

“It Shall Come to Pass”

“In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.”
—Micah 4:1

IN THIS INSPIRED PROPHECY of God’s Word, we are given a preview of coming events which assures us that the peoples of earth are not always to be plagued with fear, war, unrest, division and perplexity. In verse four of this prophecy, we are told that “none shall make them afraid.” In the same verse is the assurance that this

brighter and better day will indeed come to pass, for, as the prophet declares, “The mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.”

It has become increasingly clear that human wisdom is unable to find a solution to the many complex and distressing problems which confront the nations. Every effort that is made by the world to extricate itself from the quicksands of despair leaves the people and nations sinking deeper into the mire of confusion and hopelessness. Most in

the world want peace and security, and are feverishly seeking them, but thus far all efforts to reach these goals of human happiness have fallen well short of man's desired outcome.

Because of the continued failure of the nations to find workable formulas to resolve their many problems, the people are becoming increasingly apprehensive of that terrible cataclysm of events which could result. Take, for example, the fear of war and its potential for death and devastation. Despite such fear, much of human wisdom insists that the only way the potential holocaust of modern war can be prevented is to continue the production of more and better armaments. This, of course, only increases the probable horrors of any war that might break out.

Such preparations offer a slim hope of security, but the lesson of history is that war is seldom prevented by becoming better prepared for it. However, the world's leaders have no other knowledge to guide them than imperfect human wisdom, so, while hoping for the best, they prepare for the worst. However, the words of the prophet assure us that this will not always be the case, that the time is coming when, recognizing their own failure, the nations will say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, ... and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."—Mic. 4:2

Our opening text informs us that this is to be one of the developments of the "last days." Many have misunderstood the meaning of the prophetic expression "last days," supposing it to be synonymous with "doomsday." It has been misinterpreted to denote the last days of time and the beginning of

a dreaded eternity of torment for the majority of the human race. Along with this has been the thought that the “last days” means the destruction of the earth, and the end of all human experience and life on the planet.

This viewpoint, however, is incorrect. The “last days” are indeed synonymous with the prophetic “end of the world,” but the “end of the world” does not mean, as many have supposed, the destruction of the earth, nor the end of human experience. The Scriptures assure us that “the earth abideth for ever.” (Eccles. 1:4) In Isaiah 45:18 we are informed that God has established the earth, that “he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.”

This is fully in keeping with the Genesis account of creation, where we read that when God created man, he commanded him to multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. (Gen. 1:28) It is true that man sinned and forfeited his right to live on the earth forever, but the Scriptures reveal that through God’s plan of redemption accomplished by Christ, the death sentence against the human race is to be lifted, so that all who desire may be restored to life and health and enjoy the blessings of an earthly paradise forever.

The Apostle Peter describes this work of recovery as “restitution,” and informs us that in the divine arrangement the work of restitution follows the second coming of Christ. (Acts 3:20,21) This is the ultimate objective of the return of Christ, and it is obvious that this great feature of God’s plan for human restoration to life on the earth could not be accomplished if, at his return, the earth is destroyed.

It is true, however, that the prophetic “end of the world” is associated with the second coming of Jesus, but the prophecies pertaining thereto refer to the end of a social order, not to the destruction of the literal earth. The Greek word mostly used in these prophecies is *kosmos*, meaning, an order or arrangement, not the planet itself. It is this word that the Apostle John used when he wrote to Christians, saying “Love not the world [*kosmos*], neither the things that are in the world [*kosmos*].” —I John 2:15

Jesus used this word when to his disciples he said, “I have chosen you out of the world [*kosmos*].” (John 15:19) It is this “world order” which Christians are not to love, from which they are to keep themselves separate, and that comes to an end. It is a selfish, sinful world order. It is characterized by greed and graft and oppression, by crime, war, pain, death, and by all the evil things which right-thinking men and women despise and hate. The coming to an end of such a world or arrangement, rather than spelling “doomsday” for the human race, will prove to be a great eternal blessing for all mankind.

SATAN’S EMPIRE DESTROYED

When properly understood, the “last days” of our text is seen to be a period in human experience during which the present “world” comes to an end, and a new order under the rulership of Christ is established in its place. Jesus referred to Satan as the “prince of this world” which comes to an end, and Paul refers to the devil as being its “god.” (John 14:30; II Cor. 4:4) The destruction of this world,

therefore, means the end of Satan's rulership, and that of his empire of wickedness.

The time in which this "present evil world" comes to an end is also prophetically described as the "day of the Lord." (Gal. 1:4; I Thess. 5:2) It is the time in which God no longer refrains from interfering in human affairs, but exercises his power, through Christ Jesus his Son, over this Satan-controlled world order to bring it to an end. The Apostle Paul refers to this "day of the Lord," saying that it would come "as a thief in the night," and that God's people would be able to identify it by the fact that there would be a cry of "peace and safety," followed by "sudden destruction" which would come "as travail upon a woman with child." —I Thess. 5:2,3

In Isaiah 42:13,14 Jehovah's relationship to events in this day of destruction is described by these words: "The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once."

In this prophecy, even as in Paul's forecast of events in the "day of the Lord," the foretold destruction is described as coming like "travail" at childbirth, indicating that while the first seizure of pain would come upon the nations suddenly and unexpectedly, the world or social order would not be completely destroyed by one short and crushing blow. Rather, the pattern of destruction was to be a series of spasms, increasing in intensity, as in

childbirth, with ever shorter periods of easement between.

There is much reason to believe that the first of these spasms of destruction began at the time of the First World War. In addition to its toll of death and destruction, it was a war which resulted in the toppling of many of Europe's hereditary ruling houses—governments which had constituted the mainstay of so-called civilization for centuries. Little more than twenty years later, the Second World War raged for six years, resulting in another swathe of global destruction, and leaving civilization still nearer to the brink of chaos. Since then, many other wars, large and small, have raged throughout the earth almost continuously, with no country immune from possible devastation and calamity.

Meanwhile, as Paul foretold, there has almost constantly been the cry of “peace and safety.” Many peace societies and peace fronts came into being in the years just prior to the beginning of World War I. In 1938, just a few months before the outbreak of the second global struggle, Neville Chamberlain, then Prime Minister of Great Britain, returning from the Munich, Germany peace conference, waved a treaty before the crowd which welcomed him and said, “It is peace for our time.”

However, peace did not result, nor have the nations since, on either side of the great ideological struggles in which they are striving for control, gained “peace for our time.” The prophetic pattern of this time of great tribulation will continue until, in the final convulsion of this present world order, the Lord will reveal himself to the nations, and their eyes will be opened to behold his glory.

“LET US GO UP”

When the eyes of the nations are thus opened to recognize the hand of God in their affairs, preventing them from accomplishing their selfish designs, they will begin to look to him in humility and dependence. It will be then, as the prophet declares, that they will say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, ... and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.”—Mic. 4:2

The “mountain” of the Lord is symbolic of his kingdom of righteousness. The prophecies were originally addressed to the Jewish nation, and this people were accustomed to thinking of God’s control in their midst as being located on a mountain—Mount Zion, in Jerusalem. (Isa. 8:18; 18:7) From Mount Zion God ruled over the ancient nation of Israel through their various kings, of whom it is written that they sat upon the “throne of the LORD.”—I Chron. 29:23

Our text speaks of the “mountain,” or kingdom, of the “house” of the Lord. This is language which should readily be understood by those who are acquainted with history. Beginning from very early in ancient times, the nations and empires of the old world were governed by ruling “houses.” These were “royal families,” in which the right to rule was passed on from one generation to another.

God uses the term “house” in connection with the kingdom he has promised to establish because that kingdom will also be governed by a royal, or ruling, family. It will be his own family, or sons, of which Jesus is the chief, the “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” (Rev. 17:14; 19:16) Jesus will have

associated with him those who have faithfully followed in his footsteps during the present age.

The opportunity to become joint-heirs and rulers with Jesus in his kingdom was first offered to the Jewish nation. This was at the time of his earthly ministry. Concerning this we read that Jesus “came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power [the right or privilege] to become the sons of God.” (John 1:11,12) However, not enough from among the Jewish nation accepted him and responded to his call to sonship, so the Lord turned to the Gentiles to seek the remainder of those who were to make up this ruling house of sons.—Acts 15:14

These believers in Jesus, from among both Jews and Gentiles, qualify to be members of God’s ruling house of sons upon the basis of their faithfulness in sacrificing and suffering with Jesus. Paul, faced with death in a Roman prison, wrote to Timothy and said, “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”—II Tim. 2:11,12

In Romans 8:16,17 we read: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” The work of this present age has been the calling out from the world, by the message of the Gospel, those who have been willing to live a life of sacrifice and service, even unto death, according to the pattern set forth by Jesus. This is the people “for his name,” referred to in Acts 15:14.

When this work is completed, then will come the establishment of “the mountain of the house of the LORD.” The mighty power of God assures us of this. He began to operate toward this end nearly twenty centuries ago by raising Jesus from the dead. It was part of the divine arrangement that Jesus should die for the sin-cursed race, for it was God’s design that the kingdom reign should be over a living race rather than a dying race. Thus, Jesus died for his subjects in order that they might have an opportunity to live. (Rom. 5:18,19; I Cor. 15:21,22; I Tim. 2:3-6) When Jesus’ enemies put him to death, one of the charges against him was that he claimed to be a king. (John 18:33-37; 19:12) Satan may have thought that he had triumphed over God’s plan to establish a kingdom in the hands of Jesus. Satan failed, however, for divine power raised the king from the dead.

That was at the beginning of the present age. At this end of the age, divine power accomplishes another mighty miracle in the setting up of the long-promised kingdom. Those who throughout the age have suffered and died with Jesus, are also raised from the dead. This is referred to in the Scriptures as the “first resurrection,” and the purpose of it is that these might live and reign “with Christ a thousand years.”—Rev. 20:4,6

Jesus, together with his church, as the ruling “house” of God, will be the invisible rulers of the new world order. Throughout past ages, as Jesus explained, Satan has been the ruler of the old, sinful order which, in fact, he contrived and assembled. He has exerted his power through human agencies of one sort and another, but Satan himself has been invisible to the people. So it will be with

the kingdom of Christ. Jesus and his associate kings will be unseen by the world. However, they will exercise their righteous power and authority through human representatives, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets.—Luke 13:28

These human agencies also have been educated, trained and disciplined in advance. They are the faithful servants of God who lived and proved their fidelity to him prior to Jesus' earthly ministry. Righteous Abel was the first of these, and John the Baptist was the last. Jesus said that of those "born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."—Matt. 11:11

This does not mean that John the Baptist will not be saved. Jesus simply meant that he will not be in the spiritual phase of the kingdom, referred to in the foregoing verse as the "kingdom of heaven." John the Baptist, who died prior to Jesus' death as man's Redeemer, was the last of those referred to in Psalm 45:16 who will be made "princes in all the earth." They will not be kings, but will represent the king, Christ Jesus and his church, as "princes."

Near the end of the current period of "great tribulation," when divine intervention is manifested upon the earth, these princes—"Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets"—will be raised from the dead to live here on earth. They will become the recognized leaders and statesmen in the new world order, under the direction of the spiritual rulership of Christ. This is referred to in Luke 13:29, where we are informed that from all parts of the earth—east, west, north, and south—the people will recognize

the resurrected Ancient Worthies as their instructors and guides in “the kingdom of God.”

These human representatives of the kingdom are those who proved their fidelity to the Lord in ages past and will be made up mostly of the natural seed of Abraham. However, their sphere of influence will quickly spread until it embraces all the earth. All people, regardless of nationality or background, will be given an equal opportunity to become a part of the new world order and to partake of its blessings. Indeed, as Isaiah 2:2 says, “All nations shall flow” unto the mountain of the Lord.

When this takes place, all people and nations will learn the ways of peace instead of war. A genuine disarmament program will be put into effect, for the promise is that they shall, symbolically speaking, “beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks.” (Mic. 4:3) How wise this is! For centuries the nations have tried to establish peace by preparing for war but have failed. The laws of God’s kingdom of righteousness will reverse this procedure, for the instruments of war will be destroyed and the people will be educated in the ways of peace.

The economy of the nations then will no longer be geared to the necessity of continued preparation for war and conflict. Peace, universal and lasting, will become the heritage of all people, and at the same time they will be economically secure. The reassuring thought is given us in the symbolism of dwelling under a vine and fig tree, and the promise is that “every man” shall dwell “under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid.”—vs. 4

Today, shortsighted human wisdom and selfishness have brought the world into a state of chaos

and fear. The people fear war, with its horrible consequences, but they also fear the economic uncertainties with which the world is continually surrounded. Unemployment, depression, and economic hardship are a constant concern for many. However, we thank God, this too will not plague mankind when, in the “mountain of the Lord,” the people not only beat their swords into plowshares, but also dwell in economic security, each under his own “vine” and “fig tree.”

In addition to peace and economic security, blessings of health and life will be made available in the mountain of the Lord. The promise is that in this kingdom God will “swallow up death in victory,” and will “wipe away tears” from all faces. (Isa. 25:6-9) This is the thought implied by the Apostle Paul when he wrote that Christ must reign, until he has put all enemies under his feet, and that the “last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”—I Cor. 15:25,26

This promise of life is not limited to those who will pass through the present time of distress and trouble and be alive when the divine kingdom takes control of earth’s affairs. The Scriptures assure us that all the dead are to be raised, that they also may have an opportunity to enjoy the blessings of that kingdom. In one of the beautiful kingdom chapters of the Bible, the Apostle John tells us that “death” and “hell” will deliver up the dead which are in them.—Rev. 20:13

In Revelation 1:18 Jesus tells us that he has the “keys” of hell. In this verse the word “hell” is a translation of the Greek word *hades*, which means “unseen.” Hell—or *hades*—is the condition of death,

not a physical place. The Bible describes it in this way: "There is no work nor calculation nor knowledge nor wisdom, in *hades*, whither, thou, art going." (Eccles. 9:10, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*) The testimony of the Scriptures assures us that Jesus will use the "keys of hell" to unlock the death condition, and set free its prisoners. Awakened from the sleep of death, they will be given the same opportunity of obeying the laws of the kingdom as those who live through the present trouble into the kingdom. Those who accept the provision of life made for them through Christ, and obey the laws of the kingdom administered by the "princes in all the earth," will live forever.—Rev. 21:3-7

The glorious work of the kingdom will not be accomplished in a few days, or even in a few years, but it will require a thousand years, the Scriptures show. As previously noted, this period is described by the Apostle Peter as "times of restitution of all things," which, he reveals, follows the return of Christ. In Peter's prophecy he refers to Jesus as "that prophet" promised by Moses, and says that in the "times of restitution," having then been fully educated to God's laws, all will be required to obey from a heart of love and devotion, the divine precepts, summed up in love.—Acts 3:20-23; II Pet. 3:8

Thus, with the work of the kingdom, the "mountain of the house of the LORD," fully accomplished, the human race will be restored to the home and dominion that was lost because of sin. This will be the full answer to the Christian's prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) It is this which, according to the sure Word of God, will soon "come to pass!" ■