



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Vol. 40 Issue 776

Oct. 25, 2013

Worship Music

[Oh My God-](#)
[David Crowder](#)

[There Is A Sound-](#)
[David Crowder](#)

[Why Me?-](#)
[David Crowder](#)

Prayer

Lord, help me to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ and to never allow the unkind, cruel spirit of religion to operate in me. Help me also to love those who operate in this mean spirit and to counter their attitude with the love of Jesus Christ. And, Lord, when I am confronted by godless unbelievers, give me the wisdom to demonstrate the love of Jesus to them in a way that will touch their hearts. Both the religious and the irreligious need Jesus, so show me how to be an instrument of life to both types of people when I encounter them along the way. In Jesus' name I ask it. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

[" The Call"](#)

Charles Stanley

Chapel Flock.....text a prayer..... request telephone number.....

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Or----

If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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Psalm 16:1-11 (AMP)

1 KEEP and protect me, O God, for in You I have found refuge, and in You do I put my trust and hide myself. 2 I say to the Lord, You are my Lord; I have no good beside or beyond You. 3 As for the godly (the saints) who are in the land, they are the excellent, the noble, and the glorious, in whom is all my delight. 4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied who choose another god; their drink offerings of blood will I not offer or take their names upon my lips. 5 The Lord is my chosen and assigned portion, my cup; You hold and maintain my lot. 6 The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good heritage. 7 I will bless the Lord, Who has given me counsel; yes, my heart instructs me in the night seasons. 8 I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. 9 Therefore my heart is glad and my glory [my inner self] rejoices; my body too shall rest and confidently dwell in safety, 10 For You will not abandon me to Sheol (the place of the dead), neither will You suffer Your holy one [Holy One] to see corruption. 11 You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy, at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 17:1-15 (AMP)

1 HEAR THE right (my righteous cause), O Lord; listen to my shrill, piercing cry! Give ear to my prayer, that comes from unfeigned and guileless lips. 2 Let my sentence of vindication come from You! May Your eyes behold the things that are just and upright. 3 You have proved my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tried me and find nothing [no evil purpose in me]; I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. 4 Concerning the works of men, by the word of Your lips I have avoided the ways of the violent (the paths of the destroyer). 5 My steps have held closely to Your paths [to the tracks of the One Who has gone on before]; my feet have not slipped. 6 I have called upon You, O God, for You will hear me; incline Your ear to me and hear my speech. 7 Show Your marvelous loving-kindness, O You Who save by Your right hand those who trust and take refuge in You from those who rise up against them. 8 Keep and guard me as the pupil of Your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings 9 From the wicked who despoil and oppress me, my deadly adversaries who surround me. 10 They are enclosed in their own prosperity and have shut up their hearts to pity; with their mouths they make exorbitant claims and proudly and arrogantly speak. 11 They track us down in each step we take; now they surround us; they set their eyes to cast us to the ground, 12 Like a lion greedy and eager to tear his prey, and as a young lion lurking in hidden places. 13 Arise, O Lord! Confront and forestall them, cast them down! Deliver my life from the wicked by Your sword, 14 From men by Your hand, O Lord, from men of this world [these poor moths of the night] whose portion in life is idle and vain. Their bellies are filled with Your hidden treasure [what You have stored up]; their children are satiated, and they leave the rest [of their] wealth to their babes. 15 As for me, I will continue beholding Your face in righteousness (rightness, justice, and right standing with You); I shall be fully satisfied, when I awake [to find myself] beholding Your form [and having sweet communion with You].

Other Scripture references for each specific book of Psalm....

Psalm 16:10 (AMP)

For You will not abandon me to Sheol (the place of the dead), neither will You suffer Your holy one [Holy One] to see corruption.

Acts 13:35 (AMP)

For this reason He says also in another psalm, You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption [to undergo putrefaction and dissolution of the grave].

Psalm 16:11 (AMP)

You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy, at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

Acts 2:25-28 (AMP)

For David says in regard to Him, I saw the Lord constantly before me, for He is at my right hand that I may not be shaken or overthrown or cast down [from my secure and happy state]. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced and my tongue exulted exceedingly; moreover, my flesh also will dwell in hope [will encamp, pitch its tent, and dwell in hope in anticipation of the resurrection]. 27 For You will not abandon my soul, leaving it helpless in Hades (the state of departed spirits), nor let Your Holy One know decay or see destruction [of the body after death]. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will enrapture me [diffusing my soul with joy] with and in Your presence.

Acts 2:31 (AMP)

31 He, foreseeing this, spoke [by foreknowledge] of the resurrection of the Christ (the Messiah) that He was not deserted [in death] and left in Hades (the state of departed spirits), nor did His body know decay or see destruction.

Let's turn now to Psalm 16. The sixteenth psalm is called a Michtam of David. A Michtam is actually a meditation or a prayer. And there are about five or six psalms that are designated as Michtam, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, with the sixteenth. David's prayer unto the Lord is,

Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust (Psa 16:1).

The prayer for preservation. Now David, I guess, all through his life he had those that were out after him. Sometimes without cause. Saul sought to destroy David. Later Absalom his own son rebelled against him. David was a popular king, but it seems that you have, you know, a person has a capacity of gaining friends, but there are some people who just become your enemy because you have so many friends. There was a lot of jealousy. David was a very handsome young man. He was a very athletic person. He was a very dynamic person. And so it did inspire jealousy, and so David was constantly, it seems, being harassed by those that were jealous of him, seeking to get rid of him. And so the prayer, "Preserve me, O God: for in Thee do I put my trust."

O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord (Psa 16:2):

Actually, again, if we read it more literally to the Hebrew, "Thou has said unto Jehovah, Thou art my Lord." The two different lords again. The first one the name of God; the second one the title by which it expresses my relationship to Him. "Thou art my Lord," my Adonai, my Master. The translation:

my goodness extendeth not to thee (Psa 16:2);

Is actually a poor translation. That would much better be translated, because that doesn't really make much sense, "My goodness extendeth not to Thee." Literally it is, "I have no goodness but Thee," and that is a much better translation. "Lord, I have no goodness but Thee." If there is anything that is good in me, it is from the Lord. I have no goodness outside of Him. Paul tells us that, "What do you have but what you have received? And if you have received it, then why do you boast as though you didn't receive it?" (I Corinthians 4:7) If there is any goodness in my life, it is because of God's work in my life. I can't go around and boast or brag about my work for God or my righteousness or anything else, because my righteousness is that gift of God to me, through my faith in Jesus Christ. "I have no goodness but Thee, Lord," and so it is surely something that we all agree in that truth. Now, David speaks concerning those that would worship other gods.

Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names unto my lips (Psa 16:4).

I will not utter the names of the other gods, nor will I take up their drink offerings of blood.

Now this is exactly what God had prohibited in the law when He said, "Thou shalt not drink or eat blood." God was referring to the pagan sacrifices, where they would sacrifice an animal to their gods, and as they would take the blood of the animal, they would drink it as a libation unto their gods. The drinking of blood, it was definitely prohibited in the law, not to drink the blood of animals. But it is tragic that the ignorant leaders of the Jehovah Witnesses have translated that commandment to mean that you are not to have any blood transfusions. And as a result of this mistranslation due to the ignorance of the leaders, they are killing more people every year than Jim Jones killed down in Ghana. Hundreds, thousands of people are dying every year because they refuse to take a blood transfusion, because the ignorant leaders of the Watch Tower Society have declared to them that they are damning their souls if they take a blood transfusion because the Bible says that you are not to drink blood. But God is referring to the pagan practices that were extent in those days where they would sacrifice an animal to their god and take the blood of the animal and drink it. And David is saying, "I will not drink their drink offerings of blood." Referring to the very same practice. It is tragic that the blind are leading the blind into the ditch. My heart goes out to the people that are going around door to door, because they have been deceived by those leaders into believing everything that comes out from Brooklyn is gospel truth. That these men are the true spokesmen for God. Every church is trying to deceive them. They are the only ones who are really preaching the truth of God; all of the churches are really mixed up in the Babylonian system of religion, and thus, all of the churches are to perish and they only have the truth. And these poor people have been deceived, and they are going around door to door to spread that deception. But death is the fruit of that deception.

The LORD is the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup (Psa 16:5):

I am not going to drink the cup of their drink offerings of blood to their gods, but the Lord is my inheritance and of my cup.

thou maintainest my position. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my mind also will instruct me in the night seasons (Psa 16:5-7).

Oftentimes I have found that God speaks to me in the night seasons. It used to be when I was younger that I could never remember when I laid down at night. Just slept straight through until the alarm in the morning. But as I am getting older, somehow I just don't sleep through like I used to. Now noises in the night can wake me up. Used to be that you could shake and rattle. In fact, I used to counsel young kids up at the summer camps and I would say to them, "Now, kids, if you are smart you will just wait until I go to sleep and you can carry the camp off and I will never know it. But let me get to sleep." And so they wised up and they would let me get to sleep and then they would terrorize the camp. I'd never know it. I slept so soundly. Nothing would disturb my sleep. But things have changed, and now there are things that do disturb my sleep at night. And it used to be if something would disturb me, I could just roll right back over and go right back to sleep. But, you know, the phone rings at three in the morning and then I have difficulty going back to sleep after that. And I just lie there and I just sort of toss because I have been awakened out of a deep sleep, and now I am

in the tossing stage. And I used to get upset at tossing, but no more. I find this is just glorious time to commune with the Lord. He instructs me in the night seasons just to open my heart to God, and it is amazing the things that God pours into my heart in the night hours. So I just now take it as an opportunity, rather than cursing the sleeplessness of night. I just take it as a neat opportunity to be instructed of the Lord in the night seasons.

I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved (Psa 16:8).

And now we are actually getting into a prophecy. Peter quotes this on the day of Pentecost when they have been challenged because of the phenomenon that has taken place, the sound like a mighty rushing wind. The Galilean disciples speaking in many different dialects, and the accusation, "These men are filled with new wine. They are drunk with new wine." And Peter said, "No, these are not drunk as you suppose. It is only nine o'clock in the morning. It is too early to be drunk, but this is that which is spoken of by the prophet Joel," and then he quotes the prophet Joel.

And then he, having given them a scriptural basis for the phenomenon that they were observing, he then began to preach to them. The message was of Jesus. There were seven points to the message. He began by the identification of the person he was going to talk about, "Jesus of Nazareth." There were a lot of little Jewish boys named Jesus. It was a popular name, because Joshua was one of the national heroes. After all, he was the one that led them into the Promise Land. "Jehovah is salvation." So there were many Jewish mothers that were hoping that their child would be the savior also of Israel, and so they named their little boys Joshua, which in Greek is Jesus. And so to identify Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." There was probably a Jesus of Jerusalem, and of Bethany, and of Bethel, and of Samaria, so to identify Him, "Jesus of Nazareth. A man who was proved to be of God by the miracles and wonders that He did in your midst. Whom you, according to the predetermined counsel and foreknowledge of God, with your wicked hands have crucified and slain. But God has raised Him from the dead." The center truth of the message of Peter. The central truth is the resurrection of Jesus.

That is the central message of the New Testament, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, the hope and the basis of the hope for our whole Christian experience. If Christ be not raised from the dead, then our faith is in vain; we are hopeless. So the central truth, the message of the New Testament, the resurrection. So Peter gets it in the center of the truth that he is proclaiming, "Whom God hath raised from the dead, for it was not possible that He could be held by it. For David," he said, "by the mouth of the Holy Spirit spake of Him saying, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither will You allow the Holy One to see corruption.'" In fact, he quoted the whole.

Therefore my heart shall be glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou allow the Holy One to see corruption (Psa 16:9-10).

Peter saw this as God's direct promise to His Son. And no doubt Jesus made reference to this, and that is why Peter made the association. That this was God's promise to Jesus, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, and neither will You allow your Holy One to see corruption." Now concerning David, "Let me tell you, he was a prophet and he spake not of himself, but of Him who was to come. And we do testify that God did not leave His soul in hell, and neither did He allow His Holy One to see corruption. But this same Jesus hath God raised from the dead and is exalted Him to the right hand of the throne on high, and has given to Him this which He has shed forth upon us which you now see. That is, the gift of the Holy Spirit." For He said, "I will pray the Father. He'll send you another comforter, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive." So this what you see is the result of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and it is His promise to send the Holy Spirit upon us. But He went into hell with the promise of God that His soul would not be left in hell. So that when Jesus died, and this hell is the Hebrew Sheol, which is also translated grave. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, the grave, or hell." Now, prior to the death of Jesus Christ, Sheol of the Hebrew, or Hades of the Greek, was an area in the center of the earth that was divided into two compartments. And Jesus tells us about it in the sixteenth chapter of the gospel of Luke, where He tells about a certain rich man who fared sumptuously every day and a poor man that was brought daily and laid at his gate full of sores, and the dogs came and licked his sores. And how that the poor man died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And also the rich man died, and in Hades, hell, lifted up his eyes being in torment. And seeing Abraham afar off and Lazarus there, the man he recognized, being comforted in Abraham's bosom, cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me. Send Lazarus to me that he may take his finger, dip it in water, touch my tongue. I am tormented in this heat." Abraham said, "Well, son, you remember in your lifetime you had the good things, Lazarus evil. Now he is comforted while you are tormented. Besides that, between us there is a gulf that is fixed. It is impossible for those that are here to go over there or those that are there to come over here." "Then I pray thee, if he cannot come over here, send him back, send him back to the earth that he might warn my brothers, lest they come to this awesome place." Abraham said, "They have the law and the prophets. If they will not believe them, neither will they believe should one come back again from the dead."

So Jesus gives us a description of hell in the center of the earth. For one day they were asking Jesus for a sign and He said, "A wicked and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:39-40). So it is located for us by Jesus. Now Peter is telling us that this was God's promise to His Son, "Thou will not leave my soul in hell, neither will You allow the Holy One to see corruption." Paul tells us, in the fourth chapter of Ephesians that He who ascended is the same one who first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth. And when He ascended, He led the captives from their captivity. So when Jesus ascended from the grave, those that were there with Abraham, being comforted, awaiting the promise of God, were delivered from the grave also. He set free those captives.

You remember the prophecy of Isaiah, in the sixty-first chapter where it said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to mend up those that are broken. To set at liberty those that are bound and to open the prison doors to those that are captive." He is talking about the prison doors of death, of Hades, to those that were captive. In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, when we are told of all of these great saints of the Old Testament, who by faith, wrought all of these wonderful things, the

chapter concludes, "Now these all died in faith, not having received the promise." That is, of resurrection and of eternal life, "but seeing it afar off, they embraced it, they held on to it, and they claimed that they were just strangers and pilgrims here." They were looking for a city which hath foundation, whose maker and builder is God. And then in the end of the chapter, again it says, "These all died in faith not having received the promise, God having reserved some better thing for us, that they without us could not come into the perfect or completed state."

Until Jesus made the provision on the cross to put away sins, they could not come into the completed state in heaven. The Old Testament sacrifices served to cover their sins, but it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats could put away sin. All they could do was to testify of a better offering that was to come, the offering of Jesus Christ Himself for our sins, by which He made the way into heaven for all men. So those in the Old Testament who were by faith believing the promise of God and trusting God through faith to fulfill His promise, they were in one side of hell being comforted by Abraham, and they were released from that captivity at the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In Peter, the epistle of Peter, we read where Jesus went down and preached to those souls that were in prison. And so for three days and three nights Jesus was preaching the glorious Good News to those who had been waiting with faithful Abraham for God's promises to be fulfilled. What a time of rejoicing that must have been. And then when He ascended, He broke the bars of the grave. He ascended. He led the captives from their captivity, and gave gifts unto men. So Peter is quoting this in the New Testament, he said, "David, being a prophet, spoke not of himself; his sepulcher is with us till this day. But he was speaking of Jesus, and we bear witness, God did not leave His soul in hell, neither did He allow the Holy One to see corruption."

For thou wilt show to me the path of life: and in thy presence is fullness of joy; and at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore (Psa 16:11).

This now is the exalted place of Jesus Christ, at the right hand of the Father. He said, "Henceforth You'll not see Me until you see Me sitting there at the right hand of My Father in glory." At thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore, in thy presence there is fullness of joy God has shown to me, not death. "Thou will not leave my soul in the grave, but You have shown to me the path of life." And so the glorious promise to the Son. "And who for the joy that was set before Him by the Father endured the cross though He despised the shame" (Hebrews 12:2).



Psalm 17

The seventeenth psalm is another prayer of David. And it is, again, one of those prayers where David is sort of pleading his own cause, his own righteousness before the Lord.

Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry; give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of deceitful lips (Psa 17:1).

It is important that our prayers not come out of deceitful lips. I am afraid that many times I have prayed rather deceitfully, hoping to sort of con God. I haven't always been absolutely honest in my prayers. I have tried to make myself look better than I really am in many of my prayers. And I find that God can't deal with me until I get totally honest with Him. As long as I keep saying, "Well, Lord, I can do it. I just need a little help." I am not really honest, and the help doesn't seem to be forthcoming. Because if He would help me under those conditions, then I would go around saying, "I always knew I could do it." So it's when I get really honest and say, "Lord, I can't do it. I need help." Then He comes in and helps me, cause then all I can say is, "Wow! The Lord really helped me." And I give the credit and the glory to Him. "Lord, You know that I get a little upset with this brother. I don't love him as much as I should. I don't have that agape for him, Lord." That is sort of deceitful. That's not really telling the truth. "God, You know I hate his guts. I can't stand him. He makes me sick every time I look at him. I want to punch him in the nose. God, change my heart and my attitude." Then God can deal with me.

So David is saying, "Lord, I am not speaking out of deceitful lips." And it is something that we need to watch in our prayers. It can be very subtle, very subtle. We have not because we ask not; we ask and receive not because we ask amiss, that we might consume it upon our own lust. The true motive behind our prayers is often veiled. "Oh God, save my son. Bring him to You, Lord." And in my mind I am thinking, "I don't know what I am going to do with this kid. Can't control him any longer. I just know that one of these days, he keeps on the way he is, I am going to get a telephone call and it is going to be his one telephone call that he has from jail. They're gonna pick him up. Our name will get in the paper. What a disgrace that will be when all of the people will see our name. Our son arrested. Can't have that! Oh Lord, save him. Lord, save him. I don't want the embarrassment of my name in the paper, you know." Motive! It isn't that my heart is breaking because my son is destined in this path for hell. It's that I don't want my good name drug down into the gossip column.

"Oh God, send a revival to our church. Lord, save souls. Bring in the lost, pack the place, Lord. I don't know what we are going to do if we don't raise our budget some. If we only had about five new families we wouldn't have to worry about the budget. Lord, send in the souls. Maybe the bishop will notice that I am a pretty good pastor and I might even get a promotion to a bigger church. God, save souls." You know. Motive! Oh, how we have to watch it. Because I can deceive myself. You see, the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked and we don't always know it ourselves. That is why David, in Psalm 139 said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there is a wicked way there, and then You lead me in Your path. O God, preserve me." Hear the prayer that comes out of unfeigned, unclean, not out of the feigned or deceitful lips.

Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal (Psa 17:2).

And, again, he is asking really for justice here, something that I never do when I pray, but David feels that his cause is right here. He does declare,

I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress (Psa 17:3).

And that is a great purpose to make. I think that we so often transgress with our mouth. Our mouth can get us in the most trouble it seems.

Years ago when we first started, before we had any children, when we first started in the ministry, we knew all about how kids ought to be raised in those days. We were beginning to discover that we didn't know as much as we thought we knew about marriage, but we still knew all that there was to know about raising kids, till we had our own. And at this point we know that we know nothing about raising kids. But at that time, we put a notice in the bulletin, "Teach your child to be silent; he'll learn soon enough to talk." We get into trouble talking.

I've purposed in my heart I'll not allow my mouth to transgress. Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer. Hold up my goings in thy paths that my footsteps slip not. I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me. Show your marvelous loving-kindness. O thou that savest by thy right hand them that put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me under the shadow of thy wings (Psa 17:3-8),

Now David is asking the Lord to just keep him there as the pupil, the apple of His eye, and hiding me under the shadow of thy wings.

From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who encircle me (Psa 17:9).

And then he speaks not so nicely about his enemies.

They're enclosed in their own fat: their mouth speaks proudly. They've encircled our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth; like a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a younger lion lurking in secret places. Arise, O LORD, disappoint them, cast them down: deliver my soul from the wicked, from men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life (Psa 17:10-14),

What an interesting phrase, and how important. Talking about the men of the world, he is talking about men who have their portion in this life. Now, in the seventy-third psalm, we have an interesting case where the psalm confesses, "Hey, I almost slipped. I almost went under. When I looked around and I saw the prosperity of the wicked. I saw these wicked men, and man, they had everything they wanted, everything their hearts desired. People would pour out a full cup to them. They didn't lack for a thing, and when I saw how prosperous the wicked were, then I said, 'Hey man, it doesn't pay to try to live the right kind of a life. You know, better that you are wicked. You seem to have it better off. Here I am trying to live the right kind of a life and I'm in trouble all the time. It seems like I am always broke and I am always going through such hardships, and it really doesn't pay to serve the Lord.'" And he said, "When I sought to understand these things it almost wiped me out. My foot almost slipped. Until I went into the house of the Lord. And then I saw their end. Surely You have set them in slippery places, in a moment they go down into the pit and all." But he saw now the end.

Now, so he talks here of the men of the world who have their portion in this life only. You see, God is interested in your eternal welfare. Don't forget that. God is always dealing with you in the light of eternity. I am always interested in the light of today. I am looking for my ease today. I am looking for comfort today. I am looking for deliverance today. I want it now. So I can enjoy it for the next few minutes. But God is looking at me with eternity in view, and He wants me to have the eternal blessings of His glory and of His kingdom, and it may take depriving me of some of those things that I think I want right now in order that I might have a richer eternity with Him.

When Jesus spoke very harshly saying, "If your eye offend thee, pluck it out." And we cringe at such a horrible thing, which He wanted you to do. He is just using an illustration that just causes you to cringe, "Oouhuhu, can't pluck out my eye!" And He is trying to get that kind of a revulsion in you, because He is seeking to point out how important eternity is. Now, I think my eyes are extremely important, but they are not as important as my eternity with Him. And that is the illustration He's trying to make. Just that your eternal welfare with Him is the most important thing in this life. And the men of the world, they have their portion in this life only. But I am a stranger and a pilgrim here; my portion is coming in the life to come. My portion is there with Him in His kingdom.

The fifteenth verse is one of my favorites in the whole psalms, or in the Bible as far as that goes.

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness (Psa 17:15).

I am going to behold Your face, Lord, in righteousness. This reminds me of what Paul said in Corinthians, where he said, "And we with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed from glory to glory into the same image by His Spirit in us" (II Corinthians 3:18). I'll be satisfied. I'll behold Your face in righteousness, and I'll be satisfied the day I awake in Your likeness. Oh, how I long for that day. When I open my eyes, and I look in the mirror and there I am in the likeness of Jesus Christ. Now I see through the glass darkly, but then, face to face. His work complete in me. Conformed into the image of God's dear Son. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, it does not yet appear what we are going to be, but we know that when He appears we are going to be like Him" (I John 3:2). Now, people are all wondering, "Well, what kind of body?" I am not at all worried; I am satisfied that it

is going to be like Him, for I am going to see Him as He is. People are always worried, "What kind of body am I going to have when the Lord comes? What will I look like? I don't know if I want to change or not. Maybe I would like to have this one, you know. Just renew it or something." No way, friend! I can hardly wait for the new model to come out. Like Him. I'll be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. Comes from beholding His face in righteousness. As we behold the glory of the Lord, we are being changed from glory to glory. (Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries,1979-1986)



"The Final Curtain" Chuck Smith; 3. Crisis Years

World Crisis

A new and very significant development is taking place in the Middle East. The Soviet Union has sought to position itself as one of the major powers in the bringing about of a peaceful solution to the Iraqi crisis. The Soviets tried to persuade Iraq to remove her forces from Kuwait and launched a peace initiative. Saddam Hussien constantly sought to link Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait with the withdrawal of Israel from the West Bank and the creation of a Palestinian state. The United States insisted that Iraq's withdrawal be unconditional. The U.N. coalition indicated that once the issue of Kuwait had been settled, they would take up the matter of the Palestinians. Could it be that one of the under-the-table understandings that Russians made with Iraq is that the Soviets would push the Palestinian issue in the United Nations? It is interesting that since the end of the Gulf War, Israel has been forced to create a Palestinian state within the occupied territories.

The prophet Ezekiel tells us in chapter 38 that Magog, or Russia, will come with a confederation of nations against Israel in the last days. It is interesting to look at the alignment of nations that Ezekiel prophesies will be coming with the Soviets. Iran, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, and Togarmah (Turkey) are all specifically mentioned.

It is interesting that Iraq (Babylon) is not listed as one of the aggressive powers aligned with this coalition. Syria, Jordan, and Egypt are also conspicuous by their absence. It is also very interesting that Saudi Arabia is among the nations that will object to this move by the Soviet-led power block. Perhaps the Saudis will realize that the purpose of Russia's desire to become a major force in the Middle East is more than just helping the unfortunate Palestinians. The motives could be much more aligned with self-interest.

According to some estimates, if Russia continues to produce oil from its reserves at the present rate, it will face total depletion by the year 2003. The desire to gain a strong foothold in the oil-rich gulf states will no doubt be the underlying motive for Soviets moving their troops into the area. This desire will not be lost on nations such as Saudi Arabia. Twice in Ezekiel 38, as the prophet speaks of this invasion, he declares that the invaders are coming to take a spoil. For any nation to be a strong industrial power, oil is essential.

Whether we want to admit it or not, oil is one of the major reasons that our troops were sent into the gulf, for it is necessary to protect the oil supplies that keep our nation functioning. It is estimated that at current rate of consumption our reserves of oil will run out in 2002. It would appear by the state of current events in the world that not only is oil running out, but time is running out as well. As Paul said to the Romans, "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand."

It seems very significant that Isaiah 13:6 indicates that at the time Babylon is destroyed the people will howl for the Day of the Lord is at hand; that is, the day when His judgment and wrath are to be poured out upon the earth. Isaiah does not declare that the Day of the Lord had already begun, but the destruction of Babylon signals that the time is at hand. It is important to note that the outcome of this alleged peacekeeping mission by the Soviet-led coalition of nations will be far different than that in the Iraq/Kuwait conflict.

In the case of Israel, the invading forces are to be destroyed by the direct intervention of God. God said that at that time, His fury would rise and that there would be a great shaking in the land of Israel, that the mountains would be thrown down, and that God would call for every man's sword to be against his own brother. This may indicate that the domestic turmoil currently brewing within Russia will come to a head and that a civil war will fragment the Red Army. Along with this infighting God will send an overflowing rain, accompanied with great hailstones, fire, and brimstone, which will spell disaster for this invading force. The Word of God declares that from that day forward, the house of Israel will know that Yahweh is their God.

With the break up of the Warsaw Pact and the strong economic and civil problems within Russia, some have questioned the idea that the Red Army is strong enough to project its power into the Middle East. However, other experts such as retired Marine four-star general Lewis Walt strongly disagree. In his book *The Eleventh Hour*, General Walt quotes Alexander Solzhenitsyn as saying that the momentum toward war with the Soviet Union is so great that he wouldn't be surprised to see the West fall on any given morning. [3]

General Walt writes in his preface, "I have never asked Marines to go into battle without telling them exactly what they faced so far as I knew it. My one unbreakable rule has always been to stick with facts and tell the truth. That is what I'm going to do in this book. The facts are these: The United States has been brought, by its own civilian leaders, to a position of military inferiority to the Soviet Union. At this moment, you and your loved ones stand exposed to physical destruction. The option of whether you shall live or die rests primarily with the hardened men who occupy the Kremlin. If they should choose tomorrow or next year to annihilate you and your family, there is little the U.S. government could do to stop them except to surrender. No generation of Americans has ever before been so recklessly placed at the mercy of so pitiless and powerful an enemy."

In an interview with a national publication, General Rogers, former Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, was asked, "In what part of the world are we in the most danger from Soviet Russia?" As far as I know, General Rogers isn't a Bible student. Nothing in the article indicates that he is. He's purely a military strategist with the advantage of the knowledge that military intelligence has been able to

gather. General Rogers answered, "I don't believe that there's going to be an attack on Western Europe by the Warsaw Pact as the beginning of a global confrontation. I think that the confrontation would erupt someplace else and spill over into Western Europe. It would probably be related to political instability in some region or the competition for scarce resources, or both. I'd say that this is most likely to occur in the Middle East-Persian Gulf-Indian Ocean area." I think his evaluation is correct from a biblical standpoint. We need to keep our eyes on the Middle East. [4]

How interesting that those of us who study biblical prophecy are no longer classified with the religious fanatics when we start talking about critical years and the end of the world. Serious-minded people looking at our world in crisis are beginning to tell us that something must be done. The usual solution provided by these men is simple and direct. We can no longer continue as separate nations with separate goals and ideals. We must surrender to a globally federated body, a one-world government. We also need a one-world religion. I recently saw a bumper sticker that read, "God is too big for one religion." Many people are dedicated to working toward these universalistic goals, which again, is exactly what the Bible says will happen. We're moving toward a one-world government in which one man will arise who will dominate all mankind.

Signs of the Times

Recently there's been a great deal of concern about the ozone blanket around the earth. Ozone is a form of oxygen. Oxygen has two atoms to the molecule, and ozone has three atoms to the molecule. The third atom easily escapes and combines with others, making ozone an excellent cleaning compound. The earth is surrounded with a blanket of ozone gas in the stratosphere. This layer of gas plays a very important part in man's survival by acting as a filter and protecting us from bombardment by the sun's lethal ultraviolet rays. In the book of Job, God mentions a "swaddling-band" around the earth (Job 38:9). This may have been a reference to the ozone layer that surrounds our planet. If the ozone layer were brought down to the earth's surface, it would form a blanket only three feet thick.

Our scientists are now saying that we're in danger of destroying this protective layer. Aerosol products release fluorocarbon gases into the air which cause the ozone to combine with nitrogen gas to form nitric oxide. Unless we change the gas within the aerosol cans (which has been done in the United States but not the rest of the world), we will continue to eradicate the ozone blanket.

The new supersonic jets that fly fifteen hundred miles an hour at fifty-five thousand feet also pose a threat to the ozone blanket. The gases emitted through the exhausts of these supersonic jets combine with oxygen and react with the ozone, diminishing the protective shield against the ultraviolet rays.

We are already beginning to observe the effects of this depleted ozone shield. I was baptizing several hundred people in the ocean recently, and as the result of several hours of exposure in the sun during this service, I received severe burns on my head. My doctor informed me they were ultraviolet burns which are becoming quite common because of ozone depletion.

In addition, the testing of atomic bombs releases great clouds of gases into the atmosphere which are detrimental to the existing ozone blanket. If we were to have an atomic war with a number of nuclear devices detonated within the atmosphere, the worst effect wouldn't necessarily be the initial destruction. It could very well be the destruction of the ozone layer. Without this blanket, the ultraviolet rays of the sun would begin to cook people alive.

In Revelation 16 we read that when the fourth vial is poured out by the angel during the Great Tribulation, power is given unto the sun to scorch men with fire (Revelation 9:20-21). This could very well be a description of ultraviolet radiation effects as the result of the disappearing ozone layer. This calamity was predicted two thousand years ago, before anyone even knew that a protective ozone blanket existed in our atmosphere.

Scientists estimate that unless we take immediate and radical steps to reverse the deterioration of the ozone blanket, we could deplete it within ten years, and the ultraviolet rays of the sun would, in fact, scorch men upon the earth. Scientists are saying, "Reverse direction, or it's the end of the world!" That's not much different from that traditional picture of the old man with the sandwich board who says, "Repent. The end is near!"

Besides destroying the ozone layer, man is also guilty of harming our environment by recklessly using chemicals to control pests. The only way the world can produce enough crops to keep us all from starving to death is through the use of massive amounts of pesticides. But we don't fully know the consequences and side effects of these chemicals on our health, lives, or future. In years past one of the most prominent insecticides in widespread use was DDT. Now DDT has been banned in the United States, but not in the other parts of the world. We have discovered that DDT doesn't disintegrate in the soil but remains in its same chemical form. When it rains DDT flows into the streams. From the streams this insecticide flows into the rivers and then into the oceans. We are now beginning to discover the tremendous effect DDT has on the marine environment. It destroys seaweed, microscopic plant and animal life, and fish. Many thriving fishing businesses on the California coast have had to close down as a result of DDT contamination. It's estimated that perhaps only one-tenth of the DDT previously used has reached the oceans as yet. We don't know what will happen when the other nine-tenths get there. The fact that we can destroy a major portion of the life within the ocean also coincides with another plague spoken of in the book of Revelation. John saw a great mountain burning with fire fall into the sea, and the third part of the creatures living within the sea were destroyed (Revelation 8:10).

We are also being warned about overpopulation. Experts predict that unless something dramatic is done to curb the spiral of population growth, by the year 2000 the earth will be wall-to-wall with people. The earth's population has already risen to over six billion people, and continues to grow at the rate of two percent of the total population each year. Even now we cannot feed all the people on the planet. The majority today go to bed hungry and undernourished. As the population increases, the demand for food increases, but the supply of food decreases. And so we see food prices rising sky-high.

Jesus said that famine would be one of the signs of the end of the world (Matthew 24:7). Revelation tells of a time that is coming when a "measure of wheat" (roughly a quart) will be sold for a day's wage (approximately thirty dollars) (Revelation 6:6). If you are planning to be around for this coming catastrophe and want to "hedge your bets," don't invest your money in silver or gold. Put it in wheat. What good will your gold be if you can't buy anything with it? In fact, James warns of the last days, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you... Your gold and silver is cankered" (James 5:1-3). Man has also created a new generation of incredibly devastating weapons. It is estimated that the nuclear arsenal of the United States now amounts to a destructive capability the equivalent of fifteen tons of TNT for every person alive on the earth. In speaking of the end of the world, Jesus said, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matthew 24:22). For centuries the idea that man could completely destroy himself was considered preposterous. But now we have enough explosive power to destroy every man, woman and child living on the planet fifteen times over. Our military men are warning us that a major nuclear war could easily mean the end of the world. Along with this our energy resources are rapidly being depleted. We used to take oil out of the ground as if there were no tomorrow. We thought we certainly had enough energy reserves to last for the foreseeable future. Now we are constantly being asked to curb our normal use of energy until science can discover some alternate resource. Our fossil-fuel reserves are limited, and scientists predict the approaching end for this type of energy. Earthquakes are increasing in frequency and intensity around the world. This is another striking sign that Jesus said would signal the time of His return (Matthew 24:7). Physicists are also getting into the act of prophesying doom. In studying the earth's structure, they find that the ions affected by the earth's magnetism are lined up differently from what is now true north. Some scientists believe this is the result of a polar axis shift. According to some researchers, these shifts occur approximately every five thousand years. It has been speculated that the last polar axis shift coincided with the flood of Noah's time. This could well mean that we're overdue for another major shift. Some scientists believe that during a polar axis shift, islands disappear, mountains melt into valleys, and ocean floors become land masses. The whole area of Utah used to be a vast ocean. There are ocean shell fossils at seven thousand feet above sea level on the south rim of the Grand Canyon, indicating a major change in the oceans and the mountain structures from the past. Such changes supposedly happened during the last polar axis shift. It is impossible to calculate the geological damage that will result from such an upheaval of nature. When we read passages that describe an event where "every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (Revelation 6:14), and "the earth shall stagger like a drunken man and shall be moved out of her place" (Isaiah 24:20), it's easy to wonder if God is possibly foretelling a polar axis shift.

Creation and Termination

It used to be considered scientifically naive to talk about a specific time of creation, but physicists are now realizing that there must have been such a day. Sir James Jeans in his book *The Universe Around Us* says that the universe is like a giant clock that was wound up and is slowly running down. A prime example of the evidence that points to a specific starting point in time for our universe is found in our own sun. In order to give off the vast amount of energy that allows for our survival on planet Earth, the sun must consume over two million tons of its own mass every second. This creates a huge problem if the universe has existed from eternity past. Over an infinite stretch of time, not only our sun, but every star in the entire universe would have burned out its fuel supply billions of years ago. A star with enough mass to burn literally forever would have to be as large as the universe itself. Therefore, it is now commonly acceptable to look back to a specific point in time called the day of creation. However, scientists are looking to the future at a much more disturbing point of time called "the day of termination." Social scientists are concerned, not so much about the physical aspects of the planet as much as with the behavior of the men upon it. Many experts are questioning the possibility of human survival even if we manage to avoid a physical catastrophe. They are alarmed at the rising increase in social hostility. Police departments and law enforcement agencies are confessing their inability to cope with the sheer number of crimes they attempt to handle. Have you called a policeman lately? If you are the victim of a crime, the police will come out and make a report, but they give very little encouragement about recovering anything stolen or missing. If a child has run away, they will file a missing person's report. But there's very little promise of a happy ending to the crisis. So much crime exists that many experts have actually given up any hope of establishing law and order. Paul wrote to Timothy, "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be... without natural affection, truce breakers... incontinent, fierce, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Timothy 3:1-4). Sadly, the Bible describes men as we see them today. How ironic that with all the scientists, the professors, the militarists, and the sociologists crying, "The end of the world!" the Church has been so silent. It may be that the Church is so preoccupied with its dwindling attendance rolls and increased financial burdens that it hasn't noticed the signs of the times. Perhaps another cause is that people in the past have foolishly and unscripturally set dates for the return of Christ even though Jesus said, "No man knows the day or the hour" (Mark 13:32). Many people have come and gone, proclaiming a special revelation of the specific time of the second advent. Perhaps because of the embarrassment caused by these unfortunate predictions, the Church has shunned the field of prophecy. When the disciples asked, "What will be the sign of the end of the world?" Jesus didn't say, "It's none of your business!" He went into great detail to describe the signs preceding the time of the end (Matthew 24:3-14).

The Real New World

When Christians speak of the world and its end, we are talking about something entirely different than the scientists. The secular expert is talking about the end of the world in a physical sense. But when Christians talk about the end of the world, we are speaking of a set and ordered system that rejects God. The world order around us that is governed by Satan in rebellion against God is coming to a final and conclusive end. Man has tried just about every form of government that can be conceived in the human mind. City-states, monarchies, democracies, dictatorships, and various forms of socialism have all been tried with, varying degrees of success and failure. Man has attempted many different ways to govern himself, but every form of government has ultimately deteriorated. No matter how theoretically perfect the system, man cannot rule himself without greed and corruption setting in. Most forms of government have been able to endure for only about two hundred years before totally disintegrating.

We, the Church, look for a new form of government: a monarchy that will embrace the entire world and endure forever. We're waiting for the kingdom of God to come when righteousness will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. We do not know the day or the

hour when this perfect kingdom will come, but Jesus said, "Watch therefore... be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 25:13). Christ then presented a series of parables by which He illustrated the importance of watching and being ready for His return to receive His Church unto Himself. The Church has great cause to cry, "The end of the world!" So many signs of the end have already been fulfilled. For instance God has established His nation Israel back in its historic homeland as He promised through the prophets. Ezekiel tells us that Israel would no longer be two nations (which was the case when it divided into northern and southern kingdoms in the tenth century B.C.), but it would become one nation upon the land, and one king would rule over the people (Ezekiel 37:22). God also said that Israel would again build the waste places and "they that come from Jacob shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isaiah 27:6).

How interesting that Israel is now the fourth largest exporter of fruit to the world. That is an amazing fact when you realize that this tiny nation is about the size of the state of New Jersey. Israel is also the main supplier of flowers throughout all of Europe. Because of Israel's good climate and favorable growing conditions, flower growing has become one of the country's major industries. God has fulfilled His promise to bring Israel back together and to cause the Jewish people to prosper in the land. But also, as the Bible predicted, it seems that now Israel is standing almost alone against all the nations of the earth. Yet God has promised that He would stand beside them, even though all the nations of the earth gather together against them (Zechariah 12:3). The author of Psalm 102 states, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory" (Psalm 102:6). Zion (the nation of Israel) is being built up; the time has come for the Lord to appear in His glory. Christ first came to earth to be crucified. He came as a humble servant as the prophets predicted. "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9). But Jesus is coming a second time not as a suffering teacher of truth, but with great power and glory! (Matthew 24:30). When the psalmist said, "When the Lord shall build up Zion then shall He also appear in His glory," he was referring to the Second Coming. The Church ought to be crying, "The end of the world!" because God is now building up Zion, the land of Israel. We see in the world today the famines, earthquakes, and pestilences Christ foretold. Doctors are always warning us of new flu strains that are worse than those we've had so far. Staph infections and other viruses are becoming more and more immune to antibiotics. Add to these the awesome threat of the AIDS virus. It seems that there is no way out of the economic, social, or universal problems confronting us today. As we look at the nations, there is no dominant power in the world today. The world is divided and the nations are in perplexity. Even the experts don't know what to do about the economic situation, the energy crisis, or increasing food shortages. There are perplexities of nations just as the Scripture said would take place in the end times (Luke 21:25). Men are looking for a leader. A leader is coming, and they'll be drawn to follow him. He's going to come in his own name, proclaiming marvelous things. He's going to have an incredibly efficient and universal economic program of computerized commerce. It used to seem impossible a few years ago, but it doesn't seem so farfetched anymore. Is it all just a coincidence? Or did God know what He was talking about when He spoke of these things two thousand years ago! Jesus said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). The Church ought to be looking up, looking for and expecting our Lord. We should be proclaiming: "The end of the world!"

This is not a cry of despair or of doom and gloom, for the end of this world system will mean an end of greed and hatred, wars and famines, sickness and death. The commercial exploitation of others, creating untold personal misery, will be gone forever. The prophet Isaiah called, "Ho! Everyone that is thirsty come to the water, and he that has no money let him buy and eat, come and buy wine and milk without money and without price, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isaiah 55:2). The end of this world system will mark an end of the world governed by man in rebellion against God, and the beginning of a new world governed by God and marked by peace like a river (Isaiah 66:12). A world where there is no pain or sorrow, "for God shall wipe away all tears" (Revelation 21:4). We are told by Isaiah that the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; the lame will leap like deer and the tongue of the mute shall sing (Isaiah 35:6). He also tells us that men will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks (Isaiah 2:4). (That is, the military budgets will be diverted to agricultural development.) Last year, the nations of the world spent over one trillion dollars in military expenditures. If this amount of money had been spent for agricultural development, not one person would have starved to death. The prophet Micah tells us, "Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid" (Micah 4:3-4). That does not sound like doom and gloom to me, but like a beautiful ideal world where I desire to live. I have difficulty waiting for it to begin, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). Jesus shall reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Ours is not a gloomy picture of desolation and destruction at the end of the world as the forecasting of scientists so often is. Ours is the glorious prediction of the end of this corrupted old world order of man. An end to rule by greed, an end to wars and hatred, and the beginning of the new world ruled by Jesus Christ where men will live together in peace and love.

I long for this new world and pray daily, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, even as it is in heaven."

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 810-812)

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