

# STRAIGHTWAY

*And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him [Mark 1:18].*

## CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

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### **But the Wise Shall Understand, Part One “The End Time Defined”**

Dr. H. T. Spence

In the light of unprecedented growing powers of darkness taking hold of our times, we are at a most urgent hour for the imperative intervention of God for the lives of His people. As we near the ominous presidential election in November (coming on the heels of the infamous past eight years of post-American changes, as well as the resolve of the public outcry for a “new world order”), we shudder to think of what is before us as a nation. The concept of leadership has radically changed in America: *character* is a thing of the past, *truth* is a matter of semantics, and

*morality* has abandoned definitive mores. America has become an existential island floating on the immense sea of humanity with a determination to literally obliterate from memory its past, leaving its future to the whims of insanity and evolutionary chance. One thing remains clear—we are living in the transitional season of history where all political energies are out to destroy our past sacredness and preciousness.

In this issue of *Straightway*, we are drawing from the recent Men’s Prayer Conference’s burden “But the Wise Shall Understand” (Daniel 12:10).

*This edition includes two more articles*

**Part Two—There Shall Be a Time of Trouble**

**Part Three—Many Shall Be Purified, and Made White, and Tried**

Herein is a principle of both a *hope* for God's people in this diabolical generation and a *prayer* that in the light of God's precious Word, the wise shall understand the times in which we live.

### **Understanding the Times of History**

But before we come directly to this burden, preliminary truths declared in God's Word must be established. We must first understand the time in which we presently live. Secondly, we should seek out both principles and patterns in Scripture that help to identify our times.

We firmly believe that the phrase the "times in which we live" refers to both the last days and the time of the end. But we carefully need to define this aspect of time.

The unfolding of Scripture reveals that God deals with this world and

its history through the dimension of *time*. There was a definite beginning for the history of this world's existence, there is a continuation of its history, and there will be a future designation for its existence. Time is a gift from God in creation, and He has *total* control of it. The entire unfolding of history has already been planned out; furthermore, history continuously unfolds according to the appointment of a Sovereign God.

Thousands of prophecies in Scripture prove that God knows the future and confirms that He is the ultimate controlling factor of history. The Book of Daniel especially reveals this truth about time, history, and the sovereignty of God manifested through time and history. The Bible reveals that God has numbered the days of history, including the personal history of every individual conceived.

We have often observed that the Bible declares the "last days" (which according to Acts 2:16, 17 and Hebrews 1:2, along with other passages) began with the coming of God's Son to earth and continues to the present. Therefore, we can declare we live in the "last days." The New Testament also reveals that the last days were appointed primarily for the Church, especially developed in the Gentile world. The last two thousand years have been appointed by heaven to the Church ages.

The apostle Paul declares in Romans 11:25 that these last days

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would be true “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” This “fulness of the Gentiles” seems to come to an end at the Rapture, when the concept of the Gentile Church ages ceases. God has appointed the several seasons of time that have unfolded the Church ages of the past two millennia.

Within these Last Days of the past two thousand years, the Bible prophesies also of a concluding time called “the time of the end” or the End Time. This End Time is approached and described from various perspectives, depending on the burden of the writer in Scripture. Daniel uses the term “the time of the end,” or the End Time, from the perspective of the Gentile empires and their lingering influence in the End Time (or when their time of existence comes to an end). He culminates in chapter 11 primarily with the political and religious aspects of the End Time. Later in chapter 12 Daniel relates the End Time to the people of Israel.

Jesus Christ, when dealing with this truth in Matthew 24, gave us greater details in the two segments of the End Time: the “beginning” of the End Time (Matt. 24:4–8) and the “end” of the End Time (Matt. 24:9–14).

There are also *patterns* and *types* of the End Time that Christ gave to us, shedding light on our understanding of this biblical term. Christ declared

He would come at the end of a certain age. Our Saviour speaks of “the days of Noah.” Noah’s days came at an end of time, or an age, which covered from the fall of man to the destruction of that first earth by a flood. Noah lived in the end time of that appointed age or season of time. He was told how long his end time would be—120 years (Gen. 6:3). Living through that end time, he was delivered through the Flood.

Christ also revealed to us that His coming would be as “in the days of Lot.” Lot lived in an end time of the history of Sodom and Gomorrah. He was snatched out by the angels in the end time of that city’s history.

But there is also the end time of the consummated Church ages. We believe we are living in the End Time of the Church ages, or the time which will bring the fullness of the use of the Church in God’s dispensational economy, and thus bring an end to the purpose of the Church. The end of the Church ages will culminate in the secret second coming of Christ for only those who are watching and waiting for Him in the last Church age of history. This end of the Church ages will be the fulfillment of the words of Paul concerning God’s spiritual dealings with the Gentiles in Romans 11:25, the “fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” Following this, there will be the Great Tribulation and its appointed time seasons, rendered to us in Revelation 6–19. There will also

be an end-time season of the Great Tribulation. It will consummate at the open display of the second coming of Christ back to earth as mentioned in Revelation 19. This will ultimately lead to the setting up of His kingdom and the ushering in of the nation of Israel as the superlative and reigning nation on earth.

In regard to the two advents of the second coming of Christ, there seems to be one perspective in the light of the end of the Church ages, and another in the light of the end of the Great Tribulation. We observe somewhat of a definitive clarification to the fact that there are two noticeable segments to the *first* coming of Christ. He first came secretly, as far as those who were watching and waiting for the consolation of Israel and those who saw Him (such as, Mary, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, Shepherds, Wise Men, Zacharias, and Elisabeth). But there was an open and public display of His first coming to all at the beginning of His public ministry at the age of thirty. This pattern is true of the Lord's second coming: a secret coming to those who anticipate His coming in what is called a Rapture, *in the air*; and then at the end of the Great Tribulation, His open display to all the world, which geographically will commence *on the Mount of Olives*.

Yet the key context of the "time of the end" in the Book of Daniel concerns the end of the Gentile political power. Chapter 2 gives a

brief presentation of the "day of man," represented in an image of a head, breasts and arms, belly and thighs, legs, and finally feet and ten toes. The "last days" began in the legs of this image, representing the Roman empire. The dismantling of the Roman empire is represented in the feet mixture of iron and clay. Ultimately this image of man's great days will be destroyed; there will be an end of the "day of man," an end of the "times of the Gentiles." This is what Christ was referring to in Luke 21:27.

Let us keep in mind the distinction between the "times of the Gentiles" and what we have observed in Romans 11:25:

*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

The "fulness of the Gentiles" is resolved at the Rapture when God will turn from the Gentile Church concept and then begin to spiritually move in dealing with the Jews as a nation. We believe we are in the End Time of the Church ages; it is God's final providential use of the Gentile Church concept. Daniel's "time of the end" addresses more particularly the end of the Gentile political power.

### **Characteristics of End Times**

Each "end time" in Scripture is

marked by certain similar characteristics. The end time of Noah before the Flood is a type of an end time *before* the judgment of the Great Tribulation. The end time of Lot before Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction is a similar type of an end time. Both Noah and Lot are types and shadows of the days before other "end times," including the end time of the Church ages. Although the context of the principles in Daniel 12 concern the remnant of Jews living in their end time at the end of the Great Tribulation (that is, nearing the end of Daniel's Last Week), the principles seen here are end-time principles that are very pertinent for our time in history as well!

We must remind ourselves that the apostasy of Israel and its judgment of the Babylonian Captivity is what brought into existence the "times of the Gentiles." What will bring the Gentile Church to an end will be its persistent, resolved apostasy in the Laodicean Church Age. It is true that the institutional Church on earth has gone through many apostasies (its defections from the truth, from the Word of God, and from Christ the Head of the Church). Yes, there have been many apostasies or fallings away from this trilogy. Truly, the Roman Catholic Church is the oldest, continuing apostasy within Christianity.

But when God providentially brought the Reformation into history, it profoundly affected the *age time* for

Christianity. Perhaps if this move of God had not happened along with its impact on Western civilization, the Rapture may have come at that time in the climax of the Church's darkest hour.

When God sent the Great Awakenings to America and the Evangelical Revivals to England, Germany, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and other countries in the 1700s, it brought the Church into deeper insights of the redemptive work of Christ. These revivals drew believing hearts more to the inward workings of grace, rather than simply the outward and the upward objective workings of grace on man's behalf.

In carefully reflecting upon this time, the eighteenth-century revivals seem to have commenced a preparation on earth for the two advents of the second coming of Christ. As this move of God became evident in the history of the Church on earth, it brought a reactionary, aggressive work of the Devil that in a radical way accelerated in the 1800s. Global ideological movements began to take place through agnostic and atheistic men in the secularist, modernist movement throughout Europe. There was also the birth of the cults (Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventist, Christian Science, etc.) that have had a profound but subtle effect on the Church. At this same time Protestant Liberalism and Modernism swept across Europe with a vengeance,

washing ashore with hurricane force in America. Evolution rose with great influential power, both in the secular world and through the avenues of Liberalism, making inroads into Christian seminaries. There was also a flood of corrupted, heretical ancient manuscripts discovered by archaeologists; these were often written by early-century apostates who had tried to overthrow the Faith. This torrential flood of manuscripts furthered attempts to pollute, defame, and deny the true Gospel!

God has permitted all of this to arise in order to prove that the institutional Church is like a man who built his house upon sand, discarding the wisdom of the rock for its foundation. By the Laodicean Church Age, the institutional Church has laid aside the Rock of the infallible Christ and His Word and turned to the sand of secular humanism for its foundation. God has tested this End-time institutional Church with the false *rains* of the Charismatic movement, the *floods* of rising troubles within the Church and the world, and the continued *winds* of false doctrine. These events have helped to bring a clear line of demarcation between the wheat and the tares growing ever so close together within the Gentile Church.

The greatest spiritual heart-movings of God in Church history came in the 1700s and helped prepare the remnant for the coming greatest

apostasy ever known in the history of the Church. The rejection of the deepest light brought forth the deepest apostasy.

## Conclusion

We live, dear brethren, in the last Church age, which seems to have begun around 1900. Many of God's men believed back in the 1800s that the Church was coming to its worst hour and warned of such a pervading heart apostasy that would bring the finality of the apostasy to the institutional Church globally. It must be said that we are in the worst and most deceptive falling away of the Church in all of its history. It is not so much the apostasy of Romanism; it is the apostasy from the great move of God in the Reformation and the Evangelical Revivalist movements, through which God brought the deepest insights of spiritual living to the Church.

Yes, our Church age continues to declare the terms *Gospel*, *Jesus Christ*, and *Christianity*. Yet it is another Gospel, another Jesus, and another Christianity, because the institutional Church has denounced the literality of the Bible and the historical Jesus. Christianity is the *only* religion that has publicly renounced the historicity and the divine inspiration of its sacred writing (the Bible) and its true Christ. In the place of these rejections, the Church has itself created a modern Jesus and a modern concept of being a Christian. Both

are antithetical to the Christ and the Christianity revealed from heaven to the saints. Yes, we have witnessed the public death of Christianity in the public, institutional Church around the world. We have come to the “end” of the Church as a true witness on earth; it now has become the voice of apostasy, destroying itself from within, rather than being the “pillar and ground of truth.”

Dear reader, how are we to live in this End Time? What are the problems that we will face? What is it that God desires for us to see, to know, to preach, and to teach in the End Time of the Last Days? It is our prayer with this issue of *Straightway* that the Lord will call us to the truth of His Word for this End-time season of history. We must be

ready in heart for the secret coming of the Lord; we dare not place our trust simply on an experience of the past, or on our water baptism, or on our being a member of some local church. We must be of those that are looking for Him to come, those who are walking daily with God, who are being delivered from this world of sin and its affections. God has called us to live in the worst hour of history, yet in the greatest hour of insight of His Word in order to overcome the greatest deception of human history.

Yes, we live in the time of the End Time. We must know this, and we must acknowledge this. We *must* live our lives in Christ in the light of this End Time.



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# But the Wise Shall Understand, Part Two

## “There Shall Be a Time of Trouble”

Dr. H. T. Spence

*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book (Daniel 12:1).*

Here, Daniel writes of the End Time being a “time of trouble.” Other prophets of the Old Testament express this same characteristic describing Israel’s End Time. Although great trouble has continued to be a part of the history of Israel, the trouble Daniel speaks of in their End Time prophetically will be the greatest of all. This great trouble of Israel is known as Daniel’s Last Week.

### **Daniel’s Last Week**

Jeremiah called this specific time of trouble “Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7), comparing Israel’s sufferings to the birth pangs of a woman. Ezekiel speaks of it as the time when Israel shall “pass under the rod” (Ezek. 20:37). Isaiah, Hosea, Zechariah, and Malachi also speak of this trouble. This troubled time of Daniel’s Last Week will be during what is designated as the Great Tribulation, a time of trouble upon the world as a whole. More specifically for the Jew, this troubled time is properly called Daniel’s Last Week; it will be the final

and worst time of judgment from God upon the Jews. It is through this final “week” (or seven years) that a refining process will be placed upon the Jew in order to fit them to again be God’s chosen people. However long the Great Tribulation lasts as a judgment upon the Gentile world, the last seven years will be accompanied simultaneously with the specific judgment upon Israel, Daniel’s Last Week. We should be reminded that the Great Tribulation has nothing to do with the Church: the concept of the Church will be closed at the Rapture.

Daniel is told in 12:1 that this last chapter relates to “the children of thy people,” that of Daniel’s nationality, Israel. Zechariah 13:8 declares of this period, “And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.” The prophet Zechariah goes on to picture the refining process until the people of Israel acknowledge the Lord as their God. Zechariah then enters chapter 14 describing the final struggle for Jerusalem and the open second advent of Christ’s second coming which will deliver Israel out of all her trouble.

All end-time seasons have been marked by this characteristic of deep



trouble. And the End Time we presently are in will be marked by deep trouble.

### **The End Time of Noah**

The end time of Noah is a pattern for our End Time. It was marked by trouble and deep distress. Luke 17 and Matthew 24 announce that the coming of the Lord would be like the days of Noah that were before the Flood. But what brought their trouble to its climax?

As we carefully review that history, for nearly 1,656 years there had been a separation of the godly and the ungodly lines. Cain was forced to separate from Adam and Eve. Yet it is evident that a sister, who was Cain's wife, and likely some other siblings chose to leave with him. As the population on the planet multiplied over the next centuries, more and more, the families of the contrasting seeds were coming to the awareness of one another, seeing and eventually communicating with one another. Genesis 6:1 states that "men began to multiply on the face of the earth." More men bring about more sinners, and thus more sin. As sinners multiplied upon the earth, so did their discoveries of deeper and darker sins.

Like the days of Noah, we have found ourselves in a generation of the multiplying of humanity. Statisticians have estimated that only around 1900 did the earth's population pass one billion; this suggests that four

thousand years of history was needed for the global population to come to its first billion. Yet today in 2016 we have reached a population of seven and a half billion. In the next ten to twelve years it is estimated that we will be at eight billion. The principle is still true: more men means more sinners, bringing more sin and the discovery of sins that have never been known before.

As Genesis 6 unfolds the historical scene of those years before the Flood, we read of licentiousness raging in a peculiar way unknown prior to this time. Though polygamy was first enacted by Lamech with his two wives, it is here in Genesis 6 that we have "the sons of God taking unto themselves daughters of men, all of whom they chose." There are those who believe these "sons of God" were angels in a succubus union with physical women. But it is clear that these mentioned here possessed a physical, sexual identity which belonged singularly to the human race. These sons of God had the ability to marry. Also, God's condemnation upon the sin of this day was addressed to *man* as flesh living his days on earth, and not to spirit. God did not pronounce any condemnation here upon angels; it was singularly upon man.

It is sad to acknowledge that it was the "sons of God" who made the first advances toward the "daughters of men." They "took them wives of all which they chose" or desired;

the matter of biblical separation of the godly and the ungodly seeds was violated. Back at the fall of Adam, God had placed an enmity between these seeds that is never to wane; it was a hatred instilled by God Himself.

In these days when Christianity is mixing with the world, we must remind ourselves that God placed a hatred between the godly and ungodly seeds. We as Christians must *hate* the ungodly seed and what it produces, as the ungodly seed hates the godly seed and what it produces. Dear reader, this is where the *trouble* concerning the end time of the days of Noah began: the mixing of the seeds, the mixture of the flesh and Spirit, of godliness and ungodliness, of truth and error, of right and wrong, and of good and evil. The godly married to please their fancies of the flesh, not for spiritual desires. They married as many wives as they desired, far worse than what the ungodly had done. Lamech, the first polygamist of the ungodly line, was content with two wives. But the degenerate sons of Seth, having yielded to self-indulgence only limited their wives by the demands of their passion. They broke the laws of God in marriage, and this empowered them to break the laws concerning men. Violence now prevailed in the descendants of the godly line. From the beginning, violence had been a characteristic of the wicked line: the killing of Abel by Cain; and Lamech in his killing by self-defense (Gen. 4:23, 24).

Lawlessness now passes over into the godly seed as it is mixed with the ungodly. And the *offspring* produced giants (Hebrew, *nephilim*) in those days. Mixing of the seeds, the union of the sons of God and the daughters of men, produced strange children. These men became giants in wickedness as well as in size. Yes, the greatest trouble that this world has borne was when the mixing of spiritual seeds created great abnormalities in the earth. Sin was great because of the abnormal giants in the earth, that occasioned new curiosities and inventions of sin by this new breed of sinners. This is where we are today in our own country of America: a new breed of atheism, a new breed of demonically-possessed men, truly a new breed of sinners and sins.

Sin was great because every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually (6:5). The heart was already corrupted; now the corruption aggressively manifested itself into all of the many varieties of sins which the mind had imagined or "brooded over continually." This announces rather conclusively that the mind as well as the heart was filled with evil. The cup of the mind had become full of evil as had the cup of the heart. Sin is a discovery and an invention; this people had exhausted many of the discoveries of sin and were now inventing through the mind other varieties of sin. This was the outworking evidence of a

total depravity.

Sin was also great because “the earth was filled with violence” (6:11). The spilling out of the heart and the mind had now filled the whole earth. There was a reaction of sinner with sinner producing violence. Sin was great because the “end of all flesh” had come up before God. This is a statement that indicates the final stage of sin in a generation had come, and God must bring the matter to an end. This is rarely mentioned in Scripture, but we do read of this word of finality of God at the tower of Babel in Genesis 11 and of Sodom in Genesis 19. In the matter of Genesis 6, as well as in Genesis 11 and Genesis 19, we could only speculate what would have happened had God not stepped in at these various places in history. Without God’s intervention, a total destruction of the human race rather than a merciful destruction of certain ones of the human race could have happened.

### **This Present World**

Our time is an end-time season; it is an end time to the Church ages. Therefore, we are in the worst days that the Church has ever known. Trouble is of such an increasing intense nature that it could flourish toward the attempted extermination of the saints; only the Rapture will thwart such a success. The Church has gone through great trials, testings, distress, and trouble, but never like

what we are facing today. This last Church age has arisen in the aftermath of the greatest spiritual move of God in Church history. It has come in the aftermath of the great awakenings and revivals throughout much of Europe and America that gave preeminence to holiness of heart and life. The End-time Church of our contemporary is convinced that their choosing of the “fair” daughters of the world will be for the betterment of the Church (Gen. 6:2).

This End-time mingling of that which is of God with that which is of man is a special form of evil, and a very effectual engine in Satan’s hand for destroying the testimony of Christ on earth. This mingling may frequently give the appearance of something desirable to the Church, something to be rejoiced in rather than to be deplored. But if viewed in the light of God’s Word, we cannot possibly imagine that an advantage is gained when the people of God mingle and intermarry with the children of this world, corrupting the truth of God. It leads to disastrous consequences. True, the fruit of that union seemed exceedingly fair, in man’s judgment; but, “the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”

But God seeth not as man seeth: “God saw that the wickedness of men was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

This is the greatest trouble we are witnessing today; greater than the leadership in Washington, and greater than secularism and atheism. We are in the greatest trouble of the Church; God's holy place has been defiled by the profane.

Satan's first effort in history was to frustrate God's purpose by putting the holy seed to death (Cain's killing Abel). When that failed, he sought to gain his end by corrupting that seed. The great danger today is the continued compromise of truth for the sake of union with the world. Sin was great because of the multiplying of man upon the earth. When the Church is wanting to increase and become successful in the eyes of the world, it employs man's adding techniques rather than the Lord's. This is what has brought the trouble.

More men coming into the church, unchanged by God's redemptive work, brings more sinners, which in turn means more sin. As a result, weird and abnormal sins will be the product of the mixture of the flesh and Spirit. The mixture of the world and the church have certainly brought multitudes of people under the canopy of the professing Church today. But people still with unconfessed sin, refusing to be delivered from sin, have brought their sins and love of the world within the church. The Church is now forced to change her theology to accommodate the unchanged lives, to accommodate their music, and

to accommodate their permissive standards. Humanly, the *building* of the visible Church means more to the Church leaders than the *purity* of the Church. Through such false building, we have created our troubles, our great troubles. Noah's troubled day began with the mixing of the seeds, the mixture of the flesh and Spirit.

No matter what the distinctives of a church were back in the 1700s, when revival swept through England and America, there was the clear evidence in the people of purity of heart, purity of life, and the denial of ungodliness and worldly lusts. But when the powers of Liberalism and Modernism theologically erupted from within such movements, there was a destruction of the separation between the seeds, and Christianity became "loving" and "loveable" *to the world*. Sin has almost become respectable today because of the abnormal giants in the earth. This new breed of sinners within the Church has occasioned new curiosities and inventions of sin. Such a never before known dialectic mixture of hot and cold, of Spirit and flesh, has erupted in the Church. The Church is assimilating all it has chosen of the world and has created the flesh and Spirit giants of our times who have paved the way for unprecedented wickedness in the future.

### **The Contemporary Giants**

How often our hearts have been drawn to godly spiritual giants of

the past whom we desired to emulate in heart and life. In contrast, the concept of “giants” today is found in the context of the megachurch. Dare we name only a few in order to bring clarity of this truth in our contemporary times.

Kenneth Copeland and Kenneth Hagan have become the product of this mingled offspring. Within the Charismatic movement they have been giants in proclaiming the “Faith Formula” theology to the End-time Church world, believing that man’s own word can create faith in people.

Rick Warren, founder and senior pastor of the Saddleback evangelical megachurch in Lake Forest, California, has globally brought compromise in every area of Christian thinking, opening the door for every version of the Bible to be fully accepted, and under the canopy of Christianity legalizing every sin and lifestyle.

Joel Osteen and his wife Victoria, co-pastors of Lakewood Church in Houston, the largest megachurch in the US, have brought the self-esteem teachings of Robert Schuller to a greater imagery. Today Osteen is the most prominent man of renown in the Charismatic movement.

Mark Burnett and Roma Downey have brought *The Bible*, and its spinoff A.D. *The Bible Continues*, polluting the Gospel with their Roman Catholic influence.

Billy Graham probably became

the greatest enemy of the true Gospel and has done more damage to Christianity than any other man in the twentieth century. He made compromise fashionable and the acceptance of the world with Christ permissible. His son Franklin Graham has become an enigmatic son of both seeds.

Jerry Falwell, Jr., president of Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA, boasts of the world’s largest evangelical Christian university. He truly has gone beyond his father in the compromising covenants with the world.

Pat Robertson, the chairman of the Christian Broadcasting Network, is a pioneer in the telecommunication world under the guise of Christianity. Yet he has brought acceptability of the existential, Charismatic philosophy into the arena of politics and the government.

T. D. Jakes has stepped forward speaking by the great power of the flesh. He is the apostle/bishop of the Dallas-based nondenominational megachurch The Potter’s House. His impassioned sermons have drawn over 26,000 members to his church. His picture appeared on the cover of *TIME* magazine (September 21, 2001) asking if he were the next Billy Graham.

John C. Maxwell, once involved with the Wesleyan churches, has become a key innovator bridging denominational barriers. He has

made the crossover, like so many, into being a motivational speaker to large ministries and to Fortune 500 companies.

Creflo Dollar is portrayed as a televangelist, pastor, and preacher of prosperity theology; he is the founder of World Changers Church International. He has risen among the ranks of being a “giant” of “renown.”

Vashti Murphy McKenzie was the first female bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME Zion Church), the largest of the black denominations in the contemporary apostasy of our times.

Jack Hayford, founding pastor of the Church on the Way in Van Nuys, California, is most prominent in the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. Andy Stanley (son of Charles Stanley) and his most contemporary North Point Community Church outside of Atlanta, Georgia, pushes the envelope in the way to “do church” in this generation. Jamal-Harrison Bryant is a postmodern pastor within the AME Zion Church. Loren Cunningham, founder of Youth with a Mission, has sent thousands of contemporary missionaries into over 135 countries. Eddie Long, who took a staunch Missionary Baptist Church and brought in the Charismatic message, now pastors New Birth Cathedral, a 25,000-member church located in the suburbs of Atlanta. Tommy Tenney has sold nearly two million copies of

his book *The God Chasers* (1999). In 2014, Joseph Prince of New Creation Church in Singapore was reported to have a net worth of \$5 million ([www.richeslifestyle.com](http://www.richeslifestyle.com)). Brian Houston of Hillsong Church (Australia), has now collaborated with TBN for a television network. We must also acknowledge the international influence of women such as Marilyn Hickey and Joyce Meyers.

The contemporary church is filled with its own list of “men of renown.” Even the Neo-Evangelical leaders such as John Piper, Chuck Swindoll, David Jeremiah, Charles Stanley, John MacArthur, Gary Chapman, and others who are portrayed more conservatively, have mixed the godly seed with the ungodly in their theology, worship, and daily lives.

The above list does not even include the “giants” of influence in Nigeria and other countries who have become some of the wealthiest charlatans of renown. The phrase “men of renown” in Genesis 6:4 is a term in the Hebrew language that means “men of the name.” We read this phrase once again in Numbers 16:2, men who had become “famous,” or men whose names had become known. This latter context regards Korah and his gainsaying. These were men whose names were in *competition* with the name of Jehovah, or in our day and time, men who have risen to worldly greatness by “using” the name of Jesus and the Gospel to promote themselves.



These and many more have been the parent stock of the giants in our End-time world who are bringing to public religion a variety of inventions of new sins.

### **The Deepening Darkness of the End Time**

It must be candidly acknowledged that we would never be facing the godlessness and strange flesh we are witnessing today in leadership of our country if Christianity had not fallen away from the Truth. Such evil and wickedness could have never risen if the powers of truth found in Christianity were still part of our nation. We are like Jeremiah of old who said, “we looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!” (8:15). The prophet Jeremiah also declared in 14:19, “Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul loathed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? we looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble.”

Our nation and the world is in deep trouble! God is giving us over to trouble because of our rejection of Him. Note 2 Chronicles 29:8, “Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes.” Again, we grievously acknowledge that it is the failure, the deep sin-sick failure

of the Church that has brought the troubles to our nation; now we have no spiritual strength to deal with them.

The New Testament reveals that in the End Time several concepts of trouble will be faced by God's people. (1) There is a trouble that comes from agitation, like the stirring of the waters, or circumstances moving to and fro causing troubles to arise. (2) There are troubles that cause individuals inward commotion, that take away the calmness of mind, disturb the heart with intense darkness. (3) There are troubles to disquiet, to make restless, to perplex the mind of one by suggesting doubts, darkness, and despair. (4) There will also be troubles that will bring great pressure and tribulation that will cause mankind to feel confined and with no hope for recovery. (5) There are also troubles which are malignant in power, in malice, ill-will, with the desire to injure, to promote wickedness and depravity. (6) There are also deep troubles of intrinsic wickedness that unashamedly break God's law; this truly will be the nature of man in the End Time. Accompanying these troubles will be great affliction and vexing of heart that can distract (if we are not vigilant) our attention from God and the hope of Christ's soon return.

### **Conclusion**

Dear reader, End-time troubles



will come in every form, every concept of pain, and every mental distress. Cares and troubles are at their worst in human history. Facing this age with the oppressive laws that have been passed has produced vexation which pains the soul and emotions of God's people.

In moments of facing this age, do you ever feel like you have been physically beaten up? Our living on this planet is becoming more and more confined; the way of the Christian is becoming more narrow. What are we to do? Where are we to go to be delivered? The laws

of the land are now against us, and there will be fewer victories for the Christian in the courts of the land. Even our places of natural enjoyment are becoming limited.

May God help us in our End Time to face the troubles that increasingly will be manifested as man deepens his hatred against God, his hatred against God's people, and his hatred against the standards by which they live. Yet, we must see in our next article what God has on His heart for His people "through" all of these troubles.

□

## **But the Wise Shall Understand, Part Three "Many Shall Be Purified, and Made White, and Tried"**

Dr. H. T. Spence

Trouble! What a word in the English language. It covers so many contexts and produces so many effects upon and in the life. As we observed in the last article, *trouble* is a term that can cause distress, worry, difficulty in living, vexation, affliction, pains, exertion, cares, bother, causing effort, disturbance, agitation, disquietness, restlessness, perplexity of the mind, ill-will, injury, feelings and emotions of illness, wickedness, and pressure. It is a term covering much of what man can experience in life.

The great variety of sources that bring us trouble include the Devil, the world, nature (insects, varmints,

floods, drought), enemies, friends, family members (in various kinds of experiences), self and our own failures and sins, *and* (more directly) God. Trouble is a word that has been a constant companion with man down through the ages. As Job declared, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble" (Job 14:1).

### **From Whence Came Trouble?**

The question may be asked, "From whence came trouble?" To answer the question, we must carefully review the beginning of time and search the Scriptures for trouble's beginning. Creation's account in Genesis 1 and 2 clarify that God

made a perfect earth: “behold it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). When we read of the early description of the Garden of Eden, no trouble is found in this enclosure of delight; nothing disturbed or afflicted created life.

In Genesis 3, however, a serpent’s entrance from the field into the garden of delight initiated change. A conversation ensued, the woman listened, and soon disturbing words arose in the communication between the serpent and the woman. Can we say, “We are in trouble now!”? Did the Devil through the serpent bring the trouble? Or did man and woman bring the trouble by listening to words against the Word of God and not obeying the Word of God? Some may quickly respond, “God should be blamed for bringing trouble into the world. He should not have placed a tree of forbidden fruit in the garden.” But we must immediately respond that God placed the two trees (the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil) in the garden to give man the liberty to use his will. For what purpose would God give man a will and then prohibit the free use of that will?

Perhaps we should acknowledge that trouble began when man made the choice to go against God’s Word. Adam’s disobedient use of his will brought forth sin in his heart and into the created world. Consequently, God had to alter the earth somewhat in order to make it compatible for

this newly fallen man. According to Genesis 3:16, God added certain troubles or sorrows to the woman, especially in the context of birthing (and perhaps rearing) children. God also chose to curse the ground, for in sorrow man would eat of it all the days of his life.

*Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return (3:18, 19).*

Yes, trouble became part of man’s earthly existence. Man commenced the trouble himself, but God added to his trouble and difficulty for the *good* of man.

But oh, how trouble increased from the fall of Adam and Eve! Trouble is immediately seen in their home with a son refusing to listen to God’s Word about a proper sacrifice. There was trouble in Cain’s fallen countenance, trouble in his anger, and trouble from murdering his brother. Trouble eventually divided the home of Adam and Eve when Cain departed. Cain’s descendants will increase the trouble of sin in the earth.

After 1,656 years of human history, the malignant expansion and depth of man’s sin has multiplied trouble so much that we are brought to Genesis 6 and the days of Noah. Noah will be troubled with the necessity to build an ark

for the saving of his home from the judgment of God. When the Flood finally came, there came great troubling of the earth and all of mankind.

### **The Troubles of Theodicy**

Our heart continues to probe this subject matter of trouble. Although sinning man creates his own trouble through his sins, why does God permit or directly bring trouble to the righteous?

Early in the Bible, after the Flood, this question arose in the circumstances of the life of Job. Job, the oldest book in the Bible, deals with the theological question of *theodicy*, or “why do the righteous suffer?” From the opening of the book, it is made clear that Job was “perfect, upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil” (Job 1:1). But as the book unfolds, God sent and permitted to be sent, great trouble to this perfect man. It came in the brutal destruction of his cattle, his possessions, and then his children. Trouble accelerated with an overwhelming attack on his body. Oh, how the trouble progressively escalated! Next, his wife turned against both him and his God. Finally, his own friends (who initially came to comfort him) became advocates of the Devil trying to explain Job’s trouble. To add to the trouble, through all of his suffering God was silent to this intensely-afflicted man Job. This in

itself caused more trouble to Job.

Yes, the Book of Job becomes a most important book for the enigmas of trouble in the righteous man’s life. But there was a reason for even the trouble brought upon Job. James 5:11 speaks of the “end of the Lord” wrought in this experience of Job. Trouble in the hand of God is for a purpose or often for a variety of purposes.

### **The Trouble for the Jewish Nation**

While in captivity, the Lord revealed to Daniel that seventy weeks of years were still determined against the Jew for troubles. The reason for such troubles is enumerated to him:

*To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy (Daniel 9:24).*

The purpose of these prophesied troubles to the Jewish nation is something not expected—God meant these troubles for their *good*. God has an expected end in mind while permitting all of the aspects of trouble to come to the Jewish nation. Although the first sixty-nine weeks have been fulfilled (from the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the city of Jerusalem to the time of the cutting off of Messiah), the last and final week will be the greatest trouble the Jewish nation will face. This last week (the seventieth week) of trouble will finally turn the Jewish

nation back to their Messiah. It will be marked by providential workings of *purifying, making white, and trying by fire* as mentioned in Daniel 12:10. These are figurative expressions given respectively for *sifting, washing, and smelting*.

### **The World Increasing in Trouble**

The deepening of man's sins throughout the earth is ever increasing the trouble on this planet. God's own people are caught in the middle of the abounding trouble that mankind's sins are bringing. We even receive the side effects of God's troubling of the minds of world leaders; we receive the side effects of increased trouble upon creation, including droughts, famine, and other natural disasters. Though trouble and tribulation befall the wicked, the wicked never really profit from the intense tribulations; as trouble increases in their lives, they increase in their wickedness.

Trouble that appears in the end time of any age brings a twofold result. (1) Trouble results in the purification of the saints; trouble serves a precious end for the saints before God. (2) Trouble manifests the true character of the wickedness of the human heart; trouble has an adverse effect upon the wicked. Therefore, the End-time trouble is uniquely for the preparation of not only the earth but also for the saints. God will increase the troubles on the earth by bringing about the

Great Tribulation, as Jesus the Lamb breaks the seals of a book that will lead to the restoration of the earth for man. The sealed book mentioned in Revelation 5 is a book unleashing trouble throughout the planet as never known before, in order to pave the way for Christ's open coming in Revelation 19.

The End Time of Daniel's Last Week will be filled with much trouble for the Jews, the worst they have ever known. But there is a purpose for this trouble. This trouble will lead the Jew to repentance; trouble should lead to repentance. We read in Zechariah 12:1, 2, 10-14 how the trouble will affect each of the Jewish families differently. The Great Tribulation is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end. Daniel's Last Week is not an end in itself but a means to the end of turning the nation of Israel to its true Messiah.

### **Troubles Throughout Christian History**

Troubles have been clearly evident throughout the Church ages. Redemption began in the womb of trouble when our beloved Saviour came to a world of trouble. He met trouble as an infant and through His life's ministry; it was trouble in God's providence which drove Him to the Cross.

Trouble has been the appointment of the institutional Church throughout history. The Church was born in the crucible of trouble, and it has

continued in the crucible of trouble. The spilling of the blood of martyrs became as seed bringing forth more into the Kingdom.

The Scriptures reveal that the End-time troubles will vastly increase upon God's true saints. James 5:7 declares that Christ is waiting for the precious fruit to be revealed before His coming. The Rapture will occur at the height of the appointment of purifying trouble to God's waiting and watching people. These providential troubles will bring forth fruit to Christ's glory in the character of His Son.

Song of Solomon 6:11 brings a vivid description of Christ's bride at the time of the End: "I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded." The Rapture may take place in the lowest hour in history for God's saints. The greatest hour of testing, of purifying, of washing, and of trying will take place at the time of the End. The Shulamite went down "to see" the fruits of the valley. Oh, the *valley* life just before the Rapture.

Only troubles mingled with the grace of Christ can bring about the fruit needed for our Saviour:

*Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and bath long patience for it, until he receive the early and*

*latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh* (James 5:7, 8).

The final fruit at Christ's coming will be the product of great trouble. Such trouble will be filled with wars and rumors of wars; our own president has contributed to the intensifying of such trouble for our country. Forerunners of Antichrist, forerunners of the False Prophet must come to place the world in a posture of the finality of the Day of Man (as prophetically resolved in the Book of Daniel).

The End-time saints will be caught in this trouble. However, this trouble will be for the good of their souls, to produce the precious fruit. Godly character can only come through grace and suffering. It will take the greatest hour of suffering, tribulation, and troubles to bring about the precious fruit needed for the remnant of the End of the Church ages.

The Christians of the last Church age before the Rapture and the last world age before the coming of Antichrist will be constantly in the climate of the apostasy. It will be the worst of times; it will be the most difficult of times to live the Christian life. It will be the greatest testing time of the Church. My earthly father often said some of the greatest saints that have ever lived will be living just before the Rapture. Yet the best of men have some dross,

which makes afflictions, yea, fiery trials, necessary for them. Even Job, the best of men, realized that at the end of his trial: “therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. . . . Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:3, 6).

### **The “End” Workings of the Gospel**

The terms *purified*, *made white*, and *tried* presented in Daniel 12:10a signify all kinds of examination and trials. They can suggest the image of a founder trying metals to purge them of dross, or the image of a laborer winnowing grain to separate it from chaff, or the image of a fuller washing and scouring cloth to cleanse away dirt or oily spots. The privilege of these purgings unto whiteness are only available to the wise ones. They will understand the true end and purpose of trials, setbacks, and troubles; they will know why these things are permitted by God. These believers are the ones who are wise unto salvation.

Oh, dear reader, this is the end goal of the Gospel—to bring God’s saints to being completely purified. The End-time Church has greatly failed in its understanding that the “ends” of the Gospel are not attained until the Church is completely purified. The first aim of the Gospel is to gather men into the Church by repentance and faith. The second aim is *to perfect them* when they are *in* the Church.

In this second aim, the evangelical church has grossly failed today.

Congregations of local churches are not going on unto perfection. What brought godly living in the past to the church has now been lost or left; carnality rules and reigns in the present-day churches; there is no concept of heart purity and perfection of living. The Church at one time in its early history lived by suffering; the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church. But the powerful Charismatic movement, yea, Neo-Pentecostalism of the 1930s and 1940s, declared that being poor and sick were signs of God’s disfavor and that God does not want his people living in troubles or sufferings, or discomforts, or the insufficiencies of life. The Laodicean Church Age moved into the world’s view of success and left the spiritual needs of life behind. It moved uptown and became friends with the Fortune 500 crowd. Churches today are looking to get out of troubles, out of poverty, out of the stigmas and mockings by the world. This kind of mind and heart concept of religious living is without holiness of heart and life. We must remember that when an individual is truly born again, the church has only begun what it has been divinely appointed to do—to bring the newborn believer to spiritual perfection through the message of the Gospel and the means of Christ’s redemption. *Otherwise, the local church is not a Bible Church!*

Purity only comes to the Christian through suffering. The inward work of holiness or sanctification can only come through the crucible of the cross, through the crucible of crucifixion, the affliction of Calvary. The only way character can come to a local church or to individuals is through the working of sufferings in trials brought upon the people and commingled with the Grace of God. Trouble in and of itself has no merit; but in the context of grace, troubles can work eternal benefit.

These ends are only attained by a lifelong process of purification. The act of conversion does not satisfy these ends. Though the life may be turned from sin to God, evil still lingers, old sins rise up again, and new temptations often prove too strong. This is why, even after the crisis of dealing with the sin nature, trials and troubles must come for an ongoing purifying of the life, making white the garments of character of Christ for the life. When Christians fail in the trying and testing of their troubles, no purging comes to the life. The failure was not the trouble itself but the improper response of the Christian to that trouble.

Tryings of life in God's providence can bring purgings by making us think more humbly of ourselves, by causing us to ask whether we have brought this trial upon ourselves, and by showing us the inadequacy of self in the trial. These trials and troubles also make us dissatisfied with this

world and therefore cause us to desire to be right in our relationship to the spiritual world and God. Such troubles are to lead us to feel and see the need of God, and so to seek to be conformed to the mind and image of Christ.

But we must be careful, for we could allow trouble to harden our heart in sin and result in complaints against providence. This is why we need the Spirit of God to enable us to profit by the holy influences of trials. This conception of the *end* of a trial should lead us to accept it with *patient submission* since it is sent not as vindictive punishment but as purifying chastisement. We are to seek grace in order to respond to the trial profitably. Remember, for God to prepare us for His glorious coming, the End Time will be given to tribulation.

As we have observed, the End Time, on the eve of the Rapture, will be the greatest hour for troubles and trials, in order to bring about the most precious inward fruit of the heart and nature and character of God's remnant. Likewise, we should understand that each trial in one's life will have its own end time, and one's life will also have its own end time. The trials at the end of one's Christian life will be the most important, and perhaps the greatest testings to resolve the Christ life within. We reiterate that the best of men have some dross ever making necessary afflictions, troubles, and



fiery trials.

The key to trials is understanding that the trying is for the Christian life. The wicked will not understand, but the wise will understand. Paul declares in Hebrews 12:11, “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” Yes, “for many shall be purified, and made white, and tried.” It is through the End-time troubles that God is preparing the precious fruit for His Son, and for His children to one day soon be caught up through a Rapture out of the trouble.

### Conclusion

“Many shall be purified, made white, and tried.” These words describe the order and steps of this end of purity of heart and life. The troubles bring about a purifying; they bring about a whitening, and they bring about a trying (of fire). Tribulations are intensely unique to each individual, so much so that perhaps no other individual would know what constitutes an individual’s greatest trial. That which would be a sore trial to one, would be as nothing to another. We may tell to others a few surface trials, but that which forms *the* trial of our soul we very seldom tell to anyone but God.

It is important to search the Scriptures to see if our peculiar trials are depicted there. If so, this can

lead to great disclosures of light and truth for our trial. Trials should bring the holy soul to wider and keener spiritual vision. While tribulation is not loved, yet it shows the child of God his need of greater sympathy, compassion, and tenderness for others. Tribulation without being in the Holy Spirit will cause us to sour, harden, and embitter the heart and life. But if we are *in* the Spirit through these End-time trials, He will soften the speech and mellow the feelings and heart toward God and toward others. Once again we read in Hebrews, “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (12:11).

The Troubles of the End Time, brought about by man and his sins, and brought through the providences of God, are vastly increasing, and are all falling upon the saints. This is God’s way of making ready His people, for “many shall be purified, and made white, and tried.”

In our next *Straightway* issue, we will witness three final aspects from Daniel’s final prophecies: (1) “The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand”; (2) “But the wise shall understand”; and, (3) “Blessed is he that waiteth.”

May God prepare us for what is ahead in our country and make us wise for these days with His wisdom.