for all the murders, killing people in wars, homicides, and all the shedding of blood upon the earth. It is punishment for all those wicked acts of human beings over many centuries. The Bible predicts that the sun will scorch people—causing blisters and terrible suffering.

Jesus said to the Philadelphia church Revelation 3:10 “*Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.*” We are given similar *tests* through *life*, and only true believers who remain in the will of God escape the Tribulation.

God wants *tried* and *true* people, so He permits a test to prove if we are sincere in our faith. Every temptation is a test, and everything that happens is to see how we are going to meet it—in the *Lord’s* way or the *world’s* way. Things people *say* to us, and things that others *do* to us, are to prove if we will be *faithful* concerning our trust on God, and whether we *love* Him with all our heart, soul, and mind. If we love God we will *obey* His Word—no matter *what* the penalty.

Jesus warned Luke 21:36 “*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*” We must be careful and not allow ourselves to get too absorbed, or more interested in, things of *this* life than we are about *eternal* life.

We should ask how *we* would meet some of the persecutions Bible believers met, and if we would be able to respond scripturally as they did. Adam and Eve lived humbly—for a while—it *was* a life of simplicity and faith. Material things, home furnishings, and other interests can distract us from humble obedience to God’s Word—*nothing* can be allowed to come between us and God.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob lived in tents, but they were sincere in trusting God. How far the Christian church has drifted from true faith in God is incredible! Bible believers were willing to go through anything—trusting God no matter what happened. Anything that came between them and God was *given up, thrown away, and forsaken*—whether it was houses, lands, or money.

The Mark of the Beast will be the ultimate test that has to be met scripturally—which is to *refuse* to accept this mark no matter *what* the penalty. To give in and *join* this unscriptural union results in eternal suffering. Revelation 14:11 “*The smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.*”

Three Hebrews were tested—either *bow* and worship a graven image, or be *cast* into a raging furnace—it was *bow* or *burn*! Only their *physical* life would be destroyed, but it was the same principle involved. They *held* to their faith and were *thrown* into the fire—but Jesus was there with them and to protect them by a divine miracle.

The world offers a million alternate plans today—plans that would mean disobeying God. True believers are *tested* like this continually. If we agree to accept unscriptural plans of protection—whether it be *financial* protection, *physical* protection, or any other, it is accepting Satan’s *substitute*, and will lead us away from true faith in God.

Labor unions is the world’s way for employees to get higher pay; better conditions; job security; medical care; old age pensions—but at the cost of rejecting our *faith* in God to *provide* those things for us. Taking the responsibility to purchase any type of insurance is the same principle involved. Every kind of insurance is against the will of God—and actually a *triple* betrayal of faith in God.

First, the world says to *worry* about the *future*, but God says Matthew 6:34 “*Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*” Insurance is taking thought for *tomorrow* and *beyond*.

Second, it is misplaced trust in a worldly plan. 1 Timothy 6:17 “*Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*”

Third, all insurance is a *gamble*—as any other type of betting. You put up a certain amount to the insurance company and they pay you nothing if you *live*; but they pay your family if you *die*. It is a horrible gamble—taking a chance on our life. If we truly believe that God will *protect, provide, and keep* us in good health to the end of our life, there would be *no thought* for or *need* for insurance.

All plans of the world today are *tests* to see if we will be loyal to God or not. They will prove whether we *are* what we profess to *be*—really *believing, trusting, and serving* the living God—or not!

All such tests must be met in a scriptural way—with the Holy Spirit’s help. Luke 21:36 “*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*” We are approaching the return of Christ!

†††

www.fcgchurch.org

*Be on our free mailing list—contact:

PO Box 24283

Philadelphia, PA 19120

info@fcgchurch.org

#2878 0913 20P

VIRTUAL