

"Until the Day..."

by Dave Hunt

November 2008

In 1983, I wrote a book titled *Peace, Prosperity, and the Coming Holocaust*. The first chapter was called, "A Contrary Scenario," which I based on my understanding of Scripture. Here was the situation as I recall it: interest rates in the U.S. were over 20 percent; the stock market was around 700 on the DOW, and the experts were predicting a crash that would make 1929 seem like prosperity; the housing market was dead, with tens of thousands of houses unsold and apartments vacant; the most popular books in Christian bookstores were about "the death of the dollar, the imminent international financial collapse, the pending Soviet attack on Israel, etc." Gloom and doom prevailed.

In that first chapter, I gave my opinion based on Scripture that the doomsayers' predictions were wrong: Reaganomics would work, prosperity was on the way, and there would be no imminent invasion of Israel. Unknown to me at the time, the Soviets had placed a cache of their weapons in Lebanon for a million-man invasion army. Israel hauled it all out, thousands of truckloads, after their invasion of Lebanon in June 1982 to stop the incessant shelling of Israel and to quell terrorism.

This "contrary scenario" held true for 25 years. Then came the current worldwide financial near-collapse after years of building "prosperity" on impossible debt. Very serious problems have bankrupted banks and businesses, have put tens of thousands out of work, and have adversely impacted millions of hard-working citizens. Of course, the problems are being "solved" by governments printing money and accumulating more debt. Where is this taking us now?

Some are fearing the possibility of another 1929-like stock market crash and Depression. Most economists, however, doubt that this could happen with all of the new regulations that are being put into place. Above and beyond worldwide financial problems, my real interest is in the Rapture, which I still believe could happen at any moment.

Christ declares that the days just before the Rapture will be like the days of Noah and Lot. Notice, however, that although those were times of gross immorality, He doesn't even mention that fact. Here are His words:

And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.... Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (Luke 17:26-30, Matthew 24:37-39; Matthew 24:44)

In the case of Noah and Lot, judgment and destruction fell instantly after the believers were taken out. But that scenario does not fit with what the Bible tells us will follow the Rapture: further prosperity and even greater persecution of Jews worldwide.

No Old Testament illustration perfectly conveys the full New Testament prophecy. In Noah's and Lot's day the phrase, "until the day" or "the same day" meant within that very 24-hour period. The New Testament has in mind "the day of the Lord" that begins with the Rapture, includes the Great Tribulation and the Millennium, and ends in the new heavens and new earth.

Christ's warning is centered on the fact that the Rapture ("Noah entered into the ark...Lot went out of Sodom...") (John 14:1-3) will be the last thing most Christians are expecting or even hoping will occur. False prosperity will make many Christians reluctant to leave earth for heaven ("Let the Rapture occur before I die, but not yet!"). It will be a continuation of the spirit of Laodicea, which has played a major role in the apostasy into which the church has been sinking ever deeper since the end of World War II.

We could almost say that this spirit has been present from the beginning of

the church after Christ ascended back to heaven, having spent 40 days with His disciples in His resurrected body. That was a glorious time for His bewildered followers to come to know their Lord in a new way, to remove any lingering doubts from their minds, and to get them started in fulfilling the "great commission" that He had given to them.

Oddly enough, in spite of fierce opposition and persecution, the thousands of new disciples were not eager to leave their homes and jobs in order to obey their Lord's parting command to "go...into all the world, and preach the gospel..." (Mark 16:15). It was still too comfortable for them in Jerusalem. It took the "great persecution" that followed the stoning of Stephen to scatter the disciples "abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria..." (Acts 8:1). Far from going into hiding, as the eleven had done on resurrection day, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where [not "giving their testimonies" but] preaching the word..." (Acts 8:4). The church thrived under persecution. This was a time of real growth, which the "church growth movement" (that Schuller in a 1974 book claims he began and of which he said Bill Hybels was his most successful student) eventually corrupted.

From the very beginning, "prosperity" has been a dangerous condition for most Christians to handle. The "health and wealth...name it and claim it" gospel, which Copeland learned from Kenneth Hagin, Sr., and which he claimed the Lord commissioned him to preach, has been promoted by the Crouches and the heretics and frauds of various stripes that they have sponsored on their worldwide TV network. This supposed "gospel" has always been wrong, but with "Christian" television and publishing promoting it to an apostate church, the deadly Laodicean mentality that has been germinating for centuries is now in full bloom. Being "rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing," unknown to the "little flock" that Christ left behind and to whom He promised the kingdom (Luke 12:32), has become a sign of God's blessing in today's "growth-industry Churchianity."

The Rapture is almost a forgotten hope. Most Christians are too comfortable on this earth to be willing to leave it for heaven. Matthew 24 is a key chapter in understanding the timing of the Rapture. Verse 34 has generated heated

controversy: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." This is also recorded at Luke 21:32. The disagreement centers around the meaning of the phrase "this generation." There are three possible interpretations of that phrase:

Preterists hold that by saying "this generation," Jesus referred to those living on earth at that time and that the Matthew 24 prophecy was fulfilled within that generation in the AD 70 siege and destruction of Jerusalem. That is clearly wrong because in those days all flesh was not in danger of being wiped out (v. 22) by bows, arrows, swords, and spears. Today's weapons could turn this earth into a glowing ember, devoid of any life, drifting silently through space. Much more is included in Christ's warning that didn't occur at that time: the greatest tribulation ever for Jews, (v. 21, since exceeded by the Holocaust, with even worse yet to come, ultimately bringing full repentance and salvation to Israel- Zechariah 12:8-13:9). Nor did any of the events foretold in verses 27-31 take place in AD 70. Others think that Jesus meant the generation living on earth when Israel returned to her land in 1948. How could "generation" in that sense be defined? Surely it couldn't include those not yet born. It must be a generation already established and still alive- and this particular one is now nearly gone.

In my opinion, Jesus was not talking about either of the above. There is a third possible meaning, which I would respectfully suggest. The key is the way Jesus, John the Baptist, and Peter all used the word "generation." The Bible is its own interpreter: "generation of vipers" (Matthew 3:7; Matthew 12:34; Matthew 23:33; Luke 3:7); "evil generation" (Luke 11:29); "evil and adulterous generation" (Matthew 12:39); "wicked generation" (Matthew 12:45); "wicked and adulterous generation" (Matthew 16:4); "faithless generation" (Mark 9:19); "faithless and perverse generation" (Matthew 17:17, Luke 9:41); "adulterous and sinful generation" (Mark 8:38); "untoward generation" (Acts 2:40).

Scripture indicates that although many individual Jews will be saved, Israel as a whole will continue in unbelief and rebellion against the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When will Israel at last repent and return to faith in the only true God, the God of Israel? Not until the armies of the

world, led by Antichrist at Armageddon, have pushed Israel to the brink of defeat. That is when Christ himself in His "Second Coming" will return visibly to earth and destroy Israel's enemies ("every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" - Revelation 1:7).

All Israel will repent of their departure from the Lord of hosts and rejection and crucifixion of her Messiah, and "all Israel shall be saved..." (Romans 11:26). There will be an unprecedented time of mourning in Israel (Zechariah 12:10-13:1) as every Jew alive will realize that Jesus Christ, the one they crucified and had despised ever since, died for their sins and is the Redeemer whom their own prophets had promised.

As for the church, anyone who knows God's Word has mourned the fact that for decades we have been steadily sinking ever deeper into apostasy such as few men and women of God could have imagined only fifty years ago. There are a multitude of causes, but a major one is the way God's Word is despised today, even by some who call themselves Christians, and even by many church leaders. What God has inspired "holy men of God" to put down in writing and that the canon of Scripture comprises is looked upon as boring and must be presented in ways that will appeal to the modern mind. We have movies and DVDs by the dozens dramatizing "thus saith the LORD." For one's teaching from the Word of God to be recorded onto a DVD is one thing. To present the Bible not in the pure words of Scripture but by a dramatization thereof on a DVD is an abomination. Imagine the pride of anyone who attempts to "improve" the Holy Word of God! These revisionists, instead of improving actually trivialize, mutilate, and destroy what God has said.

Many Christians, especially their children, are so enamored with TV that they can't sit still to read the Bible. Christ is called "the Word of God." He is the "Living Word"...the "word of truth" (Psalm 119:43), "word of life" (Philippians 2:16). Never is He called the "picture" of truth. We are "born again...by the word of God...the word which by the gospel is preached..." (1 Peter 1:23-25). There are scores of such verses.

Let's try to modernize a bit for this new generation: "born again by the DVD

of God...the living DVD...the DVD of truth...the DVD which by the gospel is preached, etc." Paul told Timothy to "preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2). He didn't say "Revise or dramatize the word"! This is not a matter of semantics. It's the difference between God's way and man's way, between life and death!

We dare not succumb to the apostasy that has invaded the church. As Amos declared, there is a famine for the Word of God-not because it is not available to hungry readers but because it is not being preached in many churches that only a few years ago were sound in doctrine and truly preached the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit. The flock has been fed phony "translations." Surely we are seeing "a famine...of hearing the words of the LORD" (Amos 8:11). Not only is God's Word not being preached, but most of those who think they are doing so are using false "Bibles," to the detriment of their souls and those of their hearers.

Eugene Peterson is a case in point. He dares to call The Message "another version of the Bible" when in fact it perverts the Bible! T.A. McMahan has brought us up to date on Rick Warren (TBC, 9/08). The compromises that Rick has made, relative to the gospel, break my heart. I have been reluctant to put him in the same category as such enemies of truth as Peterson, yet The Message continues to be Rick's favorite "Bible" (see TBC, 4/04 for quotations from The Message). He has influenced millions to follow his example in following Peterson. He now seems to believe that it is more important to give lost souls food and medicine for this life through his P.E.A.C.E. Plan than to give them the gospel for eternity, more blessed to give them physical and temporal blessings than to lead them to heaven.

We must ask ourselves repeatedly whether we truly believe that Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven and whether we live according to His words. Can we say with Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ"? Do we really believe that this gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes" and that the world is lost without Christ? Has the full and awesome meaning of that fact truly gripped our hearts and minds? I speak to my own heart first.

TBC has thoroughly and often exposed the false gospel of Roman

Catholicism that is still sending countless millions to hell. Yet in spite of excellent exposés by others as well, the Catholic "gospel" gains an ever-wider acceptance among evangelicals. There used to be many sound authors and leaders who powerfully opposed Roman Catholicism. Now scarcely anyone raises an objection to this religious system that has likely sent as many to hell as has Islam. One becomes exceedingly weary reminding evangelicals from Billy Graham to Rick Warren that Roman Catholicism is damning billions-especially when these two men lead the evangelical church in embracing Catholicism as just another way to heaven.

Didn't the Lord in "the great commission" command His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature? Has that command ever been revoked? Absolutely not. It still holds for every Christian today. But which gospel should one preach? The gospel has been so perverted, compromised, and Catholicized that the power of God unto salvation has been taken out of it for fear of giving offense. Would those in hell thank us for sparing them the offense that would have taken them instead to heaven?

Do we withhold the gospel from the unsaved for selfish reasons? Are some of us ashamed of the narrow gate that the gospel forces us to present to those who prefer the broad road to destruction? The Word of God is clear: "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25).

Time is short and eternity is forever. We need to reexamine our hearts and begin to live as though we really believe this.

TBC