

The Lamp of Prophecy

or

Signs of the Times

by

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CHAPTER ONE

ALL SIGNS POINT - TO WHAT?

WE ARE LIVING in very remarkable times. Even statesmen of the world recognize this. We seem to be at the converging of the ages; one era appears to be closing and another already beginning. Apart from divine revelation, no man can tell what the next age holds in store for the human race. But any man or woman who has learned to accept the Holy Scriptures as divinely inspired finds here, in GOD's blessed Book, the key that solves the mystery, finds here a complete revelation concerning the times in which we live and the period that is to follow, which will be ushered in by the coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST and our gathering together unto Him. Everything shows that we are rapidly nearing the end of the present dispensation.

A THREEFOLD CORD

The Scripture says: "**A threefold cord is not quickly broken**" (Ecclesiastes 4:12). There is a threefold cord that we shall do well to consider. It is what Scripture predicts will take place immediately before the coming of the Lord:

- first, in connection with the church of GOD,
- then with the Gentile nations and, lastly,
- with the people of Israel.

If we saw conditions prevailing in the church such as Scripture predicts will prevail before the coming of our Lord, but saw no such conditions in Israel or among the Gentile nations, we might well think there was considerable time to elapse before the closing of this age; or if we were to see fulfilled certain conditions predicted concerning the church and concerning Israel, and yet others in regard to the Gentile nations still unfulfilled, we might well say, "**My Lord delayeth His coming.**" But when we see everything moving on in exact accord with Scripture in these three spheres, we may be sure that the end is near.

We see the church drifting into deeper and deeper apostasy. We see Israel already gathering back

to the Land of Palestine, not by two and threes, but by tens of thousands. And we see prevailing over these conditions such as the Word declares will prevail immediately before the coming of our Lord. Then we look out upon the Gentile nations and see the various combinations predicted in Scripture already forming before our eyes.

We see the great hordes of Slavic people banding together, as predicted in Ezekiel 38 and 39; we see the Roman nations entering into an alliance for the restoration of the Roman power; and we see movements of the kingdoms of the eastern countries getting ready for the Battle of Armageddon. All is moving on in exact accord with the sure word of prophecy, so we may be very certain that it will not be long before we shall hear the voice of the archangel, the shout of the Lord, and the trump of GOD, and we who are redeemed by the Blood of CHRIST will rise to meet the Saviour.

BROKEN LINES OF SEPARATION

Let us look particularly at one line of prediction, one prediction uttered by our blessed Lord Himself in regard to the end times. He said solemnly in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, where He was telling of the signs that would prevail before His coming:

"As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

What characterized those days of Noah? Were they days of great revival? Were they days of great awakening and of wonderful conviction? Nothing of the kind! They were days of fearful apostasy, days when men had turned away from the revelation divinely given after the fall of man in Eden's Garden.

They were days, too, of brilliant achievement. I think this is implied in the words used elsewhere, **"They planted, they builded."** They were days when men built great works and prided themselves on their remarkable intelligence. They were also days of breaking down of moral barriers.

I do not know what is involved in that passage in Genesis 6, where it says: **"It came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."**

I do not know whether that implies a strange mystic union of spirit-beings from the heavens with mortals here on earth, as many eminent Bible teachers are sure that it does. I am not certain whether it means that the line of Seth forgot its separation and mingled with the line of Cain, that ungodly race - it may be that. But I do know that there was a complete breaking down of divinely set barriers. All through Scripture, GOD has been calling His people to walk in holy separation from the world that refuses His testimony. Whatever else this passage means, it certainly means this: that in the days of Noah definite dividing lines between the people of GOD and the enemies of GOD were no longer recognized. And what does JESUS say? **"As the days**

of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

What is the great business of the devil today? It is to destroy every barrier between the church and the world. We see it on every hand. After nineteen centuries of Gospel preaching, instead of the world being converted, as Dr. Pierson used to put it, "the world has become a little churchy, but the church has become immensely worldly." We may expect to see lines clearly laid down in Scripture deliberately obliterated by the enemies of the people of GOD as we draw nearer the end.

At the beginning of the dispensation, the church of GOD went forth, a little separated company, to tell men, "**Ye must be born again.**" But we live in a day when the leaders of religious thought talk about the universal fatherhood of GOD and the universal brotherhood of man, a doctrine that leaves no room for the necessity of regeneration.

The world is that multitude of men and women who are dominated by the prince of this world, the devil, and they are going on to judgment. The church of GOD is a little company of redeemed sinners who have been saved through the precious atoning Blood of the Lord JESUS CHRIST - and how the devil hates to see them walking separately from the world! He would do anything in his power to break down all these barriers, for that would utterly destroy the church's testimony.

DAYS OF CORRUPTION AND VIOLENCE

In the days of Noah, there was a great coming together of people who should not have been linked together at all. Very few stood out against the amalgamation. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation. There were no mixed marriages in his family. His was a family that walked apart in separation to GOD; and GOD came to him and told him that He was sick of the whole thing, and that He was going to wipe it all out in a flood.

He said:

"Make thee an ark of gopher wood . . . pitch it within and without with pitch" (Genesis 6:14); and when the flood came, Noah had a safe refuge.

Then, Scripture tells us that the days of Noah were days of moral corruption and great violence.

If you had lived a hundred years ago and acquainted yourself with the highest ideals of the fathers of this great nation, would you have believed it possible that in our day the United States of America would sink to such a condition of corruption and violence as we see on every hand? Would you not have thought that America would have been a kind of Utopia where people would come saying, "We want to come here to worship GOD according to our own convictions, to bring up our children in this happy place; of course, we will respect the laws of the country, for this will be for our own best interest"?

We have lived to see the laws of our country shamelessly broken on every hand - corruption and violence all about us. Pick up your morning newspaper, and you are treated to a record of lawlessness and immorality such as you would never have dreamed of a few years ago. Turn to

what country you will, and everywhere you find loose ideals about morals, about the marriage relation, and all kinds of similar corruptions. Russia is in some respects the fountain head of all this iniquity and impurity, the devil's agency for distributing these evil principles throughout the world and for destroying civilization.

THE MILITANT GODLESS

The following is clipped from a recent number of a reliable journal:

The Soviet Government is doing everything possible to eliminate religion, especially Christianity. She is going to follow the Fascist example, by adopting her own calendar next year, when the Christian calendar will be abolished, and it will be called the year fifteen of the revolution. The changing of "**time**" is characteristic of Antichrist (Daniel 7:25).

The idea is to obliterate Sunday; the week is to consist of five days instead of seven so there will be no opportunity for any to come together On the Lord's Day; there will be no way to figure the time so as to know when the Lord's Day comes around. All churches are to be destroyed throughout Russia, and religion eradicated.

The London Times (December 28, 1929) states: "Five hundred seventy-six churches were closed from January to August, 1929, and it is expected that the number will reach 1,000 by the end of the year."

"The Militant Godless in Soviet Russia" is the name given to an organization formed, some eighteen months ago, by order of the ruling clique in the Kremlin, as a body for "the final destruction of every vestige of religion." Their president is Yaroslavsky, one of Stalin's henchmen and the chief of the Control Commission, an inquisitorial department of the Central Executive. For the past eleven years, this man has been disseminating the most blasphemous anti-religious propaganda ever recorded in history, and has in consequence been rapidly promoted to high offices in the Soviet State The Militant Godless are true followers of their president; they are young people of both sexes, reared and educated under the Soviets. At the second congress of the Godless at Moscow, Yaroslavsky, in order to inflame the passions of his followers, stated quite deliberately that "believers are the enemies of the Socialist State . . . and they must be exterminated."

The members of this powerful body are particularly happy when participating in organized campaigns for the demolition of churches and other places of worship and in orgies of blasphemy known as "Godless Carnivals." These consist of a series of spectacles specially written and rehearsed, ridiculing and insulting the belief in GOD in general and certain aspects of the Christian faith in particular. These spectacles cannot be described in an English newspaper; in fact, some of the Soviet newspapers take refuge in evasions.

The organization is said to be two millions strong, and its finances are described as excellent. This is not surprising, since by Stalin's orders the Godless are financed by the State, and special donations are allotted to them from party and trade union funds. The attempts to destroy religion are costly, but the Soviets disregard the question of finances since they are confident of success.

Since these statements were published, the Soviet program to destroy every thing holy has been carried on with terrible success, though GOD still preserves in Russia His election of grace.

TEACHING BLASPHEMY

What is going on in Russia is simply the beginning of what may soon prevail all over the world. People say that this idea of Red propaganda dominating the world is just talk. I was speaking with a leading educator in Pennsylvania some days ago, and he said that the sad fact is that by far the majority of our professors are teaching Bolshevism to their students.

I am teaching in a theological college part of the year, and I find that atheistic literature is being poured into the mail of our students. The Reds of Europe are doing their best to send the atheistic literature through all the colleges and schools of America. They are doing their best to pervert our youth and to poison the very fountain of knowledge at its source. Societies are forming today in many of our colleges, named "The Society of Damned Souls"; that is their own name for it. Think of the blasphemy of it, the God-defying spirit of the movement - and it is spreading everywhere!

There was something like that in the days of Noah.

GOD said: "**My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years**" (Genesis 6:3). What do these words mean? They mean that GOD by His Spirit had sought to bring certain influences to bear upon the hearts of men. But we read: "**Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood: which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them**" (Job 22:15-17)? In the Book of Job, Eliphaz tells us how wicked men acted before the flood, and it is the way they are doing now.

GOD'S DAY OF GRACE

The wonderful thing is that a good GOD bears it all and that He still waits in mercy.

This reminds me of the day when Ingersoll, after delivering one of his addresses, pulled his watch from his pocket and said: "According to the Bible, GOD has struck men to death for blasphemy. I will blaspheme Him and give Him five minutes to strike me dead and damn my soul."

There was a period of perfect silence while one minute went by; two minutes passed, and people began to get nervous; three minutes, and a woman fainted; four minutes, and Ingersoll curled his lip. At five minutes, he snapped his watch shut, put it in his pocket, and said: "You see, there is no GOD, or He would have taken me at my word."

The story was later told to Joseph Parker, who said, "And did the American gentleman think he could exhaust the patience of GOD in five minutes?"

The patience of GOD! He says: "**My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years**" (Genesis 6:3).

It is just about one hundred and twenty years now since the truth of the second coming was revived; since then, GOD has been sending His servants into the world declaring, "**Behold, the bridegroom cometh.**" I wonder if there will be the same period of dealing with men and seeking to bring them to repentance ere the Lord returns for His own.

There is something to hold the evil in check today.

Listen to the words of JESUS:

"As in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:38-39).

What is it that answers to that in this day? The moment the redeemed will hear the cry, "**Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away,**" and the true church of GOD is caught up, who can imagine the unspeakable corruption, the violence that will prevail? Then the Lord will descend in power with His saints and bring in the reign of everlasting righteousness.

If ever there was a time when men and women ought to be serious, this is the day; and yet the people today are pleasure mad. You find people all over the land turning away from the things of GOD and turning to fables or devoting themselves to pleasure in its most extravagant forms - anything to give them a new sensation, a new amusement.

Did you ever think of that word "*amusement*"?

David said, "**While I was musing the fire burned.**" "**Muse**" means "*to think.*" But in "*amuse,*" the "*a*" is the negative; so "*amuse*" means "*to not think*" and the devil is busy today with all kinds of devices to keep men from thinking. If men think, there is some hope for their salvation. When the prodigal came to himself, he said, "**How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger**" (Luke 15:17).

GOD, give us courage to face realities.

Unsaved one, the days of grace are very near their end; if you are ever going to be saved, you will have to be saved very soon. I have tried to visualize Noah getting that ark ready. When the last day and the last hour of that day of grace came, he had to turn regretfully away, leaving them all behind. He entered into the ark, he and all his; and GOD shut them in. The hand that shut them in was the same that shut out the antediluvian world. Soon the redeemed of the Lord will be shut in up yonder, and men will come knocking, saying, "**Lord, Lord, open to us,**" only to hear Him say, "**I never knew you.**"

As the storms descended from above, and the water rolled up from below, I wonder if there were not some of Noah's neighbors who came and knocked at that door, saying, "Noah, Noah, open the door," only to hear him say, "It is too late; I did not lock the door. GOD did."

"When once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut the door, who is there that will open it?"

You have been invited for years to enter the ark of safety, and yet you are still unsaved. How much longer are you going to go on resisting the Spirit? Why not flee to CHRIST for refuge while the door stands wide open, and then, in that day when the world's distress lowers, you will be safe in CHRIST.

~ end of chapter 1~

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