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Eating, Drinking, Being Merry - And Suddenly, Shockingly.....



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #216 ~

“Whenever Christ does come again, it will be a very sudden event. I draw that truth from the verse in the parable (Matt. 25:1-13) which says, *‘At midnight there was a cry made, behold, the bridegroom cometh, go you out to meet him.’*

I do not know when Christ will come again. I should think it most presumptuous if I said that I did. I am no prophet, though I love the subject of prophecy. I dislike all fixing of dates, and naming of years, and I believe it has done great harm. I only assert positively that Christ will come again one day to set up His kingdom on earth, and that whether the day be near or whether it be far off, it will take the Church and the world exceedingly by surprise.

It will come on men suddenly. It will break on the world all at once. It will not have been talked over, prepared for and looked forward to by everybody. It will awaken men's minds like the cry of fire at midnight. It will startle men's hearts like a trumpet blown at their bedside in their first sleep. Like Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, they will know nothing till the very waters are upon them. Like Dathan and Abiram, and their company, when the earth opened under them, the moment of their hearing the report of the visitation will be the same moment when they will see it with their eyes. Before they can recover their breath and know where they are, they shall find that the Lord is come.

I suspect there is a vague notion floating in men's minds that the present order of things will not end quite so suddenly. I suspect men cling to the idea that there will be a kind of Saturday night in the world, a time when all will know the day of the Lord is near; a time when all will be able to cleanse their consciences, look at their wedding garments, shake off their earthly business and prepare to meet their God. If any reader of this address has got such a notion into his head, I charge him to give it up forever.

If anything is clear in unfulfilled prophecy, this one fact seems clear, that the Lord's coming will be sudden, and take men by surprise. And any view of prophecy which destroys the possibility of its being sudden – whether by interposing a vast number of events as yet to happen, or by placing the millennium between ourselves and the advent – any such view appears to my mind to carry with it a fatal defect. Everything which is written in scripture on this point confirms the truth, that Christ's second coming will be sudden. *'As a snare shall it come'*, says one place; *'As a thief in the night'*, says another; *'As lightning'*, says a third; *'In such an hour as ye think not'*, says a fourth. *'When they shall say, peace and safety,'* says a fifth. Luke 21:35; 1 Thess. 5:2; Luke 17:24; Matt. 24:44; 1 Thess. 5:3

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself uses two most striking comparisons when dwelling on this subject. Both are most teaching, and both ought to

raise in us solemn thoughts. In one He compares His coming to the days of Lot. In the days when Lot fled from Sodom, the men of Sodom were buying and selling, eating and drinking, planting and building. They thought of nothing but earthly things: they were entirely absorbed in them. They despised Lot's warning. They mocked at his counsel. The sun rose on the earth as usual. All things were going on as they had done for hundreds of years. They saw no sign of danger. But now mark what our Lord says: *'The same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed'.* Luke 17:28-30

In the other passage I allude to, our Lord compares His coming to the days of Noah. Do you remember how it was in Noah's day? Stay a little, and let me remind you. When the flood came on the earth in Noah's time, there was no appearance beforehand of anything so awful being near. The days and nights were following each other in regular succession. The grass and trees and crops were growing as usual. The business of the world was going on. And though Noah preached continually of coming danger, and warned men to repent, no one believed what he said. But at last, one day the rain began and did not cease: the waters rose and did not stop; the flood came, and swelled, and went on, and covered one thing after another; and all were drowned who were not in the ark. Now mark what our Lord says: *'As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of Man: they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all'* (Luke 17:26-27). The flood took the world by surprise, so also will the coming of the Son of Man. In the midst of the world's business, when everything is going on just as usual, in such an hour as this, the Lord Jesus Christ will return.

Reader, the suddenness of the Lord's second advent is a truth that should lead every professing Christian to great searchings of heart. It should lead him to serious thought, both about himself and about the world.

Think for a moment how little the world is prepared for such an event. Look at the towns and cities of the earth, and think of them. Mark how most men are entirely absorbed in the things of time, and utterly engrossed with the business of their callings. Banks, counting house, shops, politics, law, medicine, commerce, railways, banquets, balls, theatres, each and all are drinking up the hearts and souls of thousands, and thrusting out the things of God. Think what a fearful shock the sudden stoppage of all these things would be, the sudden stoppage which will be in the day of Christ's appearing. If only one great house of business stops payment now, it makes a great sensation. What then shall be the crash when the whole machine of worldly affairs shall stand still at once? From money counting and earthly scheming, from racing after riches and wrangling about trifles, to be hurried away to meet the King of kings, how tremendous the change! From dancing and dressing, from opera going and novel reading to be summoned away by the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, how awful the transition! Yet remember, all this shall one day be.

Look at the rural parishes of such a land as ours, and think of them. See how the minds of the vast majority of their inhabitants are buried in farms and allotments, in cattle and corn, in rent and wages, in rates and tithes, in digging and sowing, in buying and selling, in planting and building. See how many there are who evidently care for nothing, and feel nothing, excepting the things of this world, who reckoned nothing whether their minister preaches law or gospel, Christ or antichrist, and would be utterly unconcerned if the Archbishop of Canterbury was turned out of Lambeth Palace, and the Pope of Rome put in his place. See how many there are of whom it can only be said that their bellies and their pockets are their gods. And then fancy the awful effect of a sudden call to meet the Lord Christ, a call to a day of reckoning, in which the price of wheat and the rate of wages shall be nothing, and the Bible shall be the only rule of trial! And yet remember, all this shall one day be.

Reader, picture these things to your mind's eye. Picture your own house, your own family, your own fireside. What will be found there?

Picture, above all, your own feelings, your own state of mind. And then, remember that this is the end toward which the world is hastening. There will be no long notice to quit. This is the way in which the world's affairs will be wound up. This is an event which may possibly happen in your own time. And surely you cannot avoid the conclusion that the second coming of Christ is no mere curious speculation. It is an event of vast practical importance to your own soul.

'Ah!' I can imagine some reading say, *'This is all foolishness, raving, and nonsense; this writer is beside himself. This is all extravagant fanaticism. Where is the likelihood, where is the probability of all this? The world is going on as it always did. The world will last my time.'* Do not say so. Do not drive away the subject by such language as this. This is the way that men talked in the days of Noah and Lot, but what happened? They found to their cost that Noah and Lot were right. Do not say so. The Apostle Peter foretold, eighteen hundred years ago, that men would talk in this way. *'There shall come in the last day scoffers,'* he tells us, *'saying, where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation'* (2 Peter 3:3-4). Oh, do not fulfil his prophecy by your unbelief!

Where is the raving fanaticism of the things which I have been saying? Show it to me if you can. I calmly assert that the present order of things will come to an end one day. Will anyone deny that? Will anyone tell me we are to go on as we do now forever? I calmly say that Christ's second coming will be the end of the present order of things. I have said so because the Bible says it. I have calmly said that Christ's second coming will be a sudden event, whenever it may be, and may possibly be in our own time. I have said so, because thus and thus I find it written in the Word of God. If you do not like it, I am sorry for it. One thing only you must remember, you are finding fault with the Bible, not with me."

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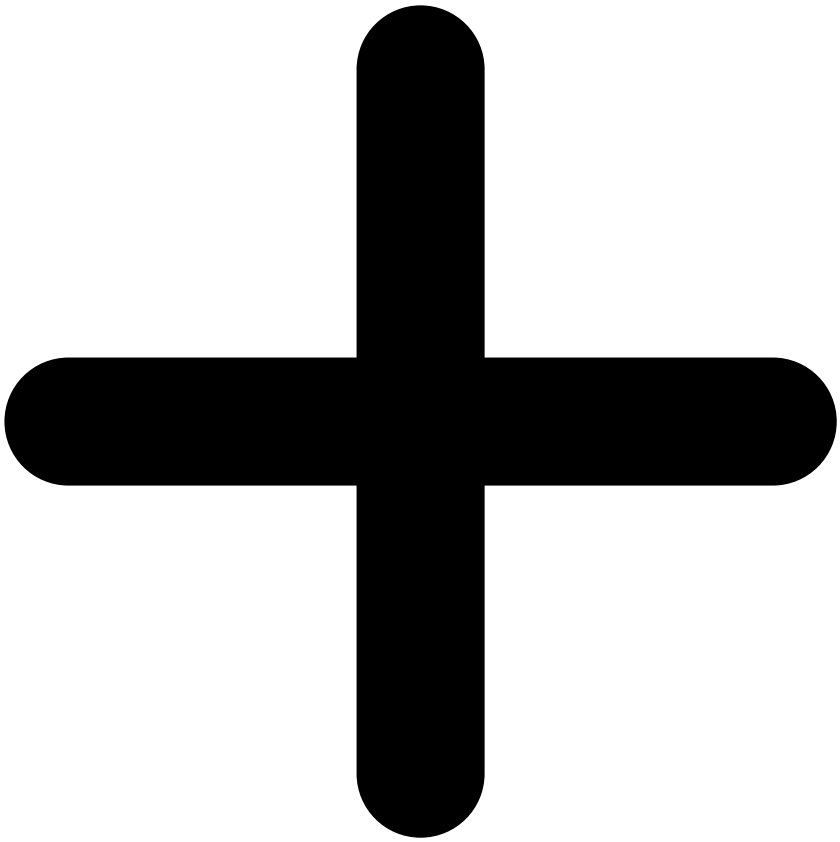
At the end of this age, billions of unbelievers will be surprised, shocked, and scared to death. In the days and months before Christ's coming, non-Christians will be living what you would call *"normal lives"*, and not expecting anything unusual to happen. But Christians know better, for we know the truth, what the Bible predicts will happen in the years leading up to the end of this age. We should not be surprised, shocked, or scared by the coming of Christ – *"But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief in the night"* (1 Thess. 5:4). Now that we are living in the end-times, we can *"see"* the day of the Lord approaching – it's clearly evident that this dreadful *"day"* is getting closer and closer. Hebrews 10:25; Matthew 24:4-14, 32-35

O Christian, you must warn the lost, and whether they believe it or not, you must tell them that *"all hell"* will soon break forth on this earth. More than ever before, you must tell the unsaved this bad news, but also, the good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ, that they need to repent of their sins and trust in Him for salvation, so they can escape this end-time's wrath on earth and the eternal wrath in hell, and then forever be with the Lord in heaven. *"Rescue those being led away to death, hold back those who are staggering to slaughter"* (Prov. 24:12). This is our duty, our solemn responsibility. *"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."* Matthew 24:14

John the Baptist made this prediction about Jesus Christ, and what we now know will soon be fulfilled: *"His winnowing fork is in His hands, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire"* (Matt. 3:12). You want to be the wheat, and not the chaff! And you want to be like John and *"make ready the way of the Lord."* Matthew 3:2

P.S. This message about Christ's return, and God's wrath being poured out upon the world is a most important message at this time in history.

The coming of Christ is soon to happen, and people need to know the truth, both believers and unbelievers. Here are two more relevant messages*: “J.C. Ryle’s Prophetic Creed – an Excellent Read”*, and *“Evildoers in the End-Times.”*



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