

## Sermon Notes

*(A basic transcription with modifications for style and clarity)*

### IN THAT DAY

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Brian Orchard, September 16, 2017

It's an interesting time. I'm thinking of just where we are today, if you measure in terms of the annual Holy Day cycle. We are only five days away from the Feast of Trumpets. We're a long way away from Pentecost. So, timewise we're moving up very, very close to the time that signifies, of course, the return of Jesus Christ. Behind us are the days which have pictured events that have already taken place.

All the days in front of us now, picture events that have not yet happened. And we run into four days in very quick succession. They are compounded together, so to speak, and they take us from the return of Christ through to the time when all people will have had the opportunity to be a part of God's eternal family.

The course of human history is about to experience some very dramatic change. Has there ever been, or will there ever be, an event of the magnitude of that which surrounds the return of Jesus Christ when you consider all of the events put together and just simply refer to it as the return of Christ?

God's word is absolutely crystal clear concerning the fact that Christ will return. In the book of Acts chapter 1 for example, just a couple of places that we can pick up on this. Christ has just been forty days talking with the disciples after the resurrection, no doubt explaining to them a great many things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

**Acts 1:9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.**

**10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up,**

It was probably an experience that would make you stand there with your mouth open and look at this spectacle.

**...behold, two men stood by them in white apparel,**

**11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."**

The return of Jesus Christ would be absolutely certain and Christ said so Himself.

**John 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.**

That's an interesting way to begin this thought process to say, "let not your heart be troubled", indicating it may be that there will be some aspect of trouble surrounding what He's talking about, which is His return.

**2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.**

**3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again** (the words of Jesus Christ) **and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.**

The implications of Christ's return are absolutely enormous. It stretches our imagination to try and get our brain around them, get our mind around these things that are pictured in these next four days that are coming up, as I said, very quickly. Satan's reign as the god of this world is terminated! What an event that is! And it's not terminated peaceably with his agreement. It's not a negotiated termination. It's a violent termination. All nations are subdued and brought under the government of God.

Look at the state of the nations today and try and consider what that means in itself. All of these nations, including North Korea, will be brought in under the Kingdom of God, the government of God. All of man's systems will cease. Try and get your brain around that one! All of man's systems that he has devised, apart from God, will cease. God's law will become the standard for all people, all nations.

God has revealed these things to us and I'm just recapping them in very brief form here; we get excited by these ideas. As I say, these things, pictured over the next four days, are ahead of us. They're enormous. They have fantastic implications and we get excited about that! So much so that it is natural to anticipate when these things might come to pass.

The anticipation of when Christ might return has caused, over the years, over the centuries, a great deal of damage to the Church of God. The problems occur when a specific time-frame is attached to the event. It was an issue in Paul's time. He had to address it and it has been an issue in more recent times.

What I'd like to do is just rehearse a little information with you that you're probably well familiar with, but I think it's good to rehearse it. First of all, I want to turn to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the eleventh edition; which I think was the last edition with any decent religious information in it. I'd just like to read a little section, because this is from a secular source, before we go to a more close to home source about an individual by the name of William Miller. He was considered to be a minister in the Church of God at that time. William Miller was born in 1782.

*"In 1831 he began to lecture, arguing that the "two thousand three hundred days" of Daniel 8 verse 14 meant 2300 years, and that these years began with Ezra's going up to Jerusalem in 457 B.C. and therefore came to an end in 1843, and urging*

*his hearers to make ready for the final coming of Christ in that year. To his many followers, after the year 1843 had passed, (and they're all sitting there without Jesus Christ having returned) he proclaimed that 1844 was the year, that his error was due to following Hebrew instead of Roman chronology, and that the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October was to be the day. (Down to the day, October the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1844 was to be time of Christ's return.) There was renewed excitement among Miller's followers; many of them left their business and in white muslin robes, on house tops and hills, awaited the epiphany. (They put on their robes before they were given their robes. But they were determined they were going to meet Christ in white robes.) In spite of disappointment, many still believed with him that the time was near. He returned to Low Hampton and died there on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1849. The Adventists or Millerites, who were formed into a single body in a convention called by him in April 1845, have since separated into several sects."*

That last little piece of information leads me into the book *The History of the True Church* by Dugger and Dodd. The name Dugger is familiar to you. He was a leader of the Church of God. We're talking about the Church of God. I'd like to just share a little of his observations and I'm not sure that every single aspect of what they present is absolutely spot-on. But I think it's close enough that it gives us a sense.

*"While the Sabbath-keepers of Europe were under the fire of persecution, and being driven from one country to another, they were humble and devoted to God. (Under persecution they were focused, as they should have been.) They trusted in the Lord to lead and deliver, and were fervent and instant in prayer, and earnest in spirit. However, after they came to America, and had enjoyed for a hundred years, or more, the religious liberties granted first by the charter of William Penn, and later extended to other colonies, some ceased to pray as earnestly as before, and settled down to a state of formality in worship, depending upon the laws of man for security, instead of the intervening hand of God. Consequently, some began gradually drifting away from the former piety and love for the Bible, and the Bible only, for their faith and practice, and took upon themselves another name besides the one divinely given of God. (That's the name of the Church.) In their history in America this was mainly among the first signs which marked their drift toward the world."*

Now, a little later, they refer to William Miller.

*"William Miller, an earnest prophetic student and minister, was the main leader in the movement of 1835 (Encyclopedia Britannica said that he started in 1831. They say 1835. I don't think that's an important fact.), in which the time of the second coming of the Lord was set. His great enthusiasm for Christ's return, and a partial knowledge of the prophecies, led him to believe the Lord would come in 1844. From the year 1835 onward, this belief gripped the minds of young and old alike. Thousands in every walk of life were anxious to leave the world affairs behind and*

*prepare to meet Jesus. (We're told to pray daily, "thy Kingdom come". We look forward, we anticipate the Kingdom of God.) Commandment observers sprang up in every quarter, and men and women, fired with zeal, went forth with the message depriving themselves of the necessities of life, that precious souls should be won to Christ and prepared to meet him at his coming. When the expected year arrived, the disappointment was bitter."*

It's known in Church history as "the great disappointment" because it didn't happen. Everybody got geared up for it, excited about it. They left their businesses. They left their regular things that were taken care of in their lives to focus on being there on that day when Christ was to return. He didn't, and the results were catastrophic for the Church! Following that there is more information here about the Whites. James White and Ellen G. White (the names associated with the Seventh Day Adventists movement) were involved in the Church of God at that time. Immediately after this bitter disappointment the Whites began to rise in importance within the Church of God and it is stated here:

*"Mrs. Ellen White said, "Before 1844 we were all united in the truth, but since 1844, in the time of perplexion, many new views have sprung up, and darkness and confusion have been the result."*

It took sixteen years to lose the name Church of God. But it did. Sixteen years, the name Church of God disappeared and Seventh Day Adventists appeared.

*"Again we find God's true people, like Israel of old, desiring to be like the nations about them forming an organization with a president, vice president, and the general organization patterned after the civil courts of worldly nations."*

The Church suffered greatly after 1844 when everybody was geared up for the return of Christ and it didn't happen. If we could leave history at that point, it would be one thing. But we can come one step further, can't we? I was coming into the Church in the mid-1960s. At that point in time the Church had not learned the lesson of William Miller in 1844 and began to teach of 1972.

Now, William Miller used material from the Bible to support his calculation of dates. That's what I read out of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. The Church in the mid-60's used material from God's word, primarily 19-year time cycles, to determine that something very special was going to happen in January 1972.

Now, it would depend on where you were as to how that impacted you. I was in Bricket Wood, England from 1968 to 1972 and there was barely a mention. But my parents, my brother and family were in Australia. Evangelists came from Pasadena to the Feast in Australia and preached an entire sermon, proving beyond any shadow of a doubt from God's word that 1972 was the time when the Church would go to a place of

safety in preparation for Christ's return in 1975. So it was believed, very strongly, in certain quarters!

We were married after I graduated from Ambassador College in 1972 and we were sent back to Australia to begin working a ministerial assignment in Sydney. So, in June of 1972, six months after another great disappointment, we arrived in an area of the world that had been totally focused on going to a place of safety in 1972. We were working with people who had stopped taking any medication, who had stopped going to dentists, stopped any forms of insurance. They wouldn't need it beyond January 1972.

I would put the demise of God's Church in Australia as beginning right after January 1972. The mid-1970s were not stellar years for God's Church. Some of you are old enough and have been around long enough to remember what happened in the mid-1970s; a huge dip in the Church and we suffered greatly. I will say, my own personal opinion is that where we are today began in 1972, with the disillusionment, the skepticism that began to form as a result of setting in anticipation and that anticipation failing.

However, the fact remains: Christ is going to return. His return is absolutely certain. The clock is ticking. I wrote that down in my notes and I thought, "I wonder how many actually know that a clock used to tick?" I've just given my age away, haven't I? Time is running out! World events are escalating. We don't have to make that up. We don't have to force that one. You're seeing it. You're observing it every, single day.

So here we sit. As I say, we're five days away from the Feast of Trumpets. In the sense of the timetable of annual Holy Days, we are very close to the time pictured by the Feast of Trumpets. Timewise we are closer to the event than any other Church era has been. Have you thought about it that way? So, how should we deal with it? Firstly, and there will be a number of things that I'd like to cover here as we go along: Firstly, act on what we know, not on what we don't know. Act on what we know. The words of Jesus Christ again:

**Matthew 24:36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.**

The angelic realm doesn't know when Christ is going to return! Christ doesn't know when He's going to return. That doesn't mean that He's not preparing. We'll get to that here in just a little bit. But, Christ knows what He has to do. He knows what will happen, but He's waiting for the Father to say, "Go! Now is the time! Go! Everything that we've planned... Go and put it into place." If the angelic realm doesn't know and Christ doesn't know, wouldn't it be a little presumptuous for us to begin to figure out when? And any time I can see in history that we've done that, it has backfired and it's hurt the Church tremendously.

It is natural for members to desire Christ's return. We're told to pray on a very regular basis, "Thy Kingdom come." And surely you don't have any problem seeing what's happening in this world and going into the privacy of your prayer room and praying "Thy Kingdom come!" Watching what people are going through now (and it's only the tip of the iceberg of what's going to come in the future); it's easy to pray, "Thy Kingdom come." World events, as I say, only increase that desire. It is also natural to desire some kind of timing. It's not unnatural, knowing all of these things are coming, knowing Christ is going to return, going to trigger all kinds of stuff; it's natural to want to have some idea of when. But it is also natural to tie our spiritual lives to a sense of timing. Now, that natural can be carnal natural. It's just natural to do that, too.

In the two examples that we saw, that I just showed you: energy, zeal, enthusiasm prior to the date – disillusionment, skepticism, lethargy, apathy after the time. Here is a little fact of life: we will put off dealing with the hard stuff until we are forced to act. The sermonette spoke about courage. It takes courage to admit that fact to yourself. We will put off dealing with the hard stuff. And what God has called us to do now, at this time, is pretty hard. It's just natural to put it off and keep putting it off until circumstances force us to address it. Christ then drew their attention to Noah:

**Matthew 24:37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.** (And it tells us...)

**38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,**

Now, I don't know that there is any particular problem with the things mentioned here. What it means is, they were just going about their regular lives, not making any changes and not taking into account what Noah was telling them. Because when you read the Book of Peter, he talks about Noah and refers to him as a preacher of righteousness.

Noah had a hundred and twenty years from the time he was told to build the ark to the time the flood came. Now, that's a long period of time in anybody's book. And he didn't do it in secret. How you construct such an object in secret, I wouldn't know. But not only was it the construction that was obvious, but he was telling them why because he had been told what God was going to do to that evil generation. Nobody listened to him. That's what it means. This is why Christ put this in here at this point in Matthew 24. Nobody listened to him! They carried on with their regular lives doing the things that they pleased:

**39 ... until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.**

A warning that there will be people who will not listen, who will not take heed of the times that they are in. Human nature will not do today what it can put off until tomorrow.

If that's not you, then you don't have human nature. It's natural to put off what we can do tomorrow. If we don't know the day or the hour, what do we know?

Well, I'm going to turn to a prophetic phrase. Now, I'm assuming it's a phrase. It's only got three words in it. I'm famous for non-sentences, so this is probably a non-phrase. I'll hear about that on the way home. The prophetic phrase is "in that day". Are we in agreement that it's a phrase? "In that day"...

It could be a time generally covered by the blowing of trumpets, which is the way the Feast of Trumpets is referenced in Leviticus 23. The seventh seal of Revelation opens to reveal seven trumpets. God begins to intervene in the affairs of man with the blowing of the first trumpet. And they are blown in successive order until you get to the seventh trumpet which is signifying the return of Jesus Christ. It was almost a very good week for me this week – almost! Because I wrote the update and I actually put into it a non-sentence and it passed the first editing hurdle unnoticed! It got caught later down the road. That's why I said it was almost a good week. It would have made my week if I had gotten a non-sentence through and published!

**Isaiah 2:2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days**

So that's the subject here, the latter days. It's talking about the establishment of God's government over this earth. That's the general subject matter here.

**11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted *in that day*.**

Here we have some of the events portrayed by the seven trumpets that are blown, as we talked about in Revelation.

**17 The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; The Lord alone will be exalted *in that day*,**

So, there's a period of time that is being covered by this expression "in that day" and it involves the Day of the Lord.

**Isaiah 24:21 It shall come to pass *in that day* that the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones, and on the earth the kings of the earth.**

So, the Day of the Lord can be referenced as "in that day". But it also can be narrowed just a little bit.

**Zephaniah 1:14 The great day of the Lord is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out.**

**15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,**

**16 A day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers.**

As I implied earlier...there's never been anything like this in the course of human history. This is a seismic activity as far as the entirety of the earth and humankind is concerned.

**17 "I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like refuse."**

**Zechariah 14:1 Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst.**

**2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.**

**3 Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle.**

**4 And *in that day* His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,**

This is referring specifically to the return of Jesus Christ and we're going to come up here in a moment to three statements of "in that day". So, whilst it can be the Day of the Lord, "in that day" encompasses the events surrounding the return of Jesus Christ. I find it absolutely fascinating, as you probably do, too, that when you go to Matthew 24 and Luke 21 and the disciples ask Christ: "Let us in on this, what's the scoop? When's all this stuff going to happen that you're talking about here?"

What's the very first thing that Christ references in response? "Don't be deceived! There will be a lot of people running around," he says, "saying that they're speaking on My behalf, saying 'I am the Christos.'" In other words, they are not saying that they are literally the Christ. But they are the appointed ones to stand in for Christ. That's the very first thing He said.

It says here that when Christ returns, His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. There is one individual, a leader of one of the Church of God groups, who is teaching that he is building the headquarters for the entire Church of God worldwide. That all Churches of God are going to come under his domain, his dominion. He is building a campus on a 90 to 100-acre block of land that will be the world headquarters of the Church of God and to that headquarters Christ will return! One problem! It's not on the Mount of Olives! It's in Ohio! Now, Christ may need to go to Ohio first, but He doesn't return to Ohio! I've just been to Ohio. The people in Ohio don't even know where they are. You get off the plane and they say, "Welcome to the Mid-west." I've just flown



from California. Ohio is not “mid” and it’s not “west”. So they don’t have a clue where they are! Christ returns to the Mount of Olives.

**4 ...Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.**

**5 Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You.**

**6 It shall come to pass *in that day* that there will be no light; The lights will diminish.**

**7 It shall be one day which is known to the Lord — neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light.**

**8 And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur.**

**9 And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. *In that day* it shall be — “The Lord is one,” and His name one.**

So, “in that day” can refer to the Day of the Lord and all of the events that take place over that period of time. Or it can refer to the timing of Jesus Christ’s return. Undoubtedly “in that day” is a warning to those who understand its significance. It is something that we need to be aware of and we need to be acting upon that knowledge.

**Luke 21:34 "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.**

Going about the natural, normal way of life in relation to the society in which they are located. This is a good description of the day and age in which we are in and the incredible effect it can have upon us if we let it.

**35 For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.**

Just as when those rains started in the time of Noah, nobody had paid any attention. By the time that rain started, it was too late. They really got the point when Noah went into the ark and God shut him in and shut the door. It comes as a snare to the people of the world! You aren’t in that category! You have knowledge that God has shared with you.

**36 Watch therefore...**

Don't get involved in the cares of this life. And that's one of the reasons why Satan has engineered the society such that he has, that this society grabs our minds. It's like putting it into a vice six days a week. It's hard to snap out of it. It's hard to get your mind away from the cares of this life, the things that have to be done and get your mind back where it needs to be. It's very hard to do that!

**36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."**

Within this is the context of the readiness of God's people. It's not to catch God's people as a snare! God's people are to be ready!

**28 Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."**

Right now, any of you who have taken the time to read the Update will appreciate when the Update was put together. This is a very, very interesting verse to me. "Look up and lift up your heads." We've just read some of the scriptures that indicate the terrible time that this is all going to be! And yet Christ says to His people "lift up your heads. Be positive." One reference that I had when I was reading this said, "be cheerful". Now, we didn't put that in the Update because it doesn't, perhaps, convey the right thought here. It's being positive. Looking up! Not fearful, not scared. It means spiritually you are where you need to be. That's what it is referencing here.

**...look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."**

**29 ..."Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.**

**30 When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near.**

There are certain aspects in nature that you look to, to get an indication of the times. I said this is false news about the weather we are having at the moment. I say that because I look out the window of my office at the tree in my front yard and the trees up and down the street and not one leaf is turning yet! They're not even giving the slightest indication that fall is around the corner. So, fall is not going to happen next week. It's coming very soon, though. You'll know that when the leaves start to turn.

**31 So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.**

**32 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place.**

**33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.**

Some of these words are, "I don't know the day and the hour. The angels don't know the day and the hour. My Father knows the day and the hour." "In that day"

references the close of an age and the opening of another. As I say, it's a major, major event in the history of man. And we are living in the last days leading up to that day. We are in the last days. Christ makes that clear as He spells out the things pertaining to the time of the end in response to the questions.

There are factors in there that could not have happened until more recent times, such as the obliteration of human life off the face of this earth. That can happen now and we've got a few idiots that could make it happen now. They won't unless God gives the word to it. But there are a few people sitting on nuclear buttons that scare me in that sense of what they are capable of doing. We could wipe mankind off the face of this earth right now. That's the generation Christ said that this refers to.

This generation is witnessing the growing intensity of the conditions as outlined by Christ. Have you noticed as they report various things that are happening, whether they be floods or hurricanes, earthquakes; everything is the largest, the biggest. The biggest hurricane to form in the Atlantic Ocean, at least known to the record keepers. The flooding in Houston above all past records. The earthquake, 8.1-8.2, that is a pretty decent earthquake. Everything is bigger, the worst! This is what is happening. Conditions that could destroy all flesh. But for the elect's sake, those days will be shortened.

We are living at the end of the age. So, without focusing on the timing of Christ's return; what are we to do? Obviously, from what I've read, we've got to do something. What are we to do as God's people? Focus on Christ's preparations for His return. As I indicated earlier, Jesus Christ may not know exact moment that the Father wants Him to move, but Christ is preparing. Christ is getting ready for the event.

**1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

You go back into Romans and you understand what Peter is talking about here – Christ's resurrection, our baptism, our "resurrection" out of that baptismal pool.

**4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

Jesus Christ has gone to His Father to prepare a mansion for His people, to prepare a place incorruptible, undefiled, that does not fade away. It's reserved there for you.

**5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

Christ is preparing a group of people that will participate in His return. Who then, after the marriage, will participate with Him when He comes down and stands on the

Mount of Olives. The saints will be with Him and the saints will be involved in what Christ does from that point on. Christ is preparing for His return to this earth.

**20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you**

**21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**

Christ is not sitting idly by in heaven. He is preparing for the main event. He is preparing additions to the God family. When He returns, that's when the God family really begins to take shape; when there is a resurrection and spirit beings are added to the God family. When He returns, the preparation is over! Have you thought of it that way? When He returns, the preparation is over.

**Luke 17:20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation;**

**21 nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is [amongst] you."**

It says "within you", but it means amongst you. He was referring to Himself standing right there in their midst. He referred to Himself as the Kingdom of God. Christ is alive on earth today. In one sense He has returned, in one sense. Don't misunderstand what I'm trying to say here. Because He's living His life in each individual member of the body, He is on this earth today. He is involved within His Church.

**Ephesians 2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,**  
(This is referring to the resurrected Christ, referring to our baptism.)

**2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,**

**4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us**

**5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),**

**6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,**

It's our relationship with Jesus Christ. You're not sitting up in heaven with Christ. But it's referring to the fact that Christ is living His life right here within each one of us. Preparing us, encouraging us to prepare for the time when He does return and then the fulfillment of the inheritance takes place. We become a part of the God family.

**6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,**

We need to couple that together with Colossians 3:

**Colossians 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, (and we have been if we're baptized) seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.**

**2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.**

It doesn't say, "Set your mind to figure out the day when Christ will return so that you'll adjust your life accordingly and leave everything to the last minute." That is a dangerous course of action.

**3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

**4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.**

Christ is preparing a group of people that He will marry at His return. They will be ready. The preparation is all over! There'll be no further preparation time available.

**Ephesians 2:7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**

**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,**

**9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.**

**10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

The mystery that Paul refers to when he talks to the Colossians is Christ in us. "In that day" Christ is revealed to the world in power and might as He subdues all resistance to God's rule. When that happens, the world will be in shock and awe as the reality begins to sink in; the reality of how deceived and how conned mankind has been.

The Church, on the other hand, is prepared in anticipation of His return and is in a strong spiritual condition such that they can proceed into a marriage union upon His return. The bride is ready when Christ returns! Christ said that in Revelation 19. "The bride has made herself ready." And that readiness is not based on knowing the time of the bridegroom's coming. It's just knowing what "in that day" means. We are just five days from the Feast of Trumpets; we're right up against that time, if we're of a mind to see it and to understand it.

An important aspect of what's taking place at Christ's return is revealing to this world what His plan of salvation is. And it's being acted out by a group of people who walked

on this earth as living, breathing humans who had to deal with living in those days but have qualified to be a part of God's family. And they're resurrected and changed. And they don't go off and hide someplace in the outer part of heaven. They're with Jesus Christ! They are living examples of God's plan of salvation to a world that has never known that plan! As I say, it's going to take a while for the minds of the people of this world to turn around and begin to grasp it. But they will. What God is doing now is a great work of preparing a group of people to reveal His plan of salvation to this world! It is of enormous frustration to me that I cannot seem to get that across with any great force!

We want a work we can see; a work we can touch. We want a work that we can push away from us and put out there and say, "Well, they're doing the work. I'm a part of them. They're doing the work." The real work that is being done by Jesus Christ in preparation for His return is right here. Is it? Is that work being done? This is the most important work on the face of the earth – preparing sons for the family of God. I was told recently that younger people like to have action points. Here is an action point.

**Romans 13:11 And do this,** (Here we go, this is an action point, this is what we've got to do.) **knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.**

He's telling us that:

**12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand.** (This is where the action point comes in.) **Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.**

Now, that's an interesting way to put it. "For now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed." Every generation of God's Church for two thousand years has read that point and it's been true. It's been absolutely true! Earlier this week we had a member of the Church die. A long time, faithful member of the Church, a family member to some of you sitting right in front of me here today. Faithful member. On Monday, when she died was the day Christ returns for her. That's it! That was it. Her next waking moment is Christ's return. We have got to look at the return of Jesus Christ a little bit realistically and realize some of us may not get to live until Christ returns. And as we get older, our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

When I first believed, it was going to happen in 1975. Wished it had. I wouldn't have to go through all this stuff that's going on. No, I wouldn't have my kids. That's not right. I had to throw that one in. If we die before Christ returns that is the day of Christ's return for us. That's it!

**13 Let us walk properly,** (honestly, decently,) **as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.** (The way of the world, the natural way of our society in which we live.)

#### **14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,**

Is that a work? That's a massive work! That takes courage of the nth degree. It takes courage provided by God's Spirit to look into the mirror and admit certain things have to be done.

#### **14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**

With the passing of each day, our salvation is nearer. In the light of, "having boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus"; a relationship with Christ:

**Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,**

This aspect of a body, and being a part of the body, is very important to our spiritual strength and growth; the encouragement that we need.

#### **25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**

Aren't you glad now you made the effort to get up and get dressed and come to services here today? Just imagine how all those sitting at home watching this streaming are feeling at this point in time. Well, I'm sort of making a joke of it, but I'm not because attendance tends to drop way down. It's so tiring to do a week's work. You get to the Sabbath and it's a day of rest. Some of us are taking it as a day of rest. But it's also a day of spiritual rejuvenation. We need each other.

Might I remind you ... I know I'm going out wide here, but I'm going to talk to this audience. Do you remember three and a half, nearly four years ago when we began here, when we began meeting in this room? Do you remember the atmosphere when you walked in every Sabbath? I commented that I looked forward to the Sabbath to go to services because I got a great deal of encouragement, enthusiasm from just being around you; and the excitement that existed! Do you feel that way now? Is that level of excitement here now? It's not; in case you're wondering what the answer is. It's not.

It is very interesting. I don't know if you picked up on that. I didn't stop at the time to underline it, but I do need to. As he talks here [reference to the quote from Mr. Dugger from *The History of the True Church*], remember he said this about how things here in America settled down after a hundred years or so. He says: "... and settled down to a state of formality in worship." Did you pick up on that? A state of formality! We come here before God on the Sabbath day as a spiritual exercise, not just simply to learn something through the sermon and the sermonette. But to get a little bit of electricity from each other, a little bit of excitement about what God is doing with us, "depending upon the law of man for security". What else did he say? "Forming an organization with

the president, vice president and general organization patterned after the civil courts of worldly nations.” Did you catch those things?

Do you think about what God is doing with us? Do you think we’re not doing anything? I know some do. I’m going to tell you it is the most important work that could be done at this time! But it’s spiritual. It takes a spiritual mind. You’ve got to seek for it. You’ve got to ask God to let you see it so you can be enthusiastic and stirred up!

**James 5:8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.**

Patient means long-suffering or patient endurance. That’s a fact of life for us as we try to live godly in a godless world. It really means there’s going to be pressure on us sort of pushing us down, but we’ve got to take it. We’ve got to stay with it. We’ve got to work with it. Establish means to turn resolutely in a certain direction. To turn resolutely!

**1 Peter 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.**

Serious means of a sound or a moderate mind. The irony is that the Church knows we are in the last days. I don’t think there’d be anybody here that would want to sit and argue that point. We know “that day” is coming. We know that Jesus Christ will return. I don’t have to convince anyone here of that. We know Christ is going to return. We know that He will marry a bride that has made herself ready.

We know we have Christ living His life in us. And we know that this is our day of salvation. Yet here is the irony and I don’t know if irony is the right word, because irony usually contains some humor. There’s no humor in this. But the thing is, knowing all of that, sleep appears to be a dominant characteristic leading up to Christ’s return! And I’m taking that from scripture. Sleep appears to be the dominant characteristic leading up to Christ’s return.

Apart from Paul’s appeals not to sleep and when he tried to correct the Church in Thessalonica over their understanding of the timing of Christ’s return, it was causing some issues in the Church. False teachers got in and started to stir some things up. Then he said, “Let us not sleep.” We do have a direct statement from Christ, apart from what Paul says, in Matthew 25. The nature of the discussion here is very clear. It’s about the return of Jesus Christ and the preparation of the bride for that. It’s the parable of the Kingdom of heaven being likened to ten virgins. It tells us from Christ’s words:

**Matthew 25:5 But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. (They all slumbered and slept!)**

It’s an interesting parable the way Christ has set it out here, because if you were a bride and you were anticipating marrying the bridegroom you wouldn’t expect to do it at midnight. You might do it late afternoon, you might do it early evening. But if the



bridegroom hadn't shown up by early evening you're probably going to say, "Alright, tomorrow. I'm going to bed." The reason for the sleep was "while the bridegroom was delayed." That is what's caused great problems in the Church over the years – Christ not returning when we thought He should. We gave Him the dates. He must have known we were expecting Him. But He didn't come.

Could you imagine standing around up in the hilltops and so on, in white muslin, waiting for Christ's return? Tick, tock, tick, tock. And it becomes obvious by dawn it didn't happen. How would you feel? That's why the Church blew apart! The bridegroom did not come when they expected. That frame of mind then opens up the human mind to justify getting involved in the cares of this life. The overall spiritual condition of the Church right now provides perfect justification for a condition of sleep – perfect justification! I'm not suggesting we should, but I know that many are.

Many of us have come to accept the status quo. The Church is divided; the Church is fractured. And we've learned to live with it. Some of us even want to suggest it's God who did that. This is good: You defy scripture if you try to reason that way, but some do. The only problem is that the spiritual condition of being awake or asleep is a personal responsibility. It's your responsibility to be awake! It's your responsibility not to be asleep! I can't wake you up. I can put you to sleep. I can get up and give a sermon and put you to sleep.

It's a personal responsibility that you have to engage in because you see it and you want it! Nobody can wake you up! God's Spirit and Jesus Christ living His life in you can. So, what is the antidote for sleep, if that is the common problem that it's going to be? Well, here's the answer. That anticipation of the return of Christ! Did I just wipe out everything else that I've just said? No, no I didn't. The anticipation of the return of Christ because the anticipation is a spiritual condition! It is based on spiritual factors that have very little to do with a physical sense of timing Christ's return. It's a spiritual condition! Christ said that worldly conditions which surround us will be no excuse for spiritual lethargy.

**Matthew 24:12 ...because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.** (And it will be okay to go to sleep for a while because the bridegroom hasn't come when you thought. No, it says) **...the love of many will grow cold.** (That's the environment in which we live.)

**13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.** (He who resists those factors. Those who determine to be awake and ask for it and seek it from God.)

**...he who endures to the end shall be saved.**

Those who meet Christ have kept the oil in their lamps topped up. It will be those who have endured. The word here is *hupomeno* from the Greek. It means to stay under, remain, have fortitude, persevere, to bear patiently. I might add, to have courage

to overcome. This Greek word, as I understand it, implies being pressed down by circumstances in trials, difficulties, just living in this life; being pressed down but still moving forward. Not allowing it to stop you in your tracks, not to find justification in the stresses and the strains of this world to stop, but continuing to move forward. What does it mean in real terms? Well, the same word is used in Revelation 14, verse 12.

**Revelation 14:12 Here is the (*hupomone* of the saints, here is the) **patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.****

Faith is what we need to go forward. Faith does not require a specific date for action! Faith means we will do what we need to do because we know it. Not because circumstances dictate it, not because everything comes crashing in around our lives and we suddenly realize I'd better do something about this. Or we get seriously ill and face the possibility of death. "Well, I'd better get my house in order now. I'd better get right with God." Faith means you do it because you believe it, not because you see it. You just believe it and you do it. These people have been totally responsive to the preparations that Christ did prior to His return because it says up in verse 4:

#### **4 ...These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes...**

(Following His lead, doing the work that He is doing in preparation for His return.).

The Lamb is preparing to return to this earth to expand the plan of salvation to cover all people. We've got four Holy Days coming up very quickly that are going to remind us of that. Are we following Him? Or are we spinning our wheels in the cares of this life? Christ said the same thing three times. In fact, four times. We read it once in the sermonette. But let's go to Revelation 22. Here he reiterates the same thing three times. In verse 7:

**Revelation 22:7 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."**

"I am coming quickly!" Then in verse 12:

**12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."**

And finally, in verse 20:

**20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly."**

We are five days away from the Feast of Trumpets. In other words, we're close. We're moving in on the time that these Holy Days picture for us. This should be a very powerful Holy Day season for us! Four days – bang, bang, bang, bang! Driving the point home of what God is doing and what He's preparing. Are you ready for Him to come quickly? ♦