

# Audio Sermon: I Will Come Again

by Leonard Ravenhill

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*Leonard Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the promise of Jesus' return and the urgent need for believers to spread the Gospel in a dark world.*

**Duration:** 1:06:15

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, Revelation 1:7, Revelation 22:20

**Topics:** "Second Coming", "Christian Living"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the anticipation of the return of Jesus Christ, highlighting the need for purity and readiness among believers. It discusses the signs of the times, the hope and assurance found in Christ's promise to come again, and the importance of living in holiness and obedience in expectation of His return.

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## Transcript

Gospel as recorded by John, the 14th chapter, one of the best-known chapters in the book, and one of the best-known verses in the chapter. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. If you are here, you remember, and if not, let me remind you that in the past two weeks we have dealt with texts that had just three words in them.

The first one was the word of the Lord Jesus when he died on the cross and he said, it is finished. We call them the three most important words that were ever uttered in history, it is finished. Last week we dealt with three words that superseded those three words.

They were the words again of an angel, he is risen. They completed what he had begun on the cross. Today we have four words, though we could reduce them to three if we took the book of the revelation, and in the four simple words, we have this exciting statement of Jesus, I will come again.

Whatever level you look to on the, in the world outside, economically, economically, morally, even spiritually, socially, internationally, whatever level you look on, the outlook is dark, but the outlook is glorious. One of the old men in the Old Testament said, I shall see him, prophetically speaking, I shall see him but not now. It is a prophetic word concerning the Lord Jesus, I shall see him but not now, I shall know him but not now, I shall see him, I think the word is I know not when, a star will arise out of Jacob that shall rule my people Israel.

So again I say the outlook is exceedingly dark, the outlook is exceedingly glorious, because we're the only one that have a star in the sky. And you remember that when the sky was dark, those wise men followed that star and they found the Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing more glorious, surely to the believer, the anticipation of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And yet I confess to you that as I meditated over this, I kind of saw a cloud over this pulpit, and over every pulpit in the land. Not a white cloud, not a small cloud, not a thin cloud, a heavy cloud, a black cloud. A cloud I think with judgment, a cloud that I think I could say for my own comfort easily, though it's not comfortable, I'm comfortable to say it's a cloud of condemnation.

Just one thing that makes this joyful anticipation of Jesus Christ, it kind of smears it for a little for me. It takes a little of the dullness off the excitement of it. Because in speaking of the return of Jesus, Luke says amongst many other things that he's describing, that one thing must happen before the Lord Jesus comes, and this is it.

You see I'm going to tell you in a very limited way about the second coming of the Lord Jesus. The shadow is this, there are millions in the world haven't heard about the first coming of Jesus. And this is our shame.

If we were really excited about his coming, we'd just bend every energy that we have, that nobody will be sitting in darkness as far as possible before this great event, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Did you notice last week they had, was it last week, they had a Veterans Day which normally would be this week. And the government has decreed now that this anniversary is going to be held again on the 11th day of this 11th month.

After World War I there was an armistice signed. It wasn't a true settlement, it was an armistice, which means there's a cessation of hostilities. It was signed at 11 o'clock in the morning on the 11th day of the 11th month, 11 months after Allenby entered Jerusalem, 11 months from the signing of the armistice with Turkey.

Now there you have a sequence of five 11s in 1918 or dawning into 19. Five 11s in succession. Would it be unreasonable to say that God was telling us that humanity is entering into the 12th hour of human history? It's dark today.

When man turned his back on the Garden of Eden, he began the human race downhill and it's become increasingly dark, dark and increasingly vicious from that day to this. You've seen pictures maybe of fates, I suppose, on TV of a man trying to get out of a quagmire or sinking sand. And the more he struggles, all he does is go down quicker and finally you see him just sucked down in the vortex of that horrible thing.

And so to use a children's story again, man is trying to still, trying still to put Humpty Dumpty together again and he just can't do it. Man is made for God. To quote H.G. Wells again, that little arrogant man who strutted before World War II and said that his bunch of intellectuals who happened to be very superior men, including George Bernard Shaw, they'd formed the Fabian Socialist Society.

Why, it was a peaceful world. There hadn't been much trouble in the world, certainly no world war. One of the signs of the end of the age was not only war, but nation lifting up sword against nation.

That didn't happen till World War I anyhow. But he was strutting around two years before World War I telling us that by intellectual and biological processes that men could make a new world order. He didn't

talk about sin and redemption, he talked about the adequacy of materialism, the sufficiency of man, the inevitability of progress.

Aren't those high sounding words? But remember he did live to see the horror of World War II, which is a lofty compared to what the next blast will be. But before we got through World War II, he had already written another book which was mind at the end of its tether. And he did not say there's hope for mankind, he said man is incurably evil, there is no cure for him.

He did say one thing that was intelligent about all as far as I'm concerned. He said there is a God-shaped blank in every man. There is a cavity in there which God alone is able to fill.

Education cannot fill it, science cannot fill it, wealth cannot fill it, success cannot fill it, achievement cannot fill it. There is a blank in that. We used to sing a hymn many years ago written by Dean Alford, if I remember right, from Greenland's icy mountains.

And he talks, he visualizes the heathen and he says the heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone. There are people foolish enough to say, you know, leave the heathen alone, they're all right, they're content. Well you can be sure that nobody has ever seen heathendom in its raw nature that ever utters a foolish statement like that.

They panic, they're afraid, death is terrible. They still tear their hair, they still beat themselves up, they still pay exorbitant things to their witch doctors, they still offer even human blood. And yet again I say that that world outside, this great lost world is a kind of a millstone around our neck.

So today we have not three words, we have four words. Jesus says, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also. So first of all we have the promise given by the Lord Jesus Christ, I will come again.

Well there are different ways of saying that. You can say, I will come again. Or you can change the emphasis, say I will come again.

Or you can change it and say this, I will come again. There's no question in my mind that what this was the hope of the church, the early church, and to some degree it is the hope of the church of Jesus Christ. In fact it is the hope of the church of Jesus Christ today, whether we recognize it or not.

So first of all I have the promise of his coming, Jesus says, I will come again. This promise is personalized, because it says in Acts chapter 1 verse 11, when the disciples saw Jesus going up, and they did not want him to go, and one of the angels said, the men standing there said, wait a minute don't be worried about this, this same Jesus will also come in like manner as you have seen him go. So we have the promise, we have it personalized, it is this same Jesus.

We have the proclamation given by the Apostle Paul, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ. I've got a daddy and mommy in the cemetery. I had an old friend in England and people used to say, oh I hope I'm alive when Jesus comes.

He said, I hope I'm dead. What do you want to be dead for? Because the dead in Christ shall rise first, the word of God says. They're going to get a start on us.

I'm going to be caught up to meet them with the Lord in the air, and so shall we be forever with the Lord. So we have a promise of his coming from Jesus, we have this personalized and emphasized by the disciples, this same Jesus shall also come in like manner. We have the proclamation given by the Apostle himself, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout.

The promise, personalized, proclaimed, and prophesied over and over and over again in what we call the four Gospels. Emphasized, repeated, lest we become slack and careless about this. Now it's good for us to remember, we do believe, I'm sure you do, I don't have to labor this point, that the same Jesus that went stepping up the clouds is going to come down on the clouds.

You see, you say there's nothing wonderful or very new about that. No, but I've heard preachers say this, the second coming of Jesus Christ is when he comes into your heart and you're born again. That's the second coming.

There's no kingdom, it's just when you're born again, that's when he comes. All others have said the second coming is, is at the resurrection, when the Lord Jesus comes to call us out of the grave. In other words, they depersonalize the visible appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this subject is vast, we could spend every Sunday of the year on it. I remember being with some preachers a while ago and one of them said, you know, I wish Jesus would come today. The other one said, I don't.

Well I do, and another fellow said, I know why, you'll just run your church into a hundred and fifty thousand dollar debt and you wish he'd come today to get you off the hook, that's all. Now what is the motive for his coming? You see, it does not matter which part of this, this part of eschatology, you know, pardon me, of theology is called eschatology. All right, it's concerning the things that are still going to happen.

The two words concerning the Lord Jesus, it is finished, it was in the past. He is risen, it is in the past. I will come again is in the future.

There were not many people saw Jesus die. It was too, uh, it was too horrid to watch people die. Too morbid for most people.

There's nothing to go outside to go guffer, they were always crucifying men. Why go again anyhow? Not many people saw Jesus die. Not many people, in fact, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was private, personal property to the disciples.

He never bothered to manifest himself to the world. It was a secret rising only for the church. But the death is in the past, the resurrection is in the past.

That, the coming, is in the future. Every man from Adam, right down to the last babe born before Jesus, he's going to turn his eyes in that direction because the word of God says, every eye shall see him. And all the nations of the earth are going to bow down to him.

See him as the king of kings and as the Lord of Lords. Now again, immediately you talk about the coming of Jesus, you get schools of theology, and if you stress one, other people turn up their nose, and if you don't have theirs, they turn up their nose. So where are you? You've got people who today are excited about a pre-tribulation rapture.

You know, we're not going to suffer. Oh, the Lord won't let one hair of our heads be hurt. Well, it says that in the 18th verse of the 21st chapter of Luke, that there shall not a hair of your head perish.

The only thing, just before that, he says, some of you will be killed. Now what do you do about it? Do you think God's concerned about your hair? Do if he is, I'd better get a better one. I'll get some more hair, I'm growing up through it, it's getting thin or something.

You see what he's saying is this, your hair or anything else does not matter. You've got something which is eternal. Now you get people saying, you know, things are getting worse and worse.

Well, I don't think you need to be too smart to say that. Twice in the last week, I've heard one of the national broadcasters say, well, that's the end of the bad news. You know, when Satan starts casting out Satan, you're in trouble.

When some of the devil's children start ringing the alarm bells, we'd better watch out. Well, I hope Jesus comes before the great tribulation. Yeah, I guess you do.

I don't know whether we sell it. There's a book by George Ladd called The Blessed Hope. He destroys that pre-tribulation theory pretty, pretty quickly.

He gives it no foundation at all, I guess. He's very strong on the fact that the church will go through the tribulation. And I suggest to you that if you were living in Russia today, in a concentration camp or China, and you hadn't seen your darling wife for 10 years, and the last thing you hear is she's walking around with two new sons you don't know a thing about.

She'd become the servant of the state. And your daughter at 16 had been pulled out of your hands, and your boy at 18 had been taken away. And you've lived in misery, and you're living in filth, and you're sleeping in your own urine every night.

And the men that come out as fierce as tigers, and they brutalize you every time they come in. I think God would excuse you if you thought you were in personally in the great tribulation. You know, if I were to wear green glasses and go out there, everything would be green.

And you know, in America, and England, and a few countries, we live in such creature comforts, we think God's going to have to shift the Rocky Mountains and blast everything under our feet before tribulation comes. There are some who are still in great tribulation. I've reminded you before about my friend.

A very famous missionary, a book is written about him, and I asked him where he had been, and he said I'd been with a friend of mine. Did you have a good time? No, no I didn't. He said he upset my theology, upset my thinking, because he had just come through Taiwan.

He had been a missionary in China, when China fell in the 1920s somewhere there, or later when the Communists took over. He said he went down into this particular place where these people were working, and he spoke to this China man who turned his head away, and he spoke in his own language. He spoke a second time, and thirdly, he said, listen, you don't recognize me.

I've got fatter, and I'm bald, and I'm older, but I'm your pastor, and so and so. The man, he said, had tears in his eyes, and he turned on him and said, you're a false prophet. He said, call me anything but that.

What do you mean I'm a false prophet? Well, didn't you have a great big map at the back of your preaching? Didn't you have a great big sign, Russia in red? Didn't you have great big arrows with murder, and rape, and pillage, and plunder, and all those other things on them, sweeping down into China? Yes. And didn't you tell us that we live to see Communists come down our streets, and rape our women, and burn our churches, and tear our bibles up? Yes. And didn't you tell us that just as it was happening, we would be raptured, and not one thing would happen to us? My wife was dragged out of my arms, screaming.

My son was put in a truck with a man's big boot behind him to get him in. My terrified daughter was taken away. We saw our churches go up in smoke, and our bibles just torn to shreds.

And you told me that would happen, but you said you'll be raptured. No rapture happened. I've lived in misery since.

Somebody came through this area a few years ago, and said they'd seen my wife with two little boys, and asked, well they're my children, who do you think you are? They were born for the state. He said, you might, if you'd cut a knife, put a knife in, and rip my heart out, I'd rather have heard that than hear that my wife had become subject to the filth of those brutes. When I mentioned that in Canada, a man who had gone through the Russian Revolution said, the hardest thing for me to put up with was not the communists, it was the preachers.

They said Russia is going to run with blood. Don't worry, that's not for you. You believers are going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

There's going to be no punishment, no suffering, no hardship. They'd lost sight of the martyrs, people burned at the stake, and brutalized for his sake. He didn't rapture them.

You see, there are many things that have to happen. As I say, it would take a month of Sundays to describe the things the Word of God says must happen before the Lord Jesus Christ comes. But to me, one of the most serious challenges of all is this, that the Gospel must first be preached to all nations, then the end cometh.

It's a very serious charge that's laid against us. Well then, the theory that Jesus comes when we're born again doesn't hold water, because he's going to come in the clouds. Or that we come from our graves.

No, no, no, that is not. This same Jesus shall also come in like manner as ye have seen him go. And Luke says of the lightning, night and the thunder, one part of the heaven unto the other part of them.

So shall the Son of Man be in his coming. Now what do we usually stress about the coming of the Lord Jesus? We always stress it, it seems to me, on the ground level. One of the particular scriptures is this, as it was in the days of Noah.

And I don't think there's any doubt about it, that those sons of those evil men that came down and produced children by women were demon-possessed people. They had spirit power. There's no question in the days of Lot that the earth was given up to corruption, and now we change the word.

It's a smooth, easy word, homosexuality. In the Bible it's called sodomy. It's a damnable thing in the sight of God.

Today we're almost legalizing it. A woman was accepted into the ministry. Well, I wouldn't kick too much against that.

I don't think that's the job. I don't think there's any scripture for it. There might be some women who prophesy now and again.

But recently the Episcopal Church admitted two women into the priesthood, and one of them is a pronounced lesbian, and she defends the gay rights. There's a church up in, the Metropolitan Church in Dallas, where when you go in there's somebody, David Wilkerson has an expose of this. He sent one of his men to see what was happening, and as they went in they were given a brochure, and it had naked centerfolds of men, and it had all the gay clubs of Dallas area outlined.

And do you know what it said at the end of that thing? He records it, and it actually happened. This man says, yes, God says he had condemned men who burn in lust one toward another, but that won't be us, because we were born this way. And he actually says, get filled with the Holy Ghost and enjoy your homosexuality.

Did you ever think you'd live to a day when such vileness would be proclaimed from the pulpit? My Lord, I'd expect that in Las Vegas. I'd expect it in Hollywood, but to hear it pronounced from the pulpit? Oh yes, there's no question about it. We've hit an all-time low in morality.

We've hit an all-time low in politics. Right now we're worried there might be something that will follow Watergate, which will be worse than Watergate, Creagate, and they're trying to hide it. This week a man got exemption because he wouldn't spill the beans, and maybe rightly so, because there's so much to uncover that we want to keep secret.

He gets more and more plain to me, this, you either live in the kingdom of this world, or you live in that kingdom, and you can't bridge the two very well. You can't stand with a foot in either of them. The kingdoms of this world, and the kingdom of Satan, they're diametrically opposed to each other.

Right now the great problem is the problem of what we're going to do with that marvelous little country called Israel. It's so big you could drop it in one of the great lakes, and yet it's a thorn in the flesh. There are not as many Jews in Israel as there are in America.

There are less Jews in America than there are in Russia. Russia just about beats us in that area. But here is a little country, a thorn in the flesh.

Menachem Begin, the new, the new prime minister is constantly reciting the scripture. He holds on to the scripture. He thumps the people with the scripture.

And it was interesting last week to hear Mr. Carter say on at least two occasions, he said, look I'll commit, not spiritual or moral or physical, but I'll commit political suicide before I let Israel down. Well I think that's a very brave statement, and if he does it, I feel he'll be honored, though I'm afraid it might trigger off another war too. But you see we have this nation, this, this thorn in the side of all nations.

The Jews wanted a, a place of their own. They got it through the Balfour Declaration, and I'm glad that they got it. But they're a sign, a sign to the nations.

This is what the Word of God says. You may try to destroy the Jew, you can't do it. There was a time when the Incas numbered about, numbered about five million.

One of the greatest tribes of Indians that I know of, the Incas, where are they today? They've gone. The Jews, they have been less than five million on more than one occasion, but you can't erase them. You can't find the Incas.

The Incas thought the Jews have never been a warlike nation. Until recently, they, they, they've had no coins of their own. Since Old Testament days, now they have a currency, now they have stamps, now they have an air force, now they have a navy, now they're building up.

And one of the signs the Word of God says, that when you see Jerusalem compassed with armies, it says in this 20th verse of the 21st chapter, when you see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. But these, let me read these things that the Word of God tells us about the near coming of Jesus. The disciples asked when shall these things be? What shall be the sign wherever thou speakest that shall come to pass? And he said, take heed that ye be not deceived, for many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ, as the time draweth near, go ye not therefore after them.

But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified, for these things must first come to pass, but the end is not by and by. Then said he unto them, nations shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and great earthquakes shall be in divers, or many places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights, and great signs shall be from heaven. But before all these, they shall lay hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues, into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers, for my name's sake.

He goes on to say you shall be put to death. He goes on to say when Jerusalem is surrounded with armies. He goes on to say in the 25th verse of this 21st chapter of Luke, there shall be signs in the sun, in the moon, in the stars, and upon the earth, distress of nations with persecutions and perplexities.

And the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for the looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in clouds with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, begin to come to pass, then lift up, then look up, and lift up your heads, for behold your redemption doth nigh.

Paul gives it to Peter in this language again, this now also in the last days, perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those of the good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof, and from such he says, turn away. Then he goes on to say, thou hast fully known my doctrine, my manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions and afflictions, which came to me at Antioch and so forth, and yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Okay, that's one other aspect. So as we see this distress of nations with perplexities, again that country of South Africa that has stood so long is in danger now in my judgment of falling like a, a lot of dominoes, you flick the first one, the man does this on TV and 2,100 dominoes just go around like that and they fall, fall, fall, and I think this domino theory is going to work there too. Suddenly the United Nations got a bit of

conscience and decided to jump on South Africa I noticed they didn't jump on Idi Amin.

I read this week a review of the book of one of the statesmen that said I saw 150,000 bodies floating on the lake. I saw doctors pulled out of surgery and brutalized and murdered on the streets. I saw judges pulled out in their robes and they were put to death before people.

One of the wives of Amin was dismembered and then her body, the members of her body were sewn back in reverse order and the body was exhibited to warn others of what might happen to them. But I haven't seen any condemnation of him hardly, at least nobody's ganged up. Of course we've ganged up on Rhodesia.

Saying that to pass over the political aspect but these are the uneasy things, these are monsters we're dealing with and nobody knows the answer. And more than once Mr, Mr Carter has teetered on the edge of saying look Amin, I'm in a state of confusion, I don't know which way to go, how can he know which way to go? These things are all outlined, we need to remember them and keep them clear before our own eyes. Let me go now to the scripture that really, two scriptures that really matter about this.

One is in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians and in chapter 4 and verse 15 he says this, for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we be forever with the Lord. Now what is Jesus coming, who is he coming for? Again you've got six different theories about this, he's coming for his church.

Whether he comes before the tribulation, mid-tribulation, post-tribulation, right now I'm not concerned. Who is he coming for? He's coming for believers. He's coming for a bride.

Well then the argument is who makes up the bride? You see there's one thing I'm very sure of, I think you are too, in the parable that's given of the ten virgins and remember they were all virgins, what happened? Well they were all asleep. Number two they all had lamps, number three all their lamps were lit but some of them said our lamps are going out, not gone out as the authorized version says, our lamps are going out. Well why do you light a lamp? Well he lights a lamp in the darkness.

Some of them had lamps, some had not. Now they were all virgins but they did not all go into the marriage, it doesn't say they were the bride even. It's assumed on the basis of an oriental wedding the bridegroom had already gone in, that's what he'd done, he'd gone in.

And the door was shut, he was in with his bride. Five of the virgins had gone in, the other five were not there. Now I remember going to Martha's home in Ireland, they used to have servants and whatnot and I remember a maid would gather all the lamps in the morning, refill them, they were burning low and I watched her cut those wicks, change the wicks or trim the wicks as they said.

Now the oil in that vessel surely is a type of the Holy Spirit, the wick surely must be a type of faith which draws on the Holy Spirit, but faith can get clouded, faith can get lazy, faith can get unexpected. Who is the bride? The only recorded prayer at the end of the Old Testament, of the New Testament is the Spirit and the bride. The last prayer of the Holy Ghost, the prayer of the Holy Ghost is come, actually the Greek is come thou.

The last statement of Jesus is not about the world being on fire, it's not about wars and rumors of wars, it's not about great earthquakes, there was an earthquake in China months ago that we're told destroyed three quarters of a million people. We're told that we shot a thing up in the sky there, one of those amazing contraptions we have these days, satellites that can take a photograph of anything on earth, but I noticed they never produced a photograph of that great earthquake. Did you happen to see one of the great outstanding men of government say two weeks ago with a face as though he were announcing the death of the nation, he said we've got so much stuff floating up in space that the Russians have put something up which we call a killer satellite, which can neutralize every satellite we have there.

We put billions and billions and billions of material up in the sky, we can spy on Russia, we know where their armies are marching, we know where their silos are, we know where they're going to shoot rockets in there, and suddenly this man says they've got a thing that can go like that and liquidate everything we ever put in the sky. And yet the last words are not about anguish and the travail the nations are going into, sure they're going into travail. 40,000 Jews that thought they'd found the promised land pulled out of Israel last year.

20,000 new lots of folk went in for sure. But the Word of God says, and I think it's in the future as far as I read it, that Jacob's trouble, the time of Jacob's trouble is still to come. I say listen, when you talk about this scene of the second coming, I hear somebody say one night, well bless the Lord, drive carefully before you get home tonight, the Lord may come, hallelujah.

Then he says, listen to me tomorrow night, I'm going to tell you about the rebuilding of Jerusalem. What, they're going to build it before you get home? They'd have to if the temple has to be rebuilt before the Lord comes, they'll have to build it before you get out of your car, that would be a bit of smart engineering. All the theories we come up with, yes sir there are some dreadful things.

What about the Antichrist? Well John says, back in those days you see the world is Antichrist, systems are Antichrist. Well is there going to be a person Antichrist? One school of scholarship says yes, the other says no. One school goes back and says, remember what John says, in this day in which he lived there were many Antichrists.

Well read a bit about Antiochus Epiphanes and see what happened in it, read a chapter or two about Nero and see what he did with the Christians will you. If you have to see your precious wife dipped in oil and put around the Colosseum and set on fire at midnight to be a torch, would you say, well of course things will get worse than this, might happen to me. You wouldn't say that.

If you saw your wife standing in an arena with a babe at her breast and they said, look your wife will be eaten and that babe will be chewed up in front of your eyes if you don't say three simple words, Caesar is Lord. But if you say them, we'll call your darling wife back and you can live a happy ever after. What are you going to do? Now you wouldn't be a brute and say that Jesus, that Christ is Lord, would you? And a man had to stand there and make, you and I not demanding, demands are not made like that on us, God help us.

What would you do if they were? Well I don't think you could read every bit about Foxe's book of martyrs to your children, but I'm glad I read it when I was a teenager, changed my life. We're the most lush, easygoing, comfortable Christians the world has ever known. Man, there was a conflict in those days.

There's a conflict now in certain countries, not in our country so much, thank God, nor does opposition. Antichrist, let's mention three and pass. The antichrist system, sometimes I look at a map of North Africa, I take a globe in my hands, there's that vast Sahara desert, then there's a northern part there, up out there what, Antibes and those places, they were, they came up in the second world war.

Do you know once right across northern Africa there was a string of churches on fire for God? Do you know how they went out? They were slaughtered by the sword of Mohammed, that's how they went out. And under the desert sands of North Africa there was, there was once an apostolic thriving church and it was massacred by Mohammedan power. And men were given special privileges in heaven because they liquidated the Christians.

The second great religious power was Rome. It's very compatible to some people today that she's drunk with the blood of the saints and don't you make any mistake about it in judgments coming, you read the book of the revelation. In my book she's still the great whore, she's still the imitation of the true church.

Whatever God does, Satan counterfeits. The greatest miracle this side of eternity possibly knew in me is that we're regenerated, that we become children of God by faith in Jesus Christ with a heart that is cleansed and the spirit indwelling us. That's God's supreme miracle in us because of Calvary.

But Satan has an imitation for regeneration, it's reincarnation. And you have men on TV talking about it, how many times they've been in the world and so reincarnation is a substitute for regeneration. God has given us divine healing, Satan gave us Christian science.

We were in a shopping mall this week and the man came past us picking up cigarette ends and doing things and I said hi and my friend said hi, the Lord loves us all. He said yes he does. I said do you know the Lord? He said yes, yes I'm a spiritist Baptist.

I said you know what? Oh we commune with the dead you know, we baptize people. But he said you know that chapter up there that talks about, because he got it all wrong, he talked about Ahab instead of Agag and that was about as clear as his theology was. But that poor man was as confused as it was possible to be.

God has given us the Holy Spirit, Satan has given us demon spirits. God has given us Christ, Satan has given us Antichrist. God has given us a true church, Satan gave us the Church of Rome.

It has no foundation in the Word of God. It's very acceptable to many people these days for sure, but it's still a fake. And the church went up and you read about the Spanish Inquisition, you see where the church is in the minority, the Church of Rome, she's a lamb.

Where she's in equality, she's a fox and where she is in superiority, she's a tiger. When she asserts her power again, the world will surely shake under the power, there's no question about that. And then after those two horrible powers of Mohammedism and Romanism, you have the third and the worst perhaps to some degree, and that is communism.

I forget to what degree it advances, somebody gave us some statistics recently that were terrifying. Somehow Mr. Carter believes that Russia has had a change of heart and he can make a deal with her, and yet if you're going to read the Word of Prophecy, you know it's very, very different. Russia is going to come swarming down.

Another thing that's a tributary to the second coming of Jesus, apart from Antichrists and apart from wars and apart from earthquakes, surely is this monstrous thing that's yet to happen, the most devastating war, when it's going to take seven months to bury the dead after the Holocaust. All the nations of the earth are terrified. What is Russia after now? She's after oil, more than gold.

If Mr. Carter moves one way, the second greatest seller of oil to us will dry up, and that is Africa. If he goes all the way with the Jews, the way that the Arabs will strangle us is to withhold their oil, and they can rush us into an economic and very disastrous situation. All these pressures are there, and yet despite wars and rumors of wars, despite the fact that Antichrist will come as a person, you say, all right, there are Antichrist systems.

Yes, there are. I got a new brochure this week from David Wilkerson. He's been sending a series out.

His new one is on the rush of suicides amongst teenagers under 18 years of age. 38,000 committed suicide last year in America alone. He's dealing with American statistics.

38,000. The rise of pornography. Evil men wax worse and worse.

They delight in it. They live evil, they think evil, they plan evil, they sell evil, and yet when he comes to the end of the chapter again, it's not wars, it's not rumors of wars. The Lord is concerned about two things, God Almighty, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is concerned about two things mainly.

One is the bride for his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the other is the gift that he's going to give his son. Is Jesus coming just to snatch us out of trouble? Can I put it in quotes, is that all he's bothered about? Is the supreme concern of God that I don't, the hair of my head isn't touched, or I don't lose a limb, or I don't end up for 10 years in a stinking prison, not getting a bath once in three years, hardly getting decent food, suffering for his name's sake? Is he just going to snatch me out of that? Well, it sure would be wonderful, but there's something more important than that to the Father. Number one, it is that his son has a bride, the bride.

The second thing is, and I think we ought to read it every week, I suggest you do, and I will this coming week, that we ought to read that second psalm. In some ways it's the most prophetic psalm for the days in which we live. Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, God shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon his holy hill.

Now, why do the heathen rage? Now, that does not mean heathen as we think of them in foreign countries. The other word that's translated heathen there is Gentiles. Why do they imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords.

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Why do the heathen rage? The heathen there being again Gentile nations, not just heathen as we think of them.

And why do they rage? This is a great song, disturbed, making a noise, they're angry against the Lord, and against it. Read the whole psalm through, will you? Let me step back a minute there to the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, chapter 4, where he says, The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of the archangel. Well, there can't be much speaking about that, can there? You say, but Peter says he's coming as a thief in the night.

Sure, because the thief doesn't serve notice that he's coming. The emphasis should not be on the thief, the emphasis should be on the darkness. That's why they lit their candles, that's why they lit their lamps.

It was midnight when the cry came, behold the bridegroom cometh. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of the archangel, with a trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Revelation 1, 7, Revelation chapter 1, verse 7, gives an amplification of that clouds.

Behold he 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. But what about the preparation? Step now to the end, will you, of revelation in the 22nd chapter there. It says in verse 17, the spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is a thirst come, and whosoever will let him come and take of the water of life freely.

And then verse 20, he which testifieth these things says, surely I come quickly. So here is the last recorded prayer of the church, the spirit and the bride. Those who are blood-washed, those who are living in the place of obedience and submission to him, the bride says come.

Well let me ask you a simple question, you don't have to answer it to me, answer it up there. How many times have you said this week, come Lord Jesus? Hmm? We like Rutherford's hymn, the bride eyes not her garments. How many times have you said Lord Jesus I want you to come, not just to get me out of difficulty, but oh I'm longing, because you see God has promised this earth to his son.

The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as waters cover the sea. The earth is the Lord and the fullness thereof. He's coming to set up his kingdom on earth.

And so the bride says come. The Holy Spirit's only recorded prayer that I remember in the book is, he says come. Because you see he's been working ever since Jesus came into the world, he's been working with a desire to prepare a bride and present that bride to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And not only does he say come, but the bride says come. I think so often of Isaac and that sending Eliezer to find a wife. Goodness as I've said often it's bad enough to find a wife for yourself, but finding a wife for somebody else.

And Eliezer goes and he goes to this lovely girl and she says well I don't know. But he says listen let me tell you about, you know what? This man that runs you is the most gorgeous man in the world. And she describes all his qualities and she says let me give you some samples of what he inherits.

And he undoes one parcel. I forget how many camels he took, camels loaded. And she gapes and gasps and says well what are these? And he says well my dear these are nothing but he just wanted to have a

foretaste and see what these things are.

And I want to tell you about what he's going to inherit. And I want to tell you about God's anointing on him. And I want to tell you all these wonderful things about him.

And he says well let's go. We'd better tell your father we're going. And her father says now look don't, don't, don't, now don't go yet.

You don't know who he is. I mean this could be a fake. You know what these sheiks are.

And this, this fellow doesn't look that smart to me. His long black beard and flashing eyes. I mean he could have a dagger in his back.

Now let's, let's, let's go. She says and her mother says supposing you stay here a few more days. And then just a few, you know, till we check up.

And she says I can't wait. I want to go. And she went.

Remember you Isaac was walking in the field meditating and worshipping. And as soon as she saw him, she didn't say well uh give me 36 hours to think this over. She didn't say uh well you look pretty decent but do you really have diamond mines and gold mines and all these.

There was something in her that responded. And immediately she saw him. In another language of another scripture, whom having not seen we love.

And as soon as she saw him she said that's the man for me. Now there's nobody on earth, I can do it, no one else can, can describe what is going to be the moment you see Jesus face to face. Always sing it and I shall see him face to face.

Everything we dreamed about perfection and holiness and beauty, the spirit was given to him without measure. Then he had unlimited love, unlimited power, unlimited knowledge, unlimited beauty. Everything in creation was made for him.

I read to you last week and let me read the end of it. I read to you that statement of Phillips there in Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 9 where he says for God has allowed us to know the secret of his plan it is this. He purposes in his sovereign will that all human history shall be consummated in Jesus Christ.

Rockefeller never had a dream about that. The stock market never thinks that everything is pointing, it's going in one direction. God says even about evil men, he puts evil men on the throne for his own intentions.

He's going to do something even out of that evil. Now that boggles my mind, I can't think all the devilish things Hitler did will glorify God but they will one day. All human history shall be consummated in Jesus Christ.

But listen to this nice little bit at the end. Everything that exists in heaven or earth shall find its perfection and fulfillment in him. Isn't that beautiful? Well if you lick your lips at that, listen to this.

And here is the staggering thing that in all which one day will belong to him, he's promised us a share in it. Well you didn't disturb heaven with your hallelujahs but thank you. Whatever is in this kingdom in the

future I've got a share in it.

Wouldn't you rather have just a square inch of territory in heaven than a million acres in hell? The hymn writer says well one smile from the sage that I know will through the ages be glory for me. Somebody said to one day to Mr. Wesley when he was grieving over the death of his friend who he said was the holiest man since the apostle Paul, John Fletcher of Maidley. Somebody said Mr. Wesley don't grieve like that.

There's going to be a resurrection, the trumpet's going to sound, he's going to be caught up in the air and you'll see him around the throne. Mr. Wesley said friend you're right. He's so holy if there's a 13th apostle he'll be so near the throne and I'll be so far away.

I'll only see the reflected glory of Jesus in his face. I'll be so far. Now not so many of us are humble like that.

Most of us are going to run up to Jesus and shake hands first of all. Get away apostles and prophets. I've come from Seguin.

Hey Jesus how are you? I just want you to know how good I was. I served you, I tithed and I prayed when I felt like it and I did a few other things and it was convenient. I'm sure I'm going to get a major reward.

A brother said to me the other day, Rayden I've been chewing over that word that when we've done miracles and signs and wonders and preached he's going to say to some I never knew you. Think of it. They've done it in his name.

He said that knocks me cold, it knocks me dead. But some ministries when we get there I never knew you in spite of all you did. You used my name, you used my power.

Well thank God I believe there'll only be a very very small minority. He wants a bride and the bride of course is to be pure. So while it says in the 16th verse of 1 Thessalonians 4, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, we'll all be caught up and so forth.

But wait a minute, what about, what proceeds there? He says in verse 1 of that same chapter, ye ought to walk to please God. He says in verse 3, this is the will of God even your sanctification, that is we've got a purified heart. And in the first epistle in chapter 3, the first epistle of John 3 he says, he that hath this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure.

Nothing that defile us will be accepted. The very God of peace sanctify you all he says in 1 Thessalonians 5 23, the next chapter. If you're going to be part of the bride rejoice evermore and pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks.

You see the most, the cleansing and stabilizing, preserving, keeping power of holiness, is what we shall need if we're going to be caught unawares. Oh there are plenty of signs, I think all the signs are flashing now, the state of Israel, the moral collapse, the exalting of filth, depravity, suicides, drunkenness. There's not been a chapter written like this amongst any civilized people since the days of the Romans and they hadn't as much as we have.

They didn't flick it into your home anyhow down a tube at night. They didn't have girly magazines and all the filth we have, they didn't have gay clubs and gay bars and all the rottenness that we have around. But again don't think as far as we're concerned the reason the Lord Jesus is coming, he's coming for a bride,

he's coming for a chosen purified people.

And God is going to see this world is going to be cleaned up and people say I can't wait till I get to heaven. You're better because we're going to reign on the earth with him the word of God says. He's going to set up his kingdom.

In the millennial age he's going to rule with the Lord of I and everything's going to be in total subjection to him. And there's going to be a final kingdom and he shall reign. The good book says reign forever and ever as the king of kings and of the Lord of lords.

I've told this story let me tell it again if you don't need it I think I do about a couple in the World War II in England. This story isn't in a book, it preaches by books of illustration so they'll have the sermons out but this is a book of illustration. It's concerning a young couple and the young man thought he was secure he couldn't be drafted and he went along in this happiness for a long while and one day sure enough he got his draft papers and he said to his girlfriend I got some news she said what what we're going to fix the day of the wedding? No no he said no wedding.

What do you mean no wedding? I got my draft papers and I've got to go the day after tomorrow. Oh that's all good everything.

I said I'll tell you tomorrow we'll go to town and and I'd like to help you select all your all the wedding gear and so they went to town she got everything she needed you know beautiful ensemble all the out things she needed took them home he kissed her goodbye that night he went away and he wrote faithfully every week for about two years then the letter stopped she began reading the old ones she began to get discouraged and then one day when she got home her mother handed a telegram from the war office saying that this boyfriend George was missing belief killed the girl said I don't believe that somehow I don't believe he was killed I'll still hope but down the street there was a young man who didn't have to go to the war and he was pretty well off financially and eventually he he asked

just to take her for a walk and she said well you could walk to church with me and he did this a few times and one day he said you know really Mary I talked with your mother and she said you did get a notice from the war office that George isn't coming back that he's dead she said I believe it but you haven't heard for two years well I I still think he might come no no no look why don't you get look I I can I can supply you with everything I've got the money I can buy the home you can choose the furniture do as you like I love you but she kept him at arm's length and one night she came home from work and told her mother I hadn't felt good today and I I should go to church tonight Wednesday but I won't go and I I don't want to see anybody I'll go upstairs and I'll just bathe and rest and

she went upstairs and being depressed she got more depressed when she thought about her boyfriend and then she she thought well in his last letter he said I love you and I'll be back to see you and she said well all right I'll tell you what I'll cheer myself up so she she went and put on a wedding dress and she got a picture in her arm like this she was sitting in front of a vanity with this picture looking at him and reading his last love letter and then reading another one and thinking about him and reading the love letters and getting all hot and stirred up and thinking oh if he came he will come he will come I know he'll come downstairs a man knocked at the door and when the mother opened the door there was a soldier and he went come here George he looked around he said Mary Mary

where is she is she ill no is she married no she's upstairs she she isn't very well and she said she didn't want to be disturbed unless it was very important so he said well is this important enough her mother said I think it is her mother went upstairs you know in those old English houses they have keyholes I'd often said you could nearly walk through them never look through them and the mother bent down put her eye like this and look what what in the world's happening my daughter all dressed up for the wedding she went downstairs and she said to the boyfriend uh go upstairs and the room is on the left I just looked through the keyhole Mary's dress don't worry about that didn't say how she was dressed she's dressed and you just open the door gently and they said you know when when you

open that door the the knob kind of groans a bit so open it very quietly and just push it open and just step inside would you do that and he said yes and he did it he opened the door and there she is with his picture and a love letter and she had the door open and she looked through the mirror saw it reflection oh George it's you who said no oh you've come at this hour she turned around and picked up that long bridal dress and she made one step and then she was airborne she was up in his arms and he hugged her he hugged her and hugged her and hugged her well he said you sent me a letter and I've stuck a match many times in the darkness and read that letter I love you and I'll be waiting for you and I'll be ready when you come but he said I didn't think you'd be so ready you know the book

said we're looking for that blessed hope the glorious appearing uh of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ listen there's one thing the world does not have a shred of right now it's hope it has no hope it has no confidence in its own effects it has no confidence in government it has no confidence in money and at the big picture this week it says right now the crash isn't far off everybody comes up with the same thing the crash isn't far off we have a hope we have a star in our sky we have an assurance because he said I will come again because the angel said he would come again because the apostle said he would come again and the spirit's one cry is come Lord Jesus and if I'm part of the bride I say come Lord Jesus and the last thing that Jesus said in this marvelous marvelous book of the

revelation with all that's there it says in verse 20 he which testifies these things says surely I come no no surely I come quickly and the apostle puts an amen he says amen even so come I wonder what he'd think if he came back today 1977 the world drags on and the church is sleepy and she's defiled her garments he that hath this hope it impurities himself he's going to keep as far away from impurity as he can he's going to live right tiptoe on expectation he's going to be in a place of submission he's going to be in a place of obedience he's going to be a place that when he comes he won't blush as the apostle says when he comes we shall not be ashamed at his appearing if he'd come this week would he have caught you somewhere where you'd have been embarrassed would he have caught you

saying something something you wish dear Lord forgive me if I'd known you were coming I wouldn't have said that would he I'm through with this we used to have signs in the houses when I was a kid nearly every house you went into where there's any spirituality said this go to no place where you would not want to be found when Jesus comes do nothing you would not like to be doing when Jesus comes say nothing you would not like to be saying when Jesus comes you know I used to think somebody's carried that card to every house we visited I thought they nailed it ahead of something every house we go in I say mother that's the same thing yes because they're expecting the coming of the Lord they don't want to do anything they wouldn't want to want to say anything they want to say they want to go

anywhere they wouldn't like to be found trim your lamp the word of God says

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/EH5UenhLn4I.mp4>  
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