

THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN
HIS REIGN



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**PRELUDE
TO THE
END**

PRELUDE TO THE END

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INTRODUCTION

We are not here to play church, turned in on our own fellowship, or on our own righteousness. God keeps us here to call the world to repentance, offering them a new life in Christ. All in preparation for the

coming of the Lord and His Kingdom. Everything that touches our lives, every personal loss or gain, is colored by how we view of the coming Kingdom.

The question we must ask ourselves; is our heart set on the things of this world or on the Kingdom? May the words of this short booklet blow the cobwebs from our minds and help us refocus our lives to "what it is all about" and to what we have been called.

Let he/she who has ears to hear, hear what the Spirit says.

"Pray therefore the Lord of the Harvest..."

The Editor

PRELUDE TO THE END

Then he showed me the River of the Water of Life, bright as crystal, flowing from the Throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also on either side of the River, the Tree of Life, with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Revelation 22

Those who stay under the yoke with

the Master are destined for a world which our minds cannot begin to imagine. The most glorious language of scripture is but a glimpse of what the Father has prepared for those who love him.

This place, this City, is waiting for us beyond the chaos of the present hour. The darker things become on Planet Earth, the brighter is the vision which the Spirit of the Lord imparts to those whose hearts are nailed to his cross.

There shall no more be anything accursed, but the

Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him. They shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more. They need no light of lamp or sun for the Lord God will be their light. And they shall reign for ever and ever. Revelation 22

"They shall see his face." No longer by faith, but direct, and clear and perfect. To see the face of glory without burning to a crisp! To behold the countenance of the One

who watched over us through all the dark days and brought us safely through! That's where the Master wants to bring us, if we will but stay under his yoke and walk with him.

But before we get there, we have some traveling to do. The road immediately ahead of us is covered with a cloud of darkness. The Lord Jesus never tried to hide the fact that before his return in glory and the beginning of the new Day, there would be a time of suffering. Nor did he ever promise that we would be spared.

Those who have gone before us, and kept their flame alive to the end of their journey in this world, did so by focusing their attention constantly on the Lord Jesus, and clinging to his promise of the Kingdom, a Kingdom which he never tired of describing as a thing of glory, a place of peace.

Do we see it? Can our eyes see beyond the chaos to the City of God?

.... "Your young men shall see visions,

*And your old men shall
dream dreams;*

*Yea, and on my menservants
and my maidservants in
those days, I will pour out
my Spirit; and they shall
prophesy."*

Acts 2

Those visions and dreams and prophecies are coming to us now as a foretaste of the coming glory, to help us behold the Destination he has prepared for all who walk in the light.

If we have eyes to see the waiting glory, we will also have eyes to see the signs of the times.

And the signs of the times are causing us to focus on the Lord's presence among us, preparing us and the whole earth for a time of Judgment, judgment which begins at the household of faith and spreads out over the planet, until the whole earth begins to understand that this world is ruled by God alone.

And this God is none other than the Father of our Lord Jesus.

And Jesus is none other than the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Mercy straight from heaven, offered to all.

Judgment is simply God calling us to account for what we have done with that mercy. Have we received it? Have we lived it?

As the hour of Judgment approaches signs begin to appear, signs which the sons and daughters of heaven should be able to read.

"When you see a cloud coming in the west, you say, at once, 'A shower is coming', and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"
Luke 12

The Day of the Lord.

The day when all darkness will give way to terrifying Light. When all secrets will be exposed and every dark corner brought out into plain sight.

The dead will be brought back from other worlds to pass through their final accounting with the Holy.

Of course, most people, even most professing Christians, rarely look at their lives against the backdrop of the Day of the Lord. We're busy trying to survive, seeking to fulfill our dreams, vindicating ourselves before the eyes of our critics.

Buying and selling, getting and spending---who has time to think about something as far off the radar as the Day of the Lord?

No wonder the Lord Jesus warned us that, when it comes, this awesome Day will catch us by surprise. Like Noah's day, we will be so taken up with other things that most of us will miss the warning signs.

One of these warning signs is not as dramatic as earthquakes and famines and raging wars and false prophets----all of which have been

around for centuries. This warning sign will be the appearance of ordinary men and women, all over the earth, who do in unison what John the Baptist did as a single lonely voice in the wilderness: they will raise a cry of warning, as they invite all people, for one last time, to enter the door of God's Kingdom.

"I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His

winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Luke 3

These Elijah voices have already begun to make themselves heard in many parts of the earth. Like the trickle of water from Ezekiel's Temple that innocently flows eastward as a small stream until it becomes a mighty river, so these heralds of the Lord will multiply in numbers and in power in the coming days.

You may have already
encountered them.

You may even be one of them.

In any case, the following pages are offered as food for thought to those who already know in their hearts that something mysterious is going on amid the conflicts and tragedies of this earth. Something that the new media cannot see. Something many people prefer to ignore.

Something final.

That involves every soul that has

ever walked this earth.

They said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'"

John 1

OMEGA DAYS

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

Revelation 22

I just got back form Wal-Mart with half a dozen cans of tomato juice. A dollar a can! Imagine! No wonder that place is like a zoo. Everybody's scrambling to get their stuff cheap, jump in the car and head for home.

And the traffic! They really need to

widen the freeways. Took me a half hour to cover what should have taken ten minutes. Where are they all going?

Just like Noah's Day. Buying and selling, eating and sleeping. Coming and going. Texting and talking---at higher speed than Noah ever dreamed of.

It's easy not to notice the changed atmosphere amid all the hustle. But something's different, and it's not just global warming.

The first cosmic shift took place

twenty centuries ago. The Roman world was infiltrated by a new race, a race impossible to distinguish by their appearance. They looked like everybody else, yet something was going on inside these people that made them aliens in this present world. They called themselves the Followers of the Way. And when you asked them, "What do you mean, The Way?" they pointed to a person, they claimed had risen from the dead, who was alive and with them in some mysterious way. They invoked this man's name and actually healed people.

When the authorities began systematically attempting to stamp out this alien race, these people gladly died rather than deny the name Jesus. Their words had power. Things happened at their quiet command. Good things.

Those were the Alpha Days of the glorious Kingdom. A period when words spoken by Jesus echoed across the known world with such force that the very foundations of civilization were shaken.

Gradually the Alpha Days faded, followed by centuries of

"Christendom," an institutionalized, watered-down version of The Way. But hidden in all the confusion of Christendom and its wars and crusades and Inquisitions, a remnant of The Way has always continued its life of radical faith. And now this remnant has begun to emerge as the spearhead, the Elijah Sign, that the Omega Days are about to begin.

The Omega Days parallel the Alpha Days in many ways. The planet itself will begin to wonder about these aliens, these strange people of The Way, who claim Jesus of Nazareth as their absolute Lord, and

exercise redemptive power in his name.

They heal. They speak with authority. They alarm the dark powers. They arouse anger in many, simply by the way they speak and live. Like Noah, they are regarded with contempt by much of the world around them.

It's as if God is moving through the earth, awakening certain people to the lateness of the hour, and transforming them into aliens of The Way. In fact, you could be one of these "called" people. An alien. A

servant of The Way.

It is possible that in the days ahead you may find yourself doing things that will astonish both you and the lives you touch. If you are willing, surely the Lord, who even now is preparing the earth for his return, will include you in these preparations.

THEY SHALL LAY HANDS ON THE SICK

Nobody knows where he came from. Or where he lives. It's even hard to remember what he looks like. A nondescript man like a thousand others. Yet this man has a strange impact on your soul. You might find him sitting with a group in a coffee shop, or chatting with an old woman at a bus stop.

Sometimes he appears in the park pushing a child in a wheel chair.

Rumor has it that this man has a healing touch. A month ago I talked

with a woman in the final stages of cancer, only to discover her a week later the picture of health. "What happened?" I asked. "You wouldn't believe it; a stranger shook my hand at a bus stop and told me to go home and take a nap. When I awoke, all pain was gone. I feel fine. My doctor put me through a series of tests, and just shakes his head."

No one seems to be able to find out who he is. He disappears for weeks at a time, and then he returns. You'll see him helping a cripple across the street, or chatting with a young

mother on a park bench.

But if he's a healer, why doesn't he just heal the cripple he helped to cross the street? Why does he push that child in the wheel chair instead of making her whole?

Last week I met a man who says he had a long talk with him. He said the stranger spoke about Jesus as if he were sitting with them at the table drinking coffee. "Then he got up and wished me well. I thought those were just words. But I haven't had an asthma attack since."

"They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Incidents like this were abundant in the earliest days of the gospel. The good news which was proclaimed with simplicity and power by ordinary people was frequently accompanied by signs of healing which confirmed the word. The believers, like their Master, never made a production out of healing. They never promoted themselves through these signs of the kingdom. But people knew that something was happening which was not of

this world.

And now, as a prelude to the End, similar signs can be expected. They will happen, as they happened in those early days, "beneath the radar. On the street level. By men and women whose names are hidden in God. People who have no agenda of their own. Who simply walk humbly with the Master and wash feet, and share a word from God with those to whom they are sent.

These signs of the kingdom will appear inside, and perhaps more frequently, outside the institutional

churches. It may be that you who read these words are among those chosen by the Spirit of God to be that "stranger" who appears "out of nowhere," and quietly melts back into the crowd of humanity.

If you are, you must understand that your agenda must be surrendered to the Lord Jesus daily. He calls you to deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow him. Vanity faith will continue to market its goods. Ecclesiastical institutions will ignore your work. And if they find you too pesky, will seek to swat you out of their way. But you will never

be alone. Not only will the Lord Jesus be living within you, but you will have sisters and brothers who share your faith and help you stay focused.

"They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Yes, people will be healed through you from time to time. But healing will not be your focus. Your focus will simply be to help people find their way to the Door of Life. Uncover for them the "treasure hidden in a field," that they too may

joyfully sell everything to buy the field.

From the time the Lord Jesus explained to the disciples what to look for---and what not to---he has been preparing the earth for the days which are about to begin. He is the one who composes the Prelude to the End. He alone decides what part each of us is to play. And you can be sure that none of us is called to be anything but a servant, a foot-washer.

Those of us who answer his call, and fit into his lowly program will

have all we need to fulfill our calling.

THEY SHALL CAST OUT DEMONS

The church basement echoed with shouts of command. "Come out of him!" "Leave this man!" "You have no right!" They were gathered around a man seated in a chair, trying to exorcise a demon.

"Hallelujah!" shouted a woman at the top of her voice. "Glory!" proclaimed a man standing behind the chair. But nothing happened.

This confusion had been going on for almost an hour. The face of the man in the chair was dripping with

sweat. He was in agony. The shouting increased with the level of frustration. Someone ran for a basin in case the troubled man became sick.

Just then a stranger came down the stairs and approached the group. "The demon is not deaf," said the stranger in a quiet voice. In an even tone he commanded the alien spirit to depart. The man in the chair stood up, smiled, thanked everybody for their kindness, and asked for a glass of water.

No screaming. No shouting. No

hocus-pocus. All it took was a quiet word from a man who knew what he was doing.

The demonic world remains a mystery to this day. Our Lord Jesus dealt with it as the occasion arose. Jesus never chased demons, never focused on demons. They recognized him with fear and trembling. His presence was painful to them. They were totally at his mercy.

They still are.

It's important to note that our Lord

never gave how-to instructions on casting out demons. He simply told his followers to do it. They were under his authority and understood that his Name, was all they needed to deal with the world of demons. Of course, we can only speak in his Name when we live our lives under the power of that Name---and take the consequences of being linked to that Name.

As the End approaches the kingdom of darkness will become more restive. It will come out from behind its respectable mask and lash out at those who have taken

command of the house it once ruled. If you have been chosen by the Master to confront these dark powers, you will need no more protection than the cover of his name; Jesus. If you are crucified with Christ, if he lives in you, you will know what to do when you meet a demon.

And you won't have to shout.

THEY SHALL SPEAK WITH NEW TONGUES

What happened to Margaret? I've known her all my life. She was always quiet and reserved. But yesterday at lunch she looked around at us and, with a broad smile, began to describe an incident that certainly has ignited her. We sat there dumbfounded. We never heard Margaret utter more than a handful of words at our get-togethers.

She spoke with perfect poise. She didn't sound like a fanatic. She was convincing. To be honest with you,

a chill went down my spine as I listened to her. Something weird is going on here, I said to myself. I wasn't sure I wanted to hear any more. I was scared. But if I had tried to get up and leave, I think I would have been glued to my seat.

Margaret was describing a dream she had the other night. She said it was more than a dream. "Maybe it was a vision," she said, "I really don't know." She went on to explain that she sat up in bed and saw an immense moon, dripping with blood. Two men approached her and each insisted that she follow

him. Somehow she knew that one of the men was evil and the other good. For a while she was totally confused. Which one is which?

She began to explain that, in her vision, she was led by the man she chose to follow to a clearing in the forest. Jesus stepped out of the shadows and spoke to her. "Don't ask me how I knew it was Jesus; he didn't look like all the popular pictures of Jesus hanging in our churches. His skin was much darker, and his hair a bit shorter. He told me that the hour is late. He promised to help me explain things

to my friends and get my own life in order."

When Margaret awoke, she knew that this was more than a dream. And I believe her. Margaret's tongue has been touched with a wand of eloquence. The other women at the lunch table were shaking their heads, baffled and awed. But the words Margaret spoke kept echoing in our hearts. Like we had just heard a word from God.

In the earliest days of the gospel believers kept praying for boldness,

and the Spirit answered their cry. Ordinary believers spoke with such power that whole cities were stirred. The fire of the apostles seemed to spread into the lives and out across the tongues of ordinary folks like you and me. We look for the Omega of this age to bring with it the vitality of the Alpha season in preparation for the days ahead when the Body of Christ becomes the Elijah, preparing the earth for the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord. And the promise, "They shall speak with new tongues," will surely find its fulfillment in all followers of the Lamb.

If God grants you a new tongue, never forget who owns it, and to whom you answer. Should the Spirit of God choose to use your tongue to "bring down the mighty from their seats and exalt those of low degree," he will never allow your tongue to "break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax." That new tongue will never demoralize the broken ones or discourage struggling saints.

*The Lord God has given me
the tongue of those who are
taught, that I may know
how to sustain with a word,*

*him that is weary. Isaiah
50:4*

.....A tongue bathed in the presence of the Lord, by giving him thanks will speak with the wisdom of heaven, the compassion of the Lamb, and will be confirmed by the power of the Spirit of God.

YOU WILL BE HATED BY ALL NATIONS

I can still see his eyes after all these years. Eyes of pure hatred. The few words this man ever spoke to me confirmed that hatred. He did not know me. I did not know him. But something about my person aroused anger. He seemed to know the instant I walked into a room. His head turned, and there were those bitter eyes. Looking back, I begin to understand what Jewish men and women, black people, people with olive skin, people with strange accents have experienced for

centuries.

Hatred.

The demonic powers delight in inspiring hatred, and feeding its flame with any excuse to despise those who have no defense. Our present age is flooded with religious authorities who inspire hatred, politicians who exploit hatred; masses that feed on hatred toward those on the "other side."

Presently the world which most of us inhabit is largely indifferent toward people who follow Jesus.

They may think we're out-of-touch with the real world, but they tolerate us. Few of us have experienced hatred on account of our commitment to Jesus.

But this is about to change.

There is a mean-spiritedness in the atmosphere, a growing hardness in our culture, a fascination with "reality shows" where the defeated go down in flames or slink off into the shadows to lick their wounds.

"You will be hated by all nations for my name's sake," says the

Master to his disciples of all ages. And while there has never been a time since Jesus rose from the dead when his followers have not been persecuted and despised by the world, extreme hatred of disciples can be expected during the Omega season of the Body of Christ, just as it was experienced by believers in the Alpha season.

"Celebrity Christianity" may continue to thrive, at least for a while. Market-driven Christianity may linger on. But the men and women whose hearts are nailed to the cross will emerge across this

planet with burning words on their lips. Words confirmed again and again by signs of the kingdom. And these people will draw a strange anger from the world around them. They will be despised---not because of anything except the invisible seal of the Lamb on their foreheads.

Should you be privileged to be one of these, you will find yourself wonderfully comforted by the Spirit of glory and of God.

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which

has come upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you share in Christ's suffering, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

I Peter 4

SALT OF THE EARTH....BUT

We were sitting around the kitchen table drinking coffee and worrying about the earthquake which had just rattled California. A nuclear power plant had been compromised. Radiation was leaking into the water supply.

Of course we were many miles from the catastrophe. Our lives were not in danger. But we all wondered whether this was the Big One, or only a foretaste of things to come---for California, and for us.

"It's just another sign of the End," said one of our neighbors, as he took another sip and put down his cup. He looked around at the rest of us and said, "Are you guys ready for the Rapture?"

We all knew that this man was well-versed in scripture. We braced ourselves for another sermon. We also knew that his wife dreaded his temper, and his kids despised the way he treated their mother. This man's words came across wrapped in a cloud of death. We quickly changed the subject, so he couldn't go on with his religious harangue.

This man was sure that he was "witnessing," that he was confronting us with truth. But to us, who know him and how he treats his family, his words were a turn-off.

If this man ever was salt, the salt had long since lost its taste.

"You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its taste it is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men."

Matthew 5

We are either salty, or we are flat.
Nothing in-between.

Jesus makes clear that our salt can lose its taste. If it does, it's not God's fault, but ours. The salt went flat because the Word struck our brains and bounced out of our mouths, instead of reaching our hearts. We became so busy calling others to repentance that we neglected to repent of ourselves. If we continue our tasteless "witnessing", we won't be good for anything "but to be thrown out and

trodden under foot by men."

Salty salt simply practices the mercy God has showered upon it.

Shows mercy to those around it.

Rejoices in the Lord.

Is forbearing toward all people.

Serves God in the place where it has been put.

Trusts God for all its needs.

If you are a follower of Jesus, "***You are the salt of the earth***".

Jesus does not say, "Try to be the salt of the earth."

But, "You are the salt of the earth."

This salt can stay salty forever, or it can lose its taste.

It's up to us.

THE HARVEST

We stood at a distance and watched a city block go up in flames. Police, fire, emergency medical vehicles kept rushing in. The fire was out of control and spreading.

"Looks like the Apocalypse," said the stranger standing next to me. A shudder went through the crowd. Suddenly we were blown off our feet by an explosion. People were running in all directions.

Things like this were not supposed to happen in our part of the world.

Billions were being spent in "homeland security." But now the foundations of our society too were beginning to shake.

What's going on?

Two things are happening globally. The first is obvious to all eyes. The social order in all nations is mysteriously disintegrating. We see uprisings, violence, bitter mistrust of authority, corruption on every level of society.

The second change is hidden from most eyes. While society seems to

be falling apart everywhere, there is a spiritual awakening spreading over the earth that has no visible structure. It moves like an unseen fire. It's like the wind. It goes where it wills.

We view this spiritual awakening as the Last Harvest of the Kingdom of God. It is initiated by God. Controlled by God. Empowered by God.

***"The Harvest is plentiful,
but the laborers are few.
Pray therefore the Lord of
the Harvest to send out***

laborers into his Harvest."
Matthew 9

For centuries believers have been praying for laborers for the Harvest and seen little result. The laborers remained few. And the Harvest was vague. But this has begun to change. Men and women with hearts nailed to the cross and tongues that speak with power are popping up simultaneously all over the earth. They are the harvesters, and the Harvest is great.

This harvest is not characterized by mass rallies and celebrity

evangelists. It's going on largely beyond the radar of the media. It's happening on the street level.

Ordinary people touching ordinary people with extraordinary power.

They don't need fires and bombs to convince people that the

Apocalypse is at the door. Their words, and the signs that confirm them are convincing enough.

"Jesus is Lord," is a message which has convinced very few over the centuries. But now those words are spoken with such conviction that people's hearts are pierced.

As you read these words you need to consider whether you belong in this motley army, whether the call which you have heard many times before is not demanding a clear response now.

"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest.' I tell you, lift up your eyes and see how the fields are already white for harvest. He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together." John 4

If the Spirit of God is opening your eyes to see the harvest, he is doubtless calling you into the harvest as a laborer.

BACKLASH

"I don't know you anymore," was the e-mail reply. All I did was invite him to meet for coffee at Starbucks. The word is out that I've become a "fanatic." Now they avoid me like the plague.

How did it happen? I promised a friend that the Lord Jesus, as a sign of his love, would lead this man out of his marital mess. I didn't promise anything specific. Just that Jesus is alive from the dead and able to help him. His mouth curled down in a sour scowl. "Thanks anyway," he

said and walked away. Soon the word went out to all our friends that I've gone off the deep end.

It was the beginning of a kind of rejection---sometimes even hatred---which I'd never experienced. Of course, I had never been as open and forthright with the gospel as I am now. It's uncanny how bitter an old friend can become when they're offended by the gospel of the cross.

Broadminded, tolerant people become cold and hard as steel. Some of them feel a need to inflict pain. To threaten. To lash out in

hatred.

Why?

These persecutors couldn't explain it themselves. But they are part of a spiritual backlash that rises as soon as the gospel begins to have an impact.

"When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes."

Matthew 10

If we see Israel as the destination and center of the Final Harvest, we can assume that the picture the Lord gives now expands to include the whole earth.

A powerful spiritual awakening emerging. But so is persecution. The powers of darkness are rising up with fury. And their target is not "Christendom," since "Christendom" is already in the grip of the dark powers. Their target is this motley army of laborers in the harvest who are preparing the earth

for the Master's return by calling women, men, and children into the kingdom of God.

If you are part of this motley army, you will experience persecution. You will also experience "*the Spirit of glory and of God resting upon you.*" (I Peter 4:14) And you will find that the power of your words of witness will greatly increase as you defy the fires of persecution to the glory of God.

PRAY THE LORD OF THE HARVEST

"Two hours a day in prayer? Give me a break! How do you find the time? Do you get anything else done besides prayer? Me, I believe in action. Doing things! Prayer is all right in its place. But really! Two hours every day? That's fourteen hours a week. It's like spending one day a week in prayer!"

The idea in many minds is, "If you can't do anything else, at least you can pray." If you're weak, infirmed, old and decrepit, prayer is your

consolation prize.

But once the Spirit begins to enlighten us, we see things differently. Prayer is not the consolation prize; it is the foundation of the life of faith.

It is the fire that fuels everything we do.

How can we possibly do the work of God unless we're vitally connected with God? We won't even see the Harvest, much less work in it, unless God opens our eyes, and keeps them open, as we

yield ourselves to him in prayer.

Seeing the crowds he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples,

*"The harvest is plentiful,
but the laborers are few.*

Pray

*therefore the Lord of the
harvest to send forth
laborers into his harvest."*

Matthew 9

Jesus is telling us that our prayers to the Father somehow enable him to raise up laborers and send them out. If we pray, there will be more laborers. If we fail to pray, there will be less. Jesus indicates in these awesome words, that the Father has tied his redemptive work in this world to the prayers of the saints.

Yes, God can raise up laborers any time he chooses. But for reasons only God himself understands, he does this through the prayers of the saints. Hence the Spirit is stirring us to pray for laborers. It's the only

way it will happen. And it will happen, with us or without us. For God's kingdom will always have men and women who pray.

If I ignore this command of Jesus to pray for laborers, God will find someone else to do this work he gave me to do. It's work. Prayer is work....the basic work of the kingdom.

Prayer is not preparation for work. It is the work.

Prayer to the Father, the Lord of the Harvest.

But who of us feels adequate, when it comes to prayer? Where are the experts? There are no experts! We're all babes when it comes to prayer.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. Romans 8

Once we take our Lord's command seriously and begin to pray for laborers, we get help. We offer our

bumbling efforts to the Father and he ignites them with fire. Things begin to happen---in the harvest, and in us. Laborers appear and join us in the Harvest. And God's strength is made perfect in our weakness.

LIGHT BEYOND THE BUSHEL

Her name is Carol. But for the last ten years she has gone by the name, Miriam. Ever since she went to Turkey and began mixing with the people there, she has chosen a name that makes more sense to Muslims.

Miriam (Carol) is in her 70s now. She looks like a typical Turkish woman as she walks the streets of Istanbul. If you were to sit down and talk with her in a coffee house, you'd find her easy to talk to. But you would also find that, beneath

the ordinary exterior, a strange power seems to flow.

She's smart, humble, cheerful, gutsy. A flame burns in her which ignites the lives she chooses to touch. People are drawn to her. Certain people. People who hunger for God. People whose hearts are wounded and sad.

Why?

They see light, and are drawn to it.

There have always been such people on this earth. They appeared

in greater numbers as the people of Israel began to respond to God's call.

One of the brightest of these lights was King David. After the death of Saul, David settled himself in Hebron and let his light shine. Warriors came from all directions to join David and serve under him. Donkeys, laden with bread and cheese, wine and figs, keep arriving from all the tribes of Israel.

Why are all these positive things happening now---after years of struggle and hardship in David's

life? You could say the political winds have changed direction. Or you could say that the Light of God spread its rays across the land and draws people to David with a strange confidence that David will make things better.

God's light draws people to itself. God's light creates hope. God's light heals. God's light shines where and when it pleases.

Jesus, crucified and risen, is God's light in its purest form.

If you are his disciple, you are

God's light. You ARE the light of the world. Not could be. Not should be. Are.

But whether your light draws people to God and floods them with God's healing grace depends on you.

One thing is certain: During this Prelude to the End, God's light will shine----with you or without you. If you keep your light under a bushel, God will raise up someone else to do what you were meant to do. But that light will get beyond our bushels and will begin to draw

multitudes to our "Hebron" to gather around the Son of David and put them under his Kingship.

While it seems like the world itself is falling apart---nations in an uproar, nature in an uproar, the very foundations shaking with unprecedented violence---people whose hearts long for the light will see it and flock to it.

Where will they flock to the light? To mega-churches? To celebrity evangelists? It's far more likely that the seekers of Light will find their way to out-of-the-way places like

David's Cave of Adullum. Most of this ingathering will take place without any help from Facebook or Twitter.

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:44

How will people recognize God's light in you? Primarily by what you do. Even the authority of your words will depend on what you do.

You will find yourself doing things that may even surprise you. The Spirit within you will move you to get beyond yourself and begin to serve in simple, matter-of-fact ways.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 5

And when they see your good works, their eyes will be lifted

beyond you to the Father's mercy.
You will be so small and the
Father's mercy so big that the glory
will cling to him alone. His light in
you will cause them to see the
gathering clouds and prepare their
hearts.

BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS

"Aren't you coming?

Everybody's going down to the Arena to hear brother Eliezer! He took Boston by storm. Hundreds of people were healed. Thousands got saved! The whole nation is talking about him. And now he's here!

"Two years ago nobody ever heard of him. But now the name Eliezer is on everybody's lips. You've got to come and hear

him."

Brother Eliezer flew in on his private jet. He and his "team" were picked up by three limos and driven off to the best hotel in town.

Tomorrow morning he'll be on two talk shows. And tomorrow night he'll begin his Crusade of Faith.

In five minutes he'll have the crowd eating out of the palm of his hand. He'll have them in tears. Before the night is over Brother Eliezer will have added another ten thousand to his herd of followers, and taken in enough cash to fuel his jet for years

to come.

So what's the problem? This man preaches Jesus. He knows his Bible from cover to cover. He denounces the corruption that surrounds us and points the way to a better life.

And yet, there is something strange about his ministry. Yes, there is power in the hall, wherever this man speaks. But what kind of power?

A major sign that the Prelude to the End has already begun is the proliferation of "Christian Leaders"

and "Christian Celebrities" with huge followings in North America and across the globe who proclaim a "designer gospel" which is the direct opposite of the gospel of the cross. This distorted gospel is accepted without questioning by millions of people who are "born again."

Behind these strong voices, bankrolling their "crusades" and opening doors for them into the halls of power, are men with deep pockets. Men who claim to live by "Christian Principles," but who have yielded their souls to an idol

called Mammon: Men who are exploiting these false prophets and are being exploited by them, as the evil one exploits them both.

Our Lord warned us that false prophets wear sheep's clothing. They look and sound innocent. They ooze "compassion." They hold their Bibles high and radiate "truth" and "goodness." The actual fruit of their lives is covered with a cloud and difficult to observe, because, like all celebrities, they maintain their image with great care, while their private lives by vanity, lust and greed.

Our Lord Jesus tells us that there is nothing hidden that will not be exposed. Sooner or later the façade will crumble.

Meanwhile, if we check the message of these false prophets against the words of our Lord Jesus---all of them---we begin to see that the "salvation" they proclaim is not quite the same as the simple, clear call to discipleship of the Master. The call to deny self and pick up the cross is replaced with sunnier promises.

And the spirit that accompanies

their message is not the Spirit of the Cross. Not the Spirit of the Master, who, without fanfare, sought out the rejected and forgotten of this world and gave them hope. Jesus never broke the bruised reed or quenched the smoking flax, but these "prophets" have little time or patience with folks who are "inconsequential" and can't be exploited.

So how can we be sure that this Bible Teacher is a disciple of the Master and not a false prophet? Jesus keeps it simple: you will know them by their fruits.

The fruit of their lives. How they actually live. Are they forever inviting you to "share in their ministry" by sending in your cash? Do they make promises of great returns on the "seed money" you are encouraged to send to them?

The fruit of their ministry: their followers. Are these followers walking the walk of disciples of the crucified and risen Lord, or are they "groupies" that hang on every word of their beloved teacher?

Our master expects us to be able to discern the difference between a

false prophet and a true. He expects us to think. To have eyes that see and ears that hear.

Beware of "Christian Group-think" where everybody assumes that every Christian Crusade is ordained by God. Does this "Crusade" sound like the way Jesus does things?

Does this message have the ring of the Masters deep humility? His blinding holiness? His unspeakable love? Would Jesus pronounce such judgments on a confused, struggling soul as this evangelist pronounces on sinners who commit the "unspeakable"?

If we are truly seeking to follow the Master, he will certainly enable us to recognize his voice amid all the voices that claim to speak for him.

NOAH'S DAY

At last we've figured it out. It all began with the Big Bang. The universe continues to expand. Habitable planets are light-years away, but plans are in the works for a settlement on Mars.

Science has all the answers but one:

What's behind it all?

And yet, what's the point of concerning ourselves with such questions when we have bills to

pay and plans to make?

To make things worse, someone comes along and talks about God and takes us right back to the Middle Ages.

God?

Who's God?

Where is he?

How do you know?

You say Jesus is the Son of God?

What does that mean?

Listen, life simply goes on.
Things happen.

That's it!

They didn't have smart phones, tablets and TV. No ten-lane highways, no jet liners. And yet, human nature was exactly as it is today. People bought and sold, ate and drank, married, had children, laughed and cried. And died.

Like today, the people of Noah's day were busy going about their lives,

certain that things would continue as they always did. The jarring witness of this absurd boat-builder was something no reasonable person could accept.

"Why are you building that huge ship, miles away from the ocean?"

"You'll find out."

Did Noah warn them? Did he plead with the people to repent? Noah's strange project was itself a call to repentance.

At this hour, when all nations are again beginning to hear the voice "of one crying in the wilderness" most people are going about their lives as if nothing will ever change.

Earthquakes, famine, wars, mysterious infections will be featured on the evening news. But who sees anything ominous? Who takes the warning?

The Reality which penetrates our reality causes strange things to happen. Strange words fill the air. Noah was a sign. Elijah was a sign. And the most blazing sign of all

was the Prophet of Nazareth, who was much more than a prophet. He came into this world like any other human infant, and yet there was something about him which seemed to divide the multitudes into those who were awed and those who seethed with hatred.

Whenever he chooses to cause his voice to be heard, the same strange division takes place. Once you hear his voice, you either open your heart or you raise up a wall.

*"As were the days of Noah,
so will be the coming of the*

Son of man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man.

Then two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left. Watch therefore, for you do not

know on what day your Lord is coming."

But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into.

Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Matthew 24

What makes you think that God must explain himself? God doesn't need to explain himself. God doesn't need to justify himself. God speaks by whatever means he chooses.

Whether you get the message depends on the state of your heart.

Whether the world gets the message depends on the state of its heart.

Whether it's Noah's Day or Jonah's Day, or Good Friday, the purpose of the Living God is unfolding before our eyes---whether we choose to

see it, or not.

IN THE WORLD YOU WILL HAVE TRIBULATION

Lorene had been praying for her father for years. She and her parents and her children lived a few blocks from the church in the shadow of the old Cadillac Assembly Plant. "Why doesn't God hear my prayers for Daddy?" she'd say to the Bible Class on Sunday mornings.

One Easter morning Lorene's Daddy got himself all dressed up in a black suit and white shirt and marched off to church. Lorene cried when she saw Daddy coming in for the

service.

When the service was over Daddy walked past some of his buddies on Vinewood Avenue. "Look at him! All dressed up! Who are you trying to impress, Man!?"

"Hey Mark! What's got into you? You tryin to be a saint?"

Daddy didn't know what to say. He was embarrassed. Humiliated. It was too much! No more church for him!

It was years before Lorene's Daddy

made another attempt to find fellowship and draw near to the Lord Jesus.

It was a minor form of persecution, but it was enough to set this man back. And the same ridicule and contempt awaits all who seek to walk with the Master. In the world there will be tribulation.

"I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Tribulation. Suffering. Part of the

normal life of the follower of Jesus? If we take Jesus' own words seriously, how can we miss his constant warning that he isn't leading us through a rose garden? If they hated him, why shouldn't they hate us?

What do we do with Jesus' requirement that, if we choose to follow him, it involves carrying a cross?

Sunny Churchianity and its obsession with "prosperity" is miles away from our Lord's gospel of the kingdom. He calls us to

follow him "outside the camp,
bearing his reproach".

What's required is tough skin and a tender heart; men and women who can fulfill his call in any kind of weather. Because the weather is often harsh for disciples who follow Jesus in this troubled world. Once this is understood, it is easier to press on with the joy of the Lord, even while the storms come and go.

We have the Master's peace. We have his joy. We live by the power of his cross (which crucifies us to the world) and his resurrection

(which empowers us to break the chains of evil and set the captives free).

"I have said this to you, that in me you will have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

POWER

The preacher waved his Bible high in the air and shouted, "We have to get rid of this President!"

"Amen!" roared the mega congregation.

The preacher beamed with joy as he whipped his flock into frenzy of passion to shake Washington to its core. "It's time to take over and make this a Christian country! We're being threatened from all sides. We have to push back and stand up for what we believe in!"

This is the Kingdom of God? This is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus? And yet, churches all over the land are lining up behind political action groups in the service of economic agendas that have nothing to do with the gospel of the Lord.

Whether they realize it or not, they have made a compromise with the powers of the world---the very compromise that our Lord Jesus refused to make when Satan offered him the kingdoms of this world and all their glory.

Power. This world's power. Those

who pursue it are always corrupted by it, regardless of how much "good" they plan to do with it. Because this world's power is still in the hands of the Father of Lies.

This is not the Garden of Eden. This is The World of the Fallen. The Prince of the world was defeated at the very place where he expected his supreme victory: the Cross of Calvary.

But the Prince of this world is still very much alive. He has lost his place in the heavenly realms, so he clings to his shrinking kingdom with

bitter madness.

"All this I will give to you, if you will but bow down and worship me," was his promise to the Son of Man as he offered him a short-cut to power. "It's mine. I can give it to whomever I will."

Satan was offering to turn over his power to Jesus. Jesus scorned that kind of power, and still does.

At that very hour some Pharisees came, and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill

*you." And he said to them,
"Go and tell that fox,
'Behold, I cast out demons
and perform cures today
and tomorrow, and the third
day I finish my course.
Nevertheless I must go on
my way today and tomorrow
and the day following; for it
cannot be that a prophet
should perish away from
Jerusalem.'" Luke 13:31-33*

Herod, Caesar, Pilate, men and women of power, who with a simple word of command could take your life---these people never

impressed Jesus. Their power and their wealth were seen as delusions by Jesus.

And yet, Jesus, for all his apparent weakness in the eyes of the world, possessed a power far greater. A power before which Satan trembles and the demons cry out in fear.

The power of the cross. The power that offers itself up to the Father's will. Power that rises out of the grave of "self" to do things God's way----and only God's way.

Until the Lord Jesus returns in

glory, this Kingdom Power will always be clothed in weakness. Its face will always be humble. This power belongs to those who walk in the footsteps of the Lamb.

And to them alone.

WHEN PUT ON THE SPOT

"Okay, let's hear what you have to say for yourself, before we lock you up for a while. How many times have you been told to keep your beliefs to yourself? This is a tolerant country, but we're tired of people like you taking advantage of our tolerant ways!"

He was sitting behind a worn table in a dingy, musty "interview room." But the man sitting across from him was no minor detective. He was a man of considerable power in the new system.

"Are you sure that you want to hear what I have to say?" said the accused man.

"Speak!"

So the man opened his mouth, and out poured a stream of words which surprised the man himself. Words that burned with fire. Words that cut into the heart of his listener like a knife.

The interviewer stood up and stepped toward the door. His lips were trembling. His eyes were eyes of fear. He was afraid to speak. He

returned to his office, locked the door, sat at his desk and tried to collect himself. "What's happening to me? Am I losing my mind?"

But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake.

This will be a time for you to bear testimony. for I will give you a

mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.

"You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and kinsmen and friends, and some of you they will put to death;

you will be hated by all for my name's sake.

But not a hair of your head will perish.

By your endurance you will gain your lives.

Settle it therefore in your minds, not to meditate beforehand how to answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict."
Luke 21

There is a time to meditate and prepare for a teaching or a sermon we've been invited to give. And we are responsible before the Lord to be careful and thoughtful as we get ready to feed others with the living Word. But there is also a time for us to blank our minds before God,

trusting that when we are brought before a man or woman who represents the powers of this world, the Lord Jesus himself will fill our hearts with wisdom and our mouth with words which burn with the authority of heaven.

Our Lord is talking about a disciple sitting in prison, waiting to be brought before a ruler to give account. A disciple who may already know that immediate death awaits.

Far fetched? Wait and see.

EARTHQUAKES

3:45 a.m. The room began to tremble and sway. Frank and Nancy jumped out of bed, and fled the house. The sleepy neighborhood was suddenly alive with frightened parents, crying babies, barking dogs. Sirens could be heard everywhere.

Is this the Big One?

Well, it's not like it's the end of the world. Earthquakes are simply an on-going fact. We're not looking at the supernatural here. This is just

the way things are.

Chile, California, British Columbia, the Philippines, China, Japan.

Earthquakes keep happening, as they have down through the eons, as the earth's core and surface keep adjusting. Any geologist can explain what's going on.

So why did Jesus include earthquakes in his description of the beginning of the End? Earthquakes were part of life then as now. Or is Jesus telling us that at a certain point there will be a rapid increase in their frequency and violence?

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth-pangs.

Matthew 24

Have you ever noticed that when there is a shock or disturbance in the spiritual realm it is often reflected in the physical? Just as Granny dies, a picture falls off the wall. The ripple in the spiritual

realm caused by her departure creates a slight shudder in this world of matter.

Elijah reaches a turning point: an earthquake on Mt. Sinai.

Jesus dies: an earthquake in Jerusalem.

Jesus rises: an earthquake at the tomb.

Just prior to the Master's return: an increase in the frequency and violence of earthquakes.

Will anyone notice?

Will those who get the message respond with repentance? Or will they simply grind out more Bible Prophecy sermons?

Of this we can be certain: those who are presently walking with the Lord Jesus will "get it." They will read the signs and order their lives accordingly.

FAMINE

Sally came out of the supermarket shaking her head. "The prices! Who can afford vegetables these days? And bread! These prices are obscene!"

Sally knows about the drought in the U.S. Southwest. But she never expected it to impact her life like this. There have been droughts before. They come and go, and life goes on. But these prices are not only hitting the wallet, they are hitting the stomach.

Meanwhile, in parts of Africa they're not complaining about the price of food. There is no food. Thousands are flooding the refugee camps, hoping for enough food to stay alive. But even in these U.N. camps, the supply has dried up. Babies are crying for milk. Mothers are weeping for their starving infants.

And it's getting worse. Worldwide. If you happen to be living in the wrong place, your days are numbered. And there is nothing you can do.

For nation will rise against

*nation, and kingdom
against kingdom, and there
will be famines and
earthquakes in various
places: all this is but the
beginning of the birth-
pangs.*

Matthew 24

In a world of high-tech agriculture even the mega-farms are helpless before these mega-droughts. So the nations scramble to grab whatever they can for their people--- especially for their people of means who can afford to pay the price.

Is this what Jesus was talking about? What does it all mean? It means exactly what Jesus said it meant: this is the Prelude to the End. This is one more sign that history, as we know it, is approaching its Final Hour.

Science can't help. Technology is at a loss. Who can control the weather? The world's population has mushroomed while its food supply has tanked.

Now the wars are not over religion or land, but about food and water.

Jesus, speaking for his Father, told us long ago that it would be like this. He instructed us to keep our eyes open and our minds alert---to read the signs of the times.

He also said to the multitudes, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance

*of earth and sky; but why do
you not know how to
interpret the present time?"*

Luke 12

WAR

Peter and Ruth are running back and forth, loading the old car with boxes and bags while the children chase each other around the tiny yard. They want to get started before sundown and drive through the cover of night. They need to get as far away as they can from the conflict which is about to blow.

Drones are circling overhead. Explosions are heard off in the distance. The roads are already crowded with cars and pick-up trucks, carts and families on foot.

Where they will spend tomorrow night or how they will find food and shelter in the coming days is unknown. All they know is that this place where they have lived all their lives is no longer safe. The wars that once seemed so far away have come close.

So what's new? It's been like this since the beginning of time. Man against man. Tribe against tribe. Nation against nation. The strong swallow up the weak and take control. Kingdoms rise, kingdoms fall, and the masses suffer.

But why is it that the "Peters" and "Ruths" all over the earth are on the run? The fires of war are raging on every continent. Ghettos and wealthy suburbs, towns and villages, mega-cities---all are beginning to tremble with fear in the face of the same universal plague: WAR.

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birthpangs.

Matthew 24

Do Peter and Ruth understand what's going on? Do you and I? There is an atmosphere about this strange war that makes us think of something more than the immediate confusion. One cannot help sensing that the control of this craziness is out of human hands.

One cannot help thinking of God.

Is God behind this?

Is God at least withdrawing his moderating hand and letting this

fury spread? Is this at last the war Jesus spoke of when those first disciples pressed him for a description of the End? Of the signs they should look for.

Those who walk with the Master are convinced that this is indeed one of the signs. So they look beyond the smoke and the smell and the chaos to the promise of his return. This is surely a sign that his return is near.

THE HARLOT

"It's the Roman Catholic Church!"

"It's the Muslims!"

"It's Wall Street!"

"It's the Russian Empire!"

For centuries Bible Prophecy buffs have been labeling one entity after another as the Great Harlot. But who is she?

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven

*bowls came and said to me,
"Come, I will show you the
judgment of the great harlot
who is seated upon many
waters, with whom the
kings of the earth have
committed fornication, and
with the wine of whose
fornication the dwellers on
earth have become drunk."*

*And he carried me away in
the Spirit into a wilderness,
and I saw a woman sitting
on a scarlet beast which
was full of blasphemous
names, and it had seven*

heads and ten horns.

The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication; and on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations."

And I saw the woman,

*drunk with the blood of the
saints and the blood of the
martyrs of Jesus.*

*When I saw her I marveled
greatly.*

Revelation 17

Don't expect her to make a sudden appearance. She's already here. She has been toasted by kings and princes, prelates and politicians, for centuries.

She is "seated on many waters."
Masses of humanity have been held

under her power, controlled more than they know, by her whims. All who thirst for this world's power are drawn to her. And those who hold this world's power in their hands are inclined to become intimate with her.

The Great Harlot does not appear to human eyes to be "sitting on a scarlet beast which is full of blasphemous names." Her jewels and pearls take many forms. That golden cup in her hand, full of abominations, is disguised as a cup of wisdom, a cup of expediency, even though it contains the suffering

of countless martyrs.

The Harlot, Babylon the Great, is none other than the Kingdom of this World. This world's order; Power. Power to buy and sell, power to kill or let live, power to turn whatever it chooses into an idol.

The Harlot can be found in seats of power, whether national, corporate, ecclesiastical, or the local town hall. She seduces us into thinking that we deserve to be in control. She draws us into uncanny fellowship with others of like mind. She plants mistrust in our minds

toward those who don't belong to our group. She inspires us to compromise our way to counterfeit glory.

The Harlot is not far away from any of us. We live in her shadow. Her breath covers us with vanity and fear.

When we begin to take the Lord Jesus at his word, and become serious disciples, the Harlot takes note. She watches us with disdain. She awaits her chance to bring us down.

But the day is coming when the Harlot will be judged. And her judgment will begin when the Anti-Christ no longer needs her services....

And he said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the harlot is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.

And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the harlot; they will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh

*and burn her up with fire,
for God has put it into their
hearts to carry out his
purpose by being of one
mind and giving over their
royal power to the beast,
until the words of God shall
be fulfilled.*

*And the woman that you
saw is the great city which
has dominion over the kings
of the earth."*

Revelation 17

It may be that in her final days the

Harlot will take the form of a world-wide church which claims to be the "true Body of Christ." If so, those who are focused on following the Crucified and Risen One will see her for what she is. There's no need to speculate now on how the Harlot will behave in her final days.

Our present calling in the Lord Jesus is to make sure that we know the difference between the way of the cross, and the way of compromise -- and to stay focused on our Calvary. The Master's footsteps always lead "outside the camp, bearing his

reproach." And his power is always clothed in weakness, hidden from eyes of flesh.

If we reject the Harlot's power and choose to live only in the power of the Spirit, we will not only survive the coming days, we will conquer.

FOR THE TIME IS NEAR

And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of

the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy,

and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.

Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to

repay every one for what he has done." Revelation 22

The time is near?

We've been hearing that message for centuries. Did the Apostle John make a mistake? Was the Apostle Paul misguided when he told us the hour is late?

I mean, brethren, the appointed time has grown very short; from now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though

*they were not mourning,
and those who rejoice as
though they were not
rejoicing, and those who
buy as though they had no
goods, and those who deal
with the world as though
they had no dealings with it.
For the form of this world
is passing away. I
Corinthians 7*

God does not have to explain himself. He fulfills his word in whatever way he chooses. And if his Spirit tells us that the time is near, we do well to heed. From the

Day of Pentecost to this very moment, those who come under the power of the Word find themselves walking on the rim of Eternity. The time is near. The End accompanies every breath we take.

But what will it mean when the Time arrives?

It will mean Judgment. Good and Evil will be separated by the only hand that makes no mistakes. The weeds will be thrown into the fire, and the fruit of the good seed will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The Net will come

ashore; the good fish will be kept and the bad fish will be thrown away.

We may believe with all our hearts that Judgment waits for all on the Last Day. Yet we give it little thought as long as the Last Day belongs to the distant future. We'll take our chances, and continue to live in what we call "the real world."

But what we call "the real world," is far more like a dream than we might think. The Real World is the world that takes God's judgment

into account. And the wise who inhabit the Real World by faith take shelter under the yoke of the Son of God. They don't just "believe" in him; they walk with him. They trust his promises and heed his commands.

The man who is obsessed with wealth is living in a dream world.

The woman whose single passion is to break the glass ceiling is in a dream world.

The super-athlete whose heart belongs to his awesome contract is

in a dream world.

"Christians" who flock to the "prosperity gospel" are in a dream world.

When the Spirit says, "The Time is near," he is telling us to wake up and join the Real World, God's world, before the Day of Grace gives way to Night.

A DAY AT A TIME WITH THE END IN MIND

"All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And Lo, I am with you always, to the End of the Age."

Matthew 28

"Lo, I am with you always, to the End of the Age."

Between this moment and the moment when the cosmic trumpet blast pierces the air, announcing the Kings return, we live our lives, a day at a time, as disciples. Just as Noah fulfilled his calling by building his monstrous boat on dry land, we fulfill ours by demonstrating that Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and risen is now Lord.

Our job is not to "get people saved." Jesus did that at Calvary.

Our job is to make disciples. To bring them into orbit around Jesus. To connect them to Jesus in a living way. To help them to die to themselves and rise to a new life, energized by the Holy Spirit. To teach obedience to the commands of Jesus as the doorway to freedom.

In this Omega Season, as the clouds thicken and the face of evil becomes ever more visible, each of us, as a follower of Jesus, is placed by God in a spot where our daily life becomes a light in the darkness.

If we live as followers of Jesus, our

light will shine. People will be drawn---not to us---but to the light in us. And we will find ourselves, in simple down-to-earth ways, helping them walk the walk of faith.

As we go about our lives each day, our focus is on the Master. Our bodies are living sacrifices. Our minds are filled with light from above. Our hearts are flooded with a love which is not natural to us, but comes from God.

Some of us will find a gift of healing emerging, as we care for people and pray with them. Some of

us will be gifted with words that penetrate the human heart with fire. Some of us will impart life to others simply by washing their feet--by serving them in simple ways.

But all of us will be part of a world-wide Army of Light, preparing the earth for its Final Hour.

And when the Bridegroom arrives, our lamps will still be burning.

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