

# A World without Fear

*“God is our refuge  
and strength, a  
very present help  
in trouble.  
Therefore will not  
we fear, though the  
earth be removed,  
and though the  
mountains be  
carried into the  
midst of the sea.”  
—Psalm 46:1,2*

**OVER THE CENTURIES OF** man’s existence on the earth, hundreds of millions of people have lost their lives prematurely due to wars, with some estimates of this number as high as one billion. In most cases, at the end of these wars, it was hoped that the aggression of one nation against another would not be repeated and that the world

would be rid of fear once and for all. In fact, when the objectives of such conflicts between nations have been announced, one purpose is often declared to be freedom from fear. This may seem to be a noble objective, but when wars have come to an end, the hearts of nearly all involved are almost inevitably filled with even greater fear regarding the future. The continued failure following nearly every war to settle differences among nations has, sooner or later, led to further conflicts and caused fear to

increase, not decrease. Such has been the tale of human history.

The fears of the world today are deeply rooted in the failure of human leaders to find workable solutions for the problems engendered by selfishness and hatred. There was a time when the wise men of earth were telling the people that the human race, by a process of evolution, was steadily progressing toward a higher state of civilization and that fear would soon become a thing of the past. The world is getting better, they said, and soon we will have a utopia of peace and goodwill, which has been the dream of philosophers and the song of the poets.

As proof that this bright outlook for the future was justified, we were reminded of the progress of education and were told that an enlightened world would know better than to attempt the settlement of international disputes by means of war. We were asked also to consider the great advancements in science, that these too would contribute to lasting peace among the nations. Furthermore, it was claimed that religion was making such rapid gains in the earth that soon the whole world would become so thoroughly imbued with the philosophy of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount that war would be impossible. Sadly, we know too well how all these and the many other claims that were made have miserably failed.

## **A FEAR-FILLED WORLD**

Fear of war, however, is only one of many conditions which strike apprehension in the hearts of the people in today's world. As we near a quarter of a century into the new millennium, many other

fears plague individuals, societies, and nations. We note just a partial list below of some of these fears:

Fear associated with political division and polarization within countries, particularly in the so-called western world, which has led to unrest and violence within many nations.

Fear concerning what seems to be the constant strife and turmoil emanating from the Middle East, and its potential effects on the world at large.

Fear of further deterioration of relations between the world's superpowers, China, Russia, and the United States, all of whom are vitally interlinked with each other economically and otherwise.

Fear of the yet unknown effects of the continued development of Artificial Intelligence ("AI"), and whether mankind will be able to safely control its advancement and usage.

Fear of small rogue nations, governments, and leaders, who although small in comparison to world superpowers, could wreak much havoc upon significant segments of society if not kept in check.

Fear, in general, of continual financial and economic uncertainty at both regional, national, and global levels.

Fear of the growing effects of climate change, particularly its implications with regard to the likelihood of more powerful natural disasters, such as ravaging storms, fires, droughts, earthquakes, or unprecedented changes in weather patterns.

Fear of unforeseen disease, such as was witnessed in recent years as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and its devastating effect upon the world.

Fear that "culture wars" will continue to increase, whether it be along the lines of morality, race,

religion, or other areas, to the extent that society in general will become so fragmented and divided that it may soon collapse upon itself for lack of direction.

Finally, there is fear that along all these lines the symptoms of trouble will continue to grow at such proportion and in every direction that mankind's ultimate survival is in doubt. Such is the state of today's fear-filled world. So we ask: Is there real hope for the world's recovery and for the elimination of fear in the hearts of man?

## **OUR DAY IN PROPHECY**

While the present conditions of fear and distress have come upon many in the world unexpectedly, and despite the claims of an ever-advancing civilization, it has not been a surprise to careful students of the Bible. Throughout its pages God's inspired prophets had predicted these conditions. The Prophet Daniel, for example, foretold this very era in human experience and described it as a "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." (Dan. 12:1) Jesus quoted this prophecy of Daniel, and explained that its fulfillment would be at the time of his Second Advent, or Presence, and of the end of the age.—Matt. 24:3,21,22, *Revised Version Improved and Corrected*

Jesus outlined some of the details of this time of trouble, saying that there would be upon the earth "distress of nations, with perplexity," and that the hearts of the people would fail them for fear as they looked at the things coming upon the earth. (Luke 21:25,26) Jesus' reference to the fear that would fill the hearts of the people is sufficient to

indicate that he was referring to the present time, for never before has there been such widespread worry and anxiety on the part of mankind as there is today.

When Jesus said that there would be upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, he illustrated his thought by likening it to the roaring of the sea and the waves. This is a very apt symbol indeed of the restless, discontented masses of mankind today. They are striving hopelessly to avert the havoc that they fear will be wrought by the onrushing tide of human selfishness and by the instruments of destruction provided by the very science and technology expected to lead the world into peace and goodwill.

The Prophet David also foretold this time in which we are living. Like Jesus, he too likened the chaos of the world to the relentless lashing of sea and waves, as the clamorous demands of people and nations strike out against the bulwarks of a civilization that was once thought to be impregnable. David's prophecy is addressed to those who have faith in the Word of God. Of these he declares, "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."—Ps. 46:2,3

"We will not fear," declares the prophet. As Christians, we need not fear what is coming upon the earth. That is, we will not fear if we acquaint ourselves with the prophecies of the Bible and have faith in what they declare concerning today and tomorrow. The Word of God both explains the

cause of present world distress and furnishes the only hopeful view of the final outcome of this present dark period of fear. To know the plan of God pertaining to human destiny is to have peace and joy in our own hearts. It puts us in a position to radiate comforting assurance to others despite the surrounding apprehension.

According to the Bible, what is to be the outcome of this tumultuous time of fear and distress? Many years ago it was said that mankind has a rendezvous with destiny. This is right, but God holds the controlling hand over that destiny, and the implications are so far-reaching that the imagination is almost staggered when we try to grasp them. Briefly stated, the facts as pointed out in the Word of God are these:

We are reaching the end of an age in the plan of God. Even more than that, we are reaching the end of a world order. It will not be, as many once erroneously supposed, the end of the earth. (Eccles. 1:4) Rather, it will be the end of Satan's dominion over the earth, which is to be supplanted by the reign of Christ. The fulfillment of many prophetic signs indicate that we are now living at the time of his invisible presence and the preparation for the establishment of his kingdom.

## **ENDING OF A WORLD ORDER**

When Jesus foretold the characteristics of our day, declaring that it would be a time when the hearts of the people would be filled with fear, it was in answer to questions asked him by his disciples. Those questions were, "What shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the end of the age?" (Matt.

24:3, *RVIC, Young's Literal Translation, Rotherham Emphasized Bible*) In quoting these questions we have used a correct translation of the words used by Jesus. In the *King James Version* of the Bible, this passage is mistranslated to read, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" However, the disciples were not asking how they might know when the time was near for Jesus to be "coming" again. Rather, they asked how they would know when he had, in fact, returned.

When properly understood, the Master's answer to these questions furnishes the explanation of present world conditions and the genuine hope of better days to come. It reveals that we are nearing the end of the present age in human history. This, in turn, means that the time is near for the fulfillment of those many promises of God's Word which tell of the blessings of peace and joy and life which will be made available to mankind as a result of the coming thousand-year kingdom of Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.—Isa. 11:9; 35:1-10; Rev. 17:14; 20:4,6

This does not mean that Jesus will rule on the earth as a man. His first visit to earth was as a human being, in order, as he explained the matter himself, that he might give his flesh in death for the life of the world. (John 6:51) Having provided the means of release from death by the sacrifice of his humanity on Calvary's cross, he was raised from the dead and given "glory" and "immortality"—an exalted divine being of the same nature as the Creator himself, "whom no man hath seen, nor can see."—I Pet. 1:21; I Tim. 6:16

By an altogether too literal interpretation of some of the prophecies of God's Word, very crude conceptions of Christ's Second Coming have been developed. It has been supposed by some that when he returned he would be seen as a man suspended in the skies. Simultaneously there would be tremendous upheavals of nature in the heavens and on earth, which would dwarf in destructiveness anything man has ever been able to accomplish, even by the use of nuclear weapons.

Now we see, however, that the prophecies which were used as a basis for this erroneous concept of the return of Christ are symbolically descriptive of the upheaval of manmade institutions which have formed our civilization. It is this that the prophecies describe as the end of the world—not the end of the literal planet Earth, but what the Apostle Paul describes as "this present evil world." (Gal. 1:4) Jesus referred to Satan, the devil, as the "prince of this world." Hence the end of the world means the end of Satan's empire and the end of his sovereignty over the minds and hearts of men.—John 12:31

Every Christian should be glad to note any evidence tending to show that the end of the present world order is near. All mankind will rejoice when they realize that Satan's empire has come to an end. Then they will have the opportunity of becoming citizens in a new world—not another humanly constituted civilization, but a new order in which the authority and the laws will be those of the kingdom of Christ.

The world that is even now coming to an end has never been entirely satisfactory, not even to those who have been most enthusiastic in their efforts to

perpetuate its existence. Indeed, there has been much good in it, but sin and evil have predominated. Sickness, pain, and death have been the dreaded heritage of all. Hatred and war have blighted the happiness of the people and destroyed the peace of the nations.

Fear of worse things to come, both now and hereafter, has helped to rob men and women of the joy which temporarily, at least, might otherwise be theirs. Truly, as the Scriptures declare, it has been an evil world, and the more we study its characteristics the more we realize that Jesus knew what he was talking about when he declared Satan to be its prince.

We can all be glad that such a world is coming to an end, and that, as the Scriptures declare, its ruler is to be bound and finally destroyed. (Rev. 20:1-3,10) Jesus said that those living at this time who had faith in his Word, when they saw the things begin to transpire that he foretold, should lift up their heads with hope and rejoicing, for the time of their deliverance, and the deliverance of mankind, from sin and death would be near.—Luke 21:28

## **ENEMIES DESTROYED**

In an inspired prophecy of Christ's kingdom given us by the Apostle Paul, he declared that Christ must reign until all enemies are put under his feet, and that the last enemy to be destroyed is death. (I Cor. 15:24-26) This indicates that one purpose of the kingdom of Christ is for the destruction of enemies—enemies of God, of man, and of righteousness. While death will be the last of these to be eradicated by the rulership of Christ, other enemies will be destroyed prior to that time. Among

the first of these are the selfish and sinful institutions of earth which stand in the way of Christ's reign of justice and righteousness. The destruction of these implies temporary trouble and distress for the people who have been held in bondage to them. It is this that is described by the Prophet Daniel as "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation."—Dan. 12:1

In the prophecy of the second psalm, Jesus is referred to as the great king of earth whom God has appointed to rule. (Ps. 2:1-9) In the New Testament it is further prophesied that before he would begin his rule in power and glory the nations of the world would experience a time of "tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time." (Matt. 24:21) In connection with this foretold overthrow of the present world order, in a little more than the past century we have witnessed the destruction of many of the hereditary ruling houses of Europe and the chaos in world affairs which has followed. In Jesus' prophecy, he declared that all the tribes of the earth would mourn because of these events, and we see this mourning today in all the countries of the world.—vs. 30

However, we can thank God that this distress is only temporary. The return of Christ was designed to bring peace and joy and life to a dying world, and this will be the ultimate result. Nevertheless, to accomplish this, a new world government must be established, and this calls for the overthrow of the rulership in which Satan has been the unseen and, in most instances, the unrecognized prince.

Have you ever wondered why the leaders of the world, enjoying all the advantages of modern

culture and education, have not been able to snap the world out of its tailspin toward destruction? The answer to this question is found in the prophecies of the Bible. A divine influence has intervened in the affairs of men in preparation for the establishment of a new order, and it is gradually being exerted through the invisible presence of the divine Christ.

The overthrow of the human institutions of sin and selfishness, which have fostered oppression and war, is only the beginning of the work of the divine Christ. It is like the surgeon's knife used to save the life of a dying patient. For six thousand years, the human race has been dying. Mankind has not been able to find a remedy for the poisonous sting of sin which is inflicting death upon all. Now Christ, the great physician, has come to change all this, and the first necessary step is to place mankind, the patient, in a new environment, and under just and righteous laws. It is the preparation for this that is causing the present breakdown of human authority everywhere throughout the earth.

## **A NEW DAY**

The only ones who as yet know the meaning of what is occurring in the earth are those who by faith are prepared to accept the testimony of the Word of God. To these the prophecies of the Bible are as a beacon light telling them that, despite this darkest of all periods man has ever experienced, a glorious new day is on the horizon. This will be a day in which blessings of health, joy, peace, and life will radiate from the presence of Christ, the new king—that glorious, divine ruler prophetically described

as the “Sun of righteousness,” who will “arise with healing in his wings.”—Mal. 4:2

Soon, we believe, all mankind will begin to realize that there is a power being exerted in the affairs of men which supersedes that of all humanly constituted governments. This will become apparent through the continued failure of human efforts to reestablish any permanency of peace and security among men.

The rulers of the world today still imagine that they are more or less the masters of human destiny, and that their wisdom and the impressive strength of their military capabilities will be able to impose peace upon the nations. God’s way of establishing peace is still scorned by the wise of this world. As all their efforts continue to end in failure, however, gradually they will begin to look to a higher authority for help.

This, which is still a future development in this momentous time in which we are living, is described by the Prophet Micah as follows: “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. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword

against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.”—Mic. 4:1-4

This is a very comprehensive and reassuring prophecy which, in the light of current events, will soon be fulfilled, to the everlasting joy of all mankind. Notice the time identification: “In the last days it shall come to pass.” This prophetic expression, the last days, does not refer to the traditional idea of doom, nor to the destruction of this earth, nor to the end of human existence on the earth. It does have reference to the last days of Satan’s rule over the people, the last days of sin and death, the last days of war, the last days of fear, and the last days of all other evils which have plagued the human race from Eden until now.

Part 2 of our lesson will appear in next month’s issue of *The Dawn*. In it we will consider many additional reassuring promises from the Bible concerning Christ’s coming kingdom and its countless blessings to all mankind. Indeed, “weeping may endure for a night” as the world goes through its present distress, but we are assured that joy, and the freedom from fear, “cometh in the morning” of the new kingdom day.—Ps. 30:5 ■