



THE
SECOND COMING
OF CHRIST



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Preface



“And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1:10-11. Is this promise made by the angels many years ago really true? Is Jesus surely coming to receive His holy bride? Will He find a pure and spotless church waiting and ready for His coming?

By faith we answer “yes” to all these questions! Then in order to be ready for His coming we must watch and pray. The apostle Paul instructed Timothy: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Tim. 2:15. In this age when many false spirits are gone out into the world and deceptive doctrines are abounding, we need to know what the Bible really teaches concerning the “Second Coming”!

This small booklet is not intended to be a full coverage of the prophecies, nor of the events following Christ’s coming. It consists of four radio messages broadcast and published in *The Mission Trail* in 1977. Considerable interest has been shown in them. If these messages may stimulate the reader to look diligently into the

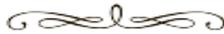
Scriptures and to better understand the “awe-inspiring” symbols of Revelation, then our efforts will not have been in vain. Our thanks to Faith Publishing House for making this material available in booklet form.

—Willie C. Murphey

Guthrie, Okla., Nov. 8, 1978

The Second Coming of Christ

(Part One)



Good morning to each and every listener of the broadcast! For today I have a subject entitled “The Second Coming of Christ.” This is one which is sometimes quite controversial and we need to know what the Bible teaches concerning this great truth which affects all the world. This is one of the most serious lines of thought in connection with the study of the Scriptures. It challenges the present and wrestles with the future. For that which is certain to happen—the second coming—we need to know what are the signs pointing to this. Then listen:

“And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Matt. 24:3. The disciples were only human and they were interested in these important events just as other anxious men have been for generations past. They wanted to know when the end was coming and when it does come, what will happen? Humanity is still the same today. They would like to know the answers to these important questions. And because we are all involved, we have a right to know so far as the Bible teaches. But beware! Let us not go beyond what

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the Scriptures teach and build upon imagination and fantasy. This is the tragedy of our day. Much is being taught which is not scriptural.

Listen to the words of Jesus: “Take heed that no man deceive you.” As in their day, so it is in ours, we live in the age of deception. The enemy of our souls stalks about to “deceive the very elect if possible.” He does this to mislead, to frustrate, to delude, and lead away from the truth. Jesus warned his disciples of this condition. Not only does the devil deceive, but men do the same through the power of Satan. How?

By fair speeches, by false doctrines, through human creeds, by erroneous modern theories, by crooked opinions, educated philosophy and sometimes this is done through a pleasing personality. There are ways and means of man-made deception, and the Lord warned us of this danger.

Let us enumerate some of the signs of our times which Jesus pointed out in this 24th chapter of Matt.

1. “And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars.” Do you see any fulfillment there?
2. “. . . nation shall rise against nation . . .” This is a far cry from peace, isn’t it?
3. “. . . kingdom against kingdom . . .” Where does this leave individual rights?
4. “. . . and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.” These are only reminders to awaken the sin-sick and slumbering souls who are bent on pleasures of the world and personal gratification of their selfish lusts.

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5. “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.”
6. “And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.” Surely the news headlines of today tell us these things are taking place both between individuals as well as between nations.
7. “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.” How tragic and yet so true.
8. “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”
9. “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

This, of course, is but a brief outline of some of the signs of the times. However, the Bible is full of them, and they are happening just as Christ said they would.

There are many things we would like to know which have not been revealed in the Bible. God’s great book was not inspired merely to satisfy our imagination or curiosity. Instead it is a divine revelation of the eternal truth, and God’s plan of redemption for mankind, and the principal information which we should know is given. Let us be satisfied therewith and say as Deut. 29:29: “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

There are many things God knows that are in His care and keeping. The day and hour of the coming of Christ is known only to the Father and will be revealed in its time. Men without God may

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predict and make guesses of the future. They are subject to error, but the Scriptures never fail. The prophecies of the Bible are always fulfilled in the events of history. The Bible students of the ages have learned of certain definite signs of the times that will precede the second coming of Christ. But let me make it clear that the set date of His arrival is not marked on the calendars of men. And if it is, it's wrong. No man knows the exact time, the day, neither the hour. That He has not revealed to men. Some folks have been very excited in making public a certain time, declaring the end to come on a given date. All attempts to fix dates are absolutely unscriptural. Such Bible juggling, date setting proposition, in seeking to map the future is contrary to the Word of God, yet it is one of the signs of the times, as Jesus spoke of men of this type coming in the last days. They are false prophets. The thing to do, best of all, is—be ready at all times, in fact, stay ready. For in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

Folks these days have many questions, some of which are confusing. May I add, many people are confused as to the facts relative to the coming of the Lord. Consider some of these questions:

1. How is He coming?
2. What will happen when He comes?
3. Will it be literal or spiritual? Or will it be secret or for everyone to know?
4. Will He set up His kingdom then?
5. What will happen to the wicked?
6. Are there to be two resurrections, one for the saved, and the second for the wicked?
7. Will there be a millennium in the future?

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8. If so, when?

9. If not, why?

Friends, we won't have time to cover all these questions in this one broadcast, but I hope to deal with some of them on later broadcasts. But there is one very definite fact I would like to impress upon you. This fact cannot be ignored. Jesus himself declared to His disciples, "I will come again." John 14:3.

There are many honest people who believe and teach that there are two distinct comings of Christ yet in the future. We hear it by radio and read of it through literature. The idea seems to have developed from the teaching that Christ will come and receive His Bride, the church, when the saints will be caught up to meet Him in the air and accompany Him to heaven above. And that later He will come with His saints. Such Scriptures as Jude 14:15 might give this impression at first. I quote:

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Here it speaks of coming **with His saints** the same as 1 Thess. 3:13: ". . . at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ **with all his saints.**"

And so the conclusion might be erroneously drawn that Christ will come first **for His saints** and then at a later time, **with His saints**. Let us look more closely at the Scriptures which will remove this theory and show it to be untrue. Paul explains it fully in 1 Thess. 4:13, 14, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others

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which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”

This Scripture is a direct answer. It is clear that the saints who will accompany the Lord on His return trip are the innumerable host who have died from the time of Adam to this present day, or the day of the coming of the Lord. This includes the patriarchs of old, and the saints of all ages, whose bodies are slumbering in earth and sea. He said, “. . . them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”

Of course, we know he speaks of the spirits of those who are His saints, who have been resting in the paradise of God, and they will accompany Him. The great and final resurrection will then take place, and those spirits will be reunited with their bodies and be raised immortal and glorified, and then all will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and receive their reward and enter heaven forever and ever. This will take place when the Lord comes again, the second time. He came first as a babe in Bethlehem, as a Saviour for the world; the next time He comes for His church and to reward all accordingly. Listen to Hebrews 9:28: “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” The text clearly teaches two advents, but not a third. His second coming, yet future, is His last and only appearance in this world.

Now, friends, I hope this is not too alarming to you. May you take it and search the Scriptures to see if these things are true. If we have learned and been taught things which are contrary to the Scriptures, let us lay them down and be honest enough to accept the truth.

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(Part Two)

Good morning, friends. We are so happy to be coming your way with a short gospel message. Please give me your attention for the next few moments and consider what I say and the Lord give you understanding. We really need the understanding of the Spirit, as the second coming of Christ is greatly misunderstood by so many.

At the very beginning let me state plainly that I do not enter into this subject to create confusion, but rather to clear it up. Also, be it understood that the book of Revelation is a book of symbols. It cannot be literally interpreted. Therefore, we must understand the symbolic language in order to properly align these truths with the others taught in the Bible, both in prophecy and in the gospels.

Now, let us go directly to the subject at hand concerning the second coming of Christ. How is He coming? Just as He went away “in the clouds of heaven” “. . . while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1:9-11.

When will it be? This is something no one upon earth knows. The time is set, but I do not know when it is, neither does anyone else. Listen to Acts 17:31: “. . . He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world . . .” To appoint means to fix, settle, or determine. Yes, the very day is already set. Jesus said, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only.” Matt. 24:36. However, there are a number of signs, very definite ones, and He said, “when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.” Mark 13:29.

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While there is a danger of attempting to set the date of His coming, there is also another danger. That is the danger of merely ignoring the signs of the times, which tell us of the conditions of the age and coming of Christ. Paul said, “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day shall overtake you as a thief, but to those who are prepared, it will be a happy event when He comes again. He will be welcomed by His saints, to enjoy the greatest reception of all ages: the coming of the King of kings, and the Lord of lords in the clouds of glory.

At this point let me state very emphatically that nowhere in the Scriptures, not once, is this second coming of Christ referred to as “the rapture.” I understand the term but I just want to say, it is not a scriptural term. If you know where “the rapture” is mentioned in the Bible please let me know, for I have failed to find it.

Now, what will happen when Christ comes? It is a very sad condition today that Christendom is divided over this question. In our day, there is a multiplicity of beliefs, a great variety of opinions, in every rank and file of religion. However, there is a fundamental doctrine that harmonizes with the Scriptures and we should know what that is. Men teach theories because their denominational leaders teach those theories. They tend to follow one another, and sad to say, this is often in the wrong direction. I say, let each study for himself, and search the Scriptures.

One of the major things that will take place at the coming of Christ is, the universal resurrection of the dead. John says: “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea

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gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Rev. 20:11-15. How could this be true unless all the dead were raised at Christ’s coming?

Paul says, “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall all be changed.” 1 Cor. 15:51, 52. This Scripture also answers the question as to whether it will be literal or spiritual and whether it will be secret or for everyone to know. It will be literal and it will not be secret but all will know about it. How could there be a secret “rapture” with the trumpet of God blasting out for the resurrection of the dead? If it were going to be a secret affair, then certainly there would be no trumpet blasting out for the dead to come forth. He most certainly is referring here to the resurrection of the righteous! This teaches that both classes of people will be raised at the same time. So there will not be a resurrection for the righteous and another one for the unrighteous. All will share the same resurrection and face the same judgment following it.

Listen to the words of Jesus: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:28, 29. There will be but one literal resurrection. The hour certainly cannot signify more than a short period of time.

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In referring to the 15th chapter of 1 Cor. again, verses 15-17 simply teach that the righteous who are living on the earth at the time Christ appears will not ascend to heaven before the righteous dead are resurrected, but the dead will rise first, then they will all be caught up together at one and the same time. The wicked are not mentioned in this connection; for Paul was writing this only for the comfort and the edification of the church. In the following chapter, however, their “sudden destruction” at the second coming of Christ is mentioned as a warning to the church.

Will He set up His kingdom then? That is an important question! Will He, or is it already set up? I say Christ established His kingdom at His first coming. Listen to the prophecy of Daniel: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” Daniel 2:44. What kings is he speaking of? The kingdoms mentioned in this vision refer to the Babylonian, the Grecian, the Medo-Persian and the Roman. Jesus set up His kingdom at His first coming during the Roman reign. Hear the words of Jesus: “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” John 18:36, 37.

From these Scriptures we see clearly that Christ has a kingdom and does not need an earthly throne from which to reign, for He ruleth over all.

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In response as to whether there will be a millennium in the future, I can see none in the Scriptures. There is neither time, place, nor need of such. And surely there is no time on this earth for it after the coming of the Lord, because the earth is going to be burned up. Listen:

“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.” 2 Pet. 3:10.

(Part Three)

A very cheerful good morning to every listener. It is indeed a pleasure to be back with a message from the Word of the Lord. I need your prayers. What a great responsibility to rightly divide the Word of truth! Especially is this true when tracing the historical events and future prophecies concerning God’s church through the book of Revelations. I am discussing the second coming of Christ.

First, let me say, the book of Revelation is made up of symbolic language. However, we should be aware that symbolic language is not confined or restricted to the book of Revelations. Who can forget Joseph’s dream of the eleven sheaves that made obeisance to his sheaf? Gen. 37:7, 8. His eleven brethren were angered, because its meaning was apparent—they should be humbled before him. Also the dream of the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars was understood to signify the subjection of the entire family unto him, which was actually fulfilled after Joseph’s exaltation in Egypt.

Again, the four divisions of King Nebuchadnezzar’s wonderful image were explained by Daniel as signifying four universal monarchies and the ten toes as signifying the ten minor

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kingdoms which grew out of the fourth; while the stone that was cut out of the mountain without human intervention, he interpreted as signifying the divine kingdom of God. Daniel 2.

Even, as also in the book of Revelation itself we have a number of symbols divinely interpreted. “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.” “The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.” “The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings.” “The waters which thou sawest . . . are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” “The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

And so it can be seen that the great underlying principle or law upon which symbolic language is based is analogy, or in other words, the similarity and likeness of certain things which are otherwise not alike! An object is chosen to represent not itself, but something of similar character. The dictionary defines “symbol” as “something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance; especially: a visible sign of something invisible.” Therefore, we might say the lion is a symbol of courage; the lamb is a symbol of meekness or patience.

Thus, a beautiful virgin bride is chosen to represent the Church of God; whereas a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns is chosen to symbolize the Pagan Roman Empire. Surely, we do not expect to find great dragons and prehistoric dinosaurs going to war with people, do we? Are these natural things the enemies of God’s church? Certainly not, for the enemies of the truth are the spiritual forces under the control of Satan and he comes in different guises to deceive. The glorious body of God’s reformers is set forth under the symbol of an angel from heaven, with his face as the sun, his feet as pillars of fire, and a rainbow upon his head. The

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anti-Christian, persecuting power of Rome is described as a ferocious wild beast, stamping everything beneath its feet and spreading desolation on every side.

Thus, even at this early point, it appears evident that the “mark of the beast” is not a literal mark or number, but a spiritual condition existing in the lives of those who conform to the false religious systems prevalent in the world. There are some limitations as to how far certain things or creatures can be symbolized, an example being that of God. “To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?” Isa. 40:18. Man cannot represent him, neither can angels. He is described as “One sitting upon a throne.” The same is true of Jesus, the Saviour. He is described as “I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore.” Again, “He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

The souls of the martyrs are represented as crying unto God from the altar for the avenging of their blood on those who dwell on the earth. Where is there an object in all creation symbolic of a disembodied spirit? None is found. So they are described as “the souls of them that were slain.” Rev. 6:9, 10, also 20:4.

Now, since we are dealing especially with events that will take place at the second coming of Christ, let us go to the book of Revelation and use these symbols to find the answers to some of those perplexing questions such as “the millennium” or the thousand years’ reign.

First, may I make another statement? You may remember that I said nowhere in the Bible could I find where “the rapture” is mentioned. The second coming of Christ is mentioned, but not “the rapture.” So far no one has supplied that information to me. Again, I fail to find “the millennium” mentioned as such anywhere in the

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Bible. These terms are often used by folks who are misinformed concerning the events which are to take place at the second coming of Christ. Some teach a “pre-millennium” and some a “post-millennium.” But friends, does the Bible really teach a literal reign or kingdom of Christ which will be established upon this earth at His second coming? If so, where? And when? I see no time or need for a millennium and I also fail to find Scriptures to substantiate such a claim. Perhaps this point is sure to bring conflict of thought. I can almost hear someone say, “Read the 20th chapter of Revelation.” This is exactly what I am going to do. Let us study through verse 6 today:

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” Rev. 20:1-6.

First, notice the binding of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan. This represents the deceitful power of the

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pagan and false religions which held sway over the nations at the coming of the pure gospel light when the Church sprang forth in all its glory in the morning time. The angel represents the ministers who were given power to rebuke and bind that deceptive power of Satan. Folks were either in or out. Some even durst not join themselves to the number of the true saints, for fear of them. Even though the church began to show a decline and falling away after a period of time, still it was universally known there was one true God, and witchcraft and spiritualism did not hold sway over the nations as they at one time had. Christianity prevailed. The power of Satan was bound for a long period of time. During this same time thousands of martyrs who would not recant, were slain under the reign of Catholicism. It is written of them that “they lived and reigned with Christ.” It was those who had “part in the first resurrection” that were exalted to this honored position with Christ. Those who teach a millennium usually **assume** that this refers to a literal resurrection at the second coming of Christ, but no such thing is hinted at. In this Scripture not one word is said about literally resurrected saints reigning. John says, “I saw the **souls** of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Nothing whatever is said about any reign on earth at all; but the description shows plainly that it was disembodied spirits that were reigning with Christ in Paradise during the period that followed the casting down of the dragon, which was in reality one of long apostasy and darkness on earth.

This same thought concerning the reign of the martyrs in Paradise while the powers of evil triumphed on earth, was brought to view in chapter 6:9-11: “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the **souls of them that were slain** for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not

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judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

This company of souls that the apostle saw reigning with Christ above were those who had had part “in the first resurrection,” which had made them “blessed and holy.” They were not on earth; they were disembodied spirits above, hence had not been literally resurrected. The Scriptures clearly teach that mankind in their ordinary condition are “dead in trespasses and in sins,” and that through salvation, which makes them “blessed and holy,” they are “quickenened” to a new life in Christ. Eph. 2:1. That this is scripturally the “first resurrection” as proven by the words of Jesus—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24.

(Part Four)

Good morning, friends, good morning! We are happy to be back today with more thoughts on the second coming of Christ! We are going to begin with the Scripture right where we left off, verse seven, chapter 20 of the book of Revelation. Do remember now, that we are dealing with symbolic language so let us not jump at conclusions unless the other Scriptures bear out the same thoughts:

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed

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the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Rev. 20:7-15.

I have spoken previously on “the first resurrection” and it was pointed out that this applies to a spiritual awakening which takes place in the life of one who surrenders to Christ right here in this life. He becomes alive from a dead state of sin to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. It takes place before physical death.

Bear in mind now, that we are living in this age of deception when Satan has been loosed from his prison for a little season and is going about to deceive every soul possible. It is the trick of Beelzebub to deceive souls by causing them to overlook the fact that this first resurrection that made men blessed and holy is of a spiritual nature, and to fix their hopes in two literal resurrections in the end. There will be but one literal resurrection then, as is clearly shown by the account given of the judgment in this chapter, verses 11:15. The writer of the Revelation declared positively, “Behold, he

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cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” Chap. 1:7. If this does not prove that there is but one literal resurrection when Christ comes, then how would you state such a fact if that is what you desired to do? Furthermore, Jesus himself, in the same chapter in which He described “The first resurrection,” says most positively that all the literal dead shall be resurrected at the same time. “Marvel not at this,” He says: “the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:28, 29. This “hour” certainly cannot signify more than a short period of time. In their efforts to prove two literal resurrections, those who teach a millennium usually quote: “The dead in Christ shall rise first.” 1 Thess. 4:16. In doing so they wrest the Scriptures from their real meaning, and that to their own destruction; for looking at this Scripture one can see clearly that no such thing as two resurrections is even hinted at. Verses 15:17 simply teach that the righteous who are living on the earth at the time Christ appears will not ascend to heaven before the righteous dead are resurrected, but the dead will rise first, then they will all be caught up together at one and the same time. The wicked are not mentioned in this connection; for Paul was writing this only for the comfort and edification of the church.

Now please remember that the power of Satan to deceive was the thing that was bound by the gospel. This included pagan worship, heathen religion, witchcraft and the like. After the long period of time these things were again loosed upon the believers of the truth.

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The loosing of Satan, or the dragon, is a very important part to be considered. Before this matter can be rightly understood, however, we must take into account certain facts regarding his binding. It was not the dragon as a political power that Christianity attacked (it did not labor to that end), but it was its huge public system of false beliefs that was overthrown. This great system, as opposed to Christianity, can all be summed up under the one word, infidelity. *Infidel* signifies “a heathen; one who disbelieves in Christ, or the divine origin and authority of Christianity.” This system was positively an anti-Christian power that wrought by every possible means to destroy the religion of Jesus and to blot out His very name. It failed in the attempt. It was bound. During the long reign of Popery, when the doctrine was “be-a-Catholic-or-die,” infidelity could not publicly lift its head in the sense in which it was cast down by the early Christians. It had no power over the nations to deceive them by pagan religions or worship.

However, thousands were deceived by a false Christianity until almost all the world wondered after the beast, which is used to represent Catholicism. The release of the dragon, then, in order to be entirely satisfactory and consistent, must embrace the following points: First, it must at least include the development of a great public anti-Christian power whose avowed object is to destroy the whole fabric of Christianity. Second, being bound by divine power, his release must be the result of divine permission for a special purpose. Third, the scene of his imprisonment must necessarily be the place of his release; namely, the earth, the territory of the Roman Empire.

And that is just what happened. A system of infidelity spread throughout Europe under the labors of Voltaire and others. The very object of the leaders of this movement was the extermination of the

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Christian religion, and their watchword was “Crush the wretch,” meaning Jesus Christ. The dragon was loose in all his terrible features. The Pagans upheld a false religion: but these modern worshippers of the dragon did likewise and publicly exalted the “goddess of reason” as an object of devotion, setting aside every tenth day for their hellish orgies in her honor.

There is also another thought which should not be overlooked regarding the dragon—his partnership with Gog and Magog. The original meaning of these terms are somewhat conflicting as they are mentioned in Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39. In Revelation it is quite evident that they apply to Romanism and Protestantism, and under the leadership of this spirit of anti-Christ they are gathered together to battle against the saints of the most High. Revelation 16:13-16 describes this union. Listen:

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”

Now, friends, for some of the most vital truths in the book of Revelation, regardless of what you may have been taught and whatever you may believe about these Scriptures, please hear me out. This is a matter of life and death, and the soul you save may be your own! **Do not look** for these things to have a literal interpretation. They are spiritually discerned. The dragon represents atheism and infidelity, as well as pagan religions. It is a deceptive

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power and is fulfilled in communism. The beast represents a desire for power, and thousands of martyrs have been slain under its reign. This is fulfilled in Catholicism. The false prophet represents those who claim to serve Christ but in reality they serve their own interests. They make an image to the beast which is “man-rule,” and therefore form many, many sectarian movements which will not preach all the truth. Therefore they are rightly described as the “false prophet.” These are fulfilled by many man-made sectarian churches which operate under “man-rule.” But now, imagine all these powers getting together to wage war against God’s true Church. This is indeed the battle of Armageddon. And it is being fulfilled before our very eyes.

But in order to form a confederation of powers each of which holds its own distinctive principles, it is necessary that each make certain concessions, in outward appearances at least, so that they can work together in harmony against a common foe. In this case it will be necessary that three points be conceded before the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet can agree. First, the dragon must not appear in his true character as anti-Christian; he must be clothed in some different attire in order to “deceive.” Second, Catholicism must stop her work of slaying those who disagree with her and cover up her true principles. Third, Protestantism must cease protesting against the abominations of Catholicism. We are living in the time when this confederation of the powers of wickedness is being affected; therefore, we must not expect to see the dragon as a terrible creature with heads and horns standing as the open adversary of God, but we must look for him dressed in a garb “to deceive.”

Now, did you notice the warning that was given: “Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame?” Those garments are the garments of salvation,

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and they are obtained not by joining some man-made church, or trusting in some organization, however large. These clean garments come only from full salvation obtained by having your name written in the book of life. Is it there? Are you keeping your garments spotless? Will you be found naked?

Have you noticed the increase of certain things, such as astrology, fortune telling, hypnosis, and various other forms of mind-control like transcendental meditation? Many of these are done in the name of religion, but none of them bring salvation. Beware lest you be deceived, and led into darkness!

Friends, there is much more which could be said upon the second coming of Christ, but I believe this is sufficient for now. May you be found in Him blameless and spotless!

