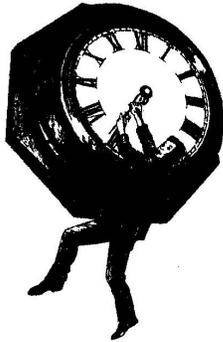


It's Later Than You Think



B. W. Cheney

From the very beginning of the creation of man until the present day, *time* has been an important factor in people's lives.

After God created Adam (the first human being), He put him in the Garden of Eden "to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15). After Adam was in the garden alone for a period of time, God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). At a certain time, God caused a deep sleep to come upon Adam, took one of his ribs, made a woman from it, and gave the woman to Adam to be his wife. Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she the shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man (Genesis 2:23).

After Adam and his wife had committed the first sin, by, disobeying God and eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:6), Adam named his wife Eve, meaning "the mother of all living."

Yes, beloved, there was an appointed time for things to take place, even when there were only two people on this earth, and all down through the history of man. God has everything taking place at its appointed time.

The Word of God tells us that after Adam and Eve sinned, people began to multiply on the earth. Genesis 6:5 tells us, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Yet, even in the midst of all this ungodliness, God still had His servant. Genesis 6:8 says, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."

God told Noah to build an ark, and He also told him how to build it. After the ark was completed, the day finally came to load the ark with every kind of beast, fowl, and everything that creepeth upon the earth (Genesis 7:8). The Bible tells us in Genesis 7:13 that Noah, his wife, his three sons (Shem, Ham, and Japheth), and their wives went aboard the ark, and verse 16 tells us it was God who shut them in. Yes, beloved, God put up with the sins of the people as long as He could, and finally at an appointed time, He brought forth the great Flood that destroyed all the people from the face of the earth, except Noah and his family. The only reason they were saved was that they were a righteous people (Genesis 7:1).

Friend, do you know that some day (in the near future) God is going to destroy all flesh again. This time He will not spare the earth as He did at the time of the Flood, but rather this earth will be burned up completely. Second Peter 3:7 proclaims, "But the heavens [the atmosphere] and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." The Bible plainly tells us that at a certain day, Jesus Christ is coming back to take His church (the saints) back to Heaven with Him. At the same time this old earth will be destroyed by fire and everything with it (2 Peter 3:10).

Friend, it is much later than most people think. According to God's Word, we are very close to the end of time. Almost all Bible prophecy has been fulfilled. The devil would have us to believe that we still have a thousand years or more to go after Jesus comes, but God's Word does not tell us any such thing when we rightly divide the Word of Truth.

The world, as a whole, has strayed far from God and become drunk on the pleasures of this life. Second Timothy 3:1 warns us of the very day and time in which we are living. The beloved Apostle Paul put it this way: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."

Friend, I say again, it is much later than most people think, and the wrath of God is close at hand to bring judgment upon this cruel, wicked, and ungodly world.

The average person would like to think that when a man dies that is the end for that individual. According to God's Holy Word, it is only the body that dies, but the soul in the body lives on and on for eternity. God's Word also tells us we have a choice of two places to live after death: one is Heaven and the other is hell. We must keep in mind that man is a twofold being. The outward man is physical and the inward man is spiritual. The Bible says when man dies, the physical body goes back to the earth from where it came (Genesis 3:19) and the spirit returns to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

It pays to know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, for He is the only One who can forgive you of all your sins (1 John 1:9). Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Do you fully realize, friend, that your coffin could be on display at this very time? You could have drawn your last paycheck and this could be your last warning from God that unless you repent, forsake all sin, and receive Jesus Christ into your heart and life, you are doomed for an eternal hell that will last for the ceaseless age of eternity.

The devil has thousands upon thousands blinded to the fact that there is life after this mortal body dies, and even if you do believe that you should turn your life to God, Satan would tell you that you have plenty of time to get saved and to have your fun now. Again, dear one, I warn you, it is later than you think. Hebrews 9:27 tells us, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

Remember, church joining cannot save your precious soul, baptism cannot do it, or any other way that man has invented. It is only when the shed blood of Jesus Christ is applied as payment for your sins and you confess to God that you are a lost sinner that God receives you as His child and the new birth takes place. Jesus said in John 3:3, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." In verse 7 He warned, "Ye must be born again."

The Bible says that no man knows when the Lord will come (Matthew 25:13), but it also says we should be ready at all times, because He will come when most people will least expect Him. The Apostle Paul told the Church of God at Thessalonica in 1 Thessalonians 5:3, "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." We believe that Jesus Christ will return in the near future for His church (saved ones), and at His coming, according to the Bible, He is going to destroy this earth and all that is in it. Second Peter 3:7 and 10 says: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

God never sends anyone to hell. People send themselves there when they reject His Son Jesus and refuse to live holy lives for Him in this present world. Titus 2:11-12 tells us: "For the grace of God that bringeth Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

God has only one church, and it is named after Him, the Church of God (Galatians 1:13 and 1 Thessalonians 2:14). When a person meets Bible conditions, Acts 2:47 tells us that the Lord adds that person to the church. At no time should you or I join any man-made denomination or sect, because all denominations cause division, and division is sin in the sight of God (1 Corinthians 1:10).

By keeping your eyes on Jesus and trusting in Him daily, then you can be assured of making Heaven your eternal home. May God help each one who reads this message to realize that the Bible is God's eternal Word and that every promise of His is true, regardless of whether it pertains to the sinner or the saint.

Sinner friend, do not let death catch you unprepared to meet God. If Jesus should come in your lifetime, Jesus should come in your lifetime, do not be ashamed at His coming because of your sins, for they can all be washed away by faith in the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

In closing, we would say, it is later than you think, sinner friend, and the Bible still declares that we all will reap what we sow. Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The saint of God has a promise of Heaven when he or she leaves this life, but the sinner has a promise of hell and an eternity to regret choosing to live a life of sin. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

May this be the hour, friend, that you fully realize that it is later than you think.

Printed by:

**The Church of God, God's Acres
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, OH 43055**

www.GodsAcres.org

Copyright © 2004 All rights reserved.