

S.N. Oct. 6, 74 P.M. W.K.R.3-

PROPHECY

2 Peter 1:18-21

We have seen in our last sermon that without question this is the world's greatest coming event. And that God's purposes and plans center in it. The question comes to our minds, that came to the minds of the disciples, when all these things -- when will these things be.

Our Lord has delayed his coming almost 2000 years. Is there any reason for believing that the time for his return may be approaching. Did he give any signs by which we could know that the coming was near at hand.

Many years ago a woman in Syracuse, New York, was disappointed in love. Forty years before she was engaged to marry a young man, whose devotion to her had been the subject of much public comment. The day of the wedding came, the guests arrived, the bride-to-be charmingly attired awaiting his coming - but in vain. Not until the hour was late and all hope had fled - that the bright lights were dimmed. He has been hindered. Perhaps he is ill. She said to the departing guests. He will not fail, he will come, I know. She loved him. And through 40 years, that have passed, and her parents and many of her wedding party are dead - she could still be standing at the gate. Her hair white with grief. Lonely and watching. Expecting him to come. And take her, his bride. Many happy hour they have spent at the gate. And there, each day, she waits expecting him to meet her.

Some say Jesus is gone - never to return. But his last words were, yeah, I come, quickly. So in the midst of eternity, the believer stands with his faith, praying, hoping, watching for the fulfillment of his words. The doctrine and prophecy of our Lord's return ought to be the sweetest doctrine in the Bible to us. For it was this that brought us salvation. When the high priest asked him,

art thou the king of the Jews, the Messiah. He answered, I am. And hereafter, ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of Heaven. Mark 14:62. Then the high priest rent his clothes and said, what need we of further witness - ye have heard the blasphemy - what think ye. And they all condemned him to be guilty of death and they began to spit upon him and cover his face, and to buffet him. Now the person who neglects this truth has only to destroy the Gospel.

I Thess. 5:1-6 - But of the times and the seasons brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord shall cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and safety - then sudden destruction come upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

The Scripture indicates the Christian should not be in the dark - relative to the return of the Lord. Why could Paul say this. It was because there are many signs which have been given to indicate that the coming of the Lord may be near.

It is something of these signs and prophecy that we want to consider this evening. I think there is (no doctrine) that is taught clearer in the New Testament - 300 times the New Testament refers to our Lord's return. (Paul) only mentions that baptism 15 times. But the second coming 50 times. Some people say we ought not to meddle with prophecy. Now I believe in thinking about anything that affects my preparation for death and judgement. (2 Tim. 3:16) - All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction and righteousness, that the man of God may be perfectly thoroughly

furnished unto all good works.

V. 21 - of our text says, the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man. But Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Now these very men are the ones who tell us about the second coming. Heb. 6 - Admonishes us to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on to perfection. Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works. "And so the principles of this doctrine is that you must be born again. And you must be justified by faith. And this principle thing is as a child that is born. He cannot walk, cry, eat, or talk. Until it is first born. A child has to be born first. Then if it looks like his parents, and he develops obedience, he must become converted, to enter the Kingdom. So this is the highway to holiness. Now some never get away from repentance. They reason that they must sin in thought or word each day, or in deed - and must constantly be sinning and repenting. But Paul in Rom. 6:11 - reckon not also yourselves to be dead unto sin but alive unto Christ - under God through Christ, our Lord. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein. "When a man gets free from a thing, the word free implies that he runs from it. And we must bear in mind, mistakes are not just sins. Unless they are carelessly repeated. An error in judgement is not sin unless it is justified and defended when discovered. We are neither almighty - there is but one way of sinning. And that is by deliberately breaking God's law. And refusing to walk in the light of the commandments. Heb. 10:26. "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." Matt. 1:27. "Declares he shall save his people from their sin - not in their sins - but from them. And it is a joy tonight that we can say that Christ ever makes intercession for you. Now with that glorious day constantly in view, let us like Paul press on toward that day, of the resurrection of the dead and the eternal judgement. And why is it that we have much along these lines and we have so little faith when it comes to the prophecy of the second coming. One reason the Devil doesn't want us to preach this truth, for nothing seems to

awaken the church so much. The minute a man realizes that Jesus is coming back to receive his followers, to himself - this world loses its hold on him. That man no longer puts his whole life in stocks and bonds, these are of a less consequence to him. He begins to look for the glorious appearing of his Lord. Satan knows to arouse a church - he gets the churches eyes off the world. And they look to the appearing of Christ.

When you expect company, you do not spend all day disputing with your neighbor. To make your neighbor see things your way. You are expecting company. And you make ready. Paul charges when Timothy 6:12-16 - fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on the eternal life where unto thou art called and has professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God who quickeneth all things and before Jesus Christ - who before Pilate witnessed a good confession. That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. Which in his time, he shall show who is the blessed and the only potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of Lords. "

Henceforth, there is layed up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me in that day. But not unto me only, but to all them who love his appearing. " 2 Tim. 4:8. So the glorious appearing is taught. In Titus 2:11, 12, 13 - we should deny all ungodliness and live soberly in this present world looking for the glorious appearing.

What I say unto you, I say unto all watch. Jesus said, in Mark 13:37 - now this was the prize of Paul's high calling. Can there be any love here. If we do not long for his appearance and his re-appearing. The same thing is true with a mother when she is absent. There are those who love, and look, and wait. And of course, when she is absent, do you ever cry out for your loneliness - for the love that was lost. When you think about one of the grandest ideas - you think

Love - Aim - "I'm still awful lonesome"

about the one who perhaps sat across the table from you. Or walked arm in arm with you down life's pathway. Sometimes you have thanksgiving - and there was something wonderful. How you were taken care of and fed. And of course, this speaks of your love.

Now how can we love God and yet possess no longing to see him face to face. The one we love most - we want nearest to us. And the hours drag wearily by when they are gone.

In the parable Matt. 24:32-36 - Jesus said learn a parable about a fig tree. And he adds that we are to watch therefore for we know not that hour your Lord doth come. Therefore, be ye also ready. Now this was a very ordinary every day experience, of a glorious truth. That when the branch of the fig tree is yet tender and puts forth leaves - you may know, he says, that summer is nigh. Now this was not true of all kinds of trees. It was not difficult for them to understand this parable, even in our own time. In the springtime when the trees put forth the green leaves - we know that summer is near. It is a sign which cannot be mistaken. The use of a fig tree was especially appropriate. Since it is one of the last of the trees to put forth its leaves. So when the fig tree bursts forth, in the late spring and summer is very close at hand.

What Jesus was saying, so likewise - when ye shall see all these things - that it is near - even at the door. What was Jesus talking about as he sat on a mount of olives - the disciples were coming unto him privately saying - tell us when all these things shall be. Tell us what shall be the sign of thy coming. Tell us what shall be the end of the world.

Jesus had just revealed the temple was going to be destroyed. He sat on the Mt. of Olives at beautiful heights and then the Lord began to tell them what the signs of

the coming end of the age they might look for. The disciples were asking for signs. Now Jesus did not rebuke them in his message - but he actually gave them many signs of his coming. And he talked about his sure return.

Norman Harrison said, there are 110 signs of return of the Lord named in the Bible. Now whether we agree with his figure or not, there are many many signs. Maybe 300 or so. That we do not have time to discuss - all of these they suggest.

Now that they knew the summer was near when the trees began to put on their leaves - so likewise he says, ye shall see all of these things.

What things? Well, the things that he had just been talking about. The signs of his coming. Now that it is even at your door. It is of course, very near. And you shall see the son of man coming in power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, lift up your heads. And your redemption draws nigh. Luke 21:27.

Before we look at signs he gave, the things he says, we shall be seen. He says in V. (34) - Verily I say unto you this generation shall not pass until all these things be fulfilled. Some of them have been seen by the generation to which Jesus was speaking. Would see all of these things come to pass. No, Jesus is not saying that. Others say that he was saying that the generation which sees all of these signs, will not pass away until all of the events about the return have been fulfilled. This is another interpretation. But that everything will come to pass in the lifetime of Jesus. If that interpretation were the meaning - then the whole prophecy would be meaningless. All of these things did not come to pass during his lifetime. And certainly his return was not near at hand at that time. However, if it is referring to the generation which sees the signs as the one that will not pass, it will all be fulfilled. Then it's meaning opens up to great light in the parable. And He has just said when you begin to see these signs fulfilled, know that the Lord's return is near. The generation that

sees these signs will not pass away before all is fulfilled.

He then adds Heaven and earth shall pass away - but my word shall not pass away.

At his return, the Heavens and the earth shall pass away. And a new Heaven and a new earth will be given. But his words, prophesying his return are not to fail. And this helps us to understand the whole prophecy. But of that day and hour - no man - no, not the angels of Heaven - only the Heavenly father knows. We cannot say - today, tomorrow. It can happen at anytime.

Look at the green leaves. Look at the long list of the number of signs, that have never happened before in any generation. But that are happening today in this generation.

Nations shall rise against nation. And Kingdom against kingdom. Famine, earthquakes, persecutions, apostasy, offense and betrayal, false prophets, iniquity shall abound, the preaching of the Gospel to the whole world, Noah's day, the rise of alliances as Russia, and dictators, increase of knowledge, new interest in prophetic truths, rejection of sound doctrine and Biblical truth, scoffers, the return of Jews to Jerusalem, signs in the sun, moon, stars with earth distress, and the sea - and the waves roaring.

Men's hearts failing them for looking after things coming on the earth. Luke 21:26. Powers of Heaven shall be shaken. Luke 21:26. Now this is just a small portion of the large number of signs which are available in prophecy.

In the book of Daniel we have the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

And it seems that it is an impossible fulfillment. No doubt it is meant with great ridicule. As Daniel declared that there would be an image which was a head of gold, feet of clay and iron, suggested different kingdoms. Beginning with the Babylonian kingdom. And of course, in the succession of years, many of these things happened. And Caesar and Augustus consolidated their power, 60 years before Christ. They formed secret alliances. During the awful wars - millions of men were slain. 800 cities and towns captured. 49 years before Christ, Pompey crossed the Rubicon - and in a short time became master of Italy. And soon Rome, the clay kingdom, came into being. For 600 years Rome held universal sway. And they never slacked from the cruel thirst and blood of Christians and were extravagant in tax and wealth from other lands. But at last she was conquered - 5 times within 600 years after the birth of Christ.

But one of the features of Daniel's prophecy, after 3000 years gone awaits fulfillment. The great stone that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream at the feet of the image grew until it became a great mountain that ground to dust the image that filled the whole earth. I Peter 2:4,5,6. ^{//} To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. ^{//}

When we meet Jesus face to face, it should be like Mary when she went to the tomb that day and said they have taken my Lord away and I know not where they have laid him. If this could somehow take possession of God's people again, we could hear his promise. If I be lifted up, from the earth - will draw all men unto me. Long ago, the disciples said - what shall be the sign of thy coming. And Jesus answered them in Matt. 24:29-31.

He told them about the great tribulation. And I want us now to look at some of

these signs in prophecy. What will help us to understand about his coming.

I. I BELIEVE THE FIRST SIGN IS IN THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Now we can see here what prophecies are unfulfilled, and what has been fulfilled. And the inspiration of the Scripture will help us to discover this position.

II. THE SIGN OF PERILOUS TIMES

We are told in 2 Tim. 3:1-6 - this know also in the last day. Perilous times shall come and men shall become lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, false-accusers, having a form of godliness but devoid in the power thereof. " But you say, these sins have been dominate in every age. Have they to the degree they are now? Why the great labor strikes, the suffering among the poor, the corporations, the covetous, the oppressors where money is king in Europe and in the United States - honor is dead. Politics are corrupt. Greed elects itself to the throne and makes his own laws and scoffs at God's holiness. But the power of goodness which is love, they deny. John 3:17. We are instructed to bear one another's burdens in Gal.

These are perilous times. In Matt. 24:7 - there is a great and terrible war that is predicted. And rumors of wars. And nations are going to rise against nations. Throughout our history and our lifetime, we have seen World War I and II. Caesar had 400,000 men under arms. Napoleon - 750,000. World War I - 53 million. World War II - 70 million. And over 16 million died in World War II. 53 nations actually declared war. And nation rising against nation. Never in the history of this world has there been such. In the same verse we find the prophecy of famines. Populations grow and

What - B. B. ...

great portions of the population today will starve. Hunger is on this earth.

Scientists tell us in the next 10 years hunger will be far beyond anything we have ever dreamed of on the face of the earth. They predict that already 2 billion people - more than half of the peoples of the earth are in the grip of hunger. 1/3 of the world is well fed. 1/3 is under fed. 1/3 is starving. The record is that 12,000 people die of starvation each day. Now the estimate is that by the year 2000 - there will be 6 billions people who are hungry - if the population continues and doubles in the next 28 years. The world will not be able to produce food enough.

Earthquakes

earthquakes are increasing at an amazing rate. From 1800 - 1896 - there were six sizeable earthquakes. 1897 - to 1946 in that period, they grew to an average of three each decade. In 1946-1956 there were 7 major earthquakes. 1956-1966 there were 17. Now this means that there were twice as many major earthquakes as in the entire 19th century. Now what does this mean. I do not know. But I do know this - that Jesus said before his return, there would be earthquakes.

Bear this in mind, there have been perilous days - May 19, 1780 was a day of awful darkness. At mid-day, people could not read the largest print. Fools went to roost. Candles were lighted then in the houses. Everyone thought it was the great day of God's wrath. In the house of representatives in Comm. - May 19, 1780 - they tell us the darkness began about 10 A. M. Continued until the middle of the next night. One great astronomer said it was one of those great wonderful things of nature that no philosophy could explain. The moon was full at the time - but it refused to give light. It seemed like a ball of blood. The darkness was so intense, that a sheet of white paper held within an inch of the face could not be detected. Rev. 6:12-17. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake: and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled

together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains.

November 13, 1833 - They tell us that there was a display of fireworks, in Heaven. The stars fell like snow in December. The whole earth at 11 P. M. to 4 A. M. A professor at Yale said there was no scholar that told or recorded any such event that they had had. But somehow the prophet 1800 years ago - and God had been opening his seal.

¹¹
2 Thess. 2:3 - Let no man deceive you - there will come a falling away first. And you will see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel. Matt. 24:15-16. This abomination is men have gotten tired of God and the desire to have someone else.

III. THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM SHALL BE PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD - Matt. 24:14

When will Christ come - some newspaper reporter asked some pastor in Canada. I can tell you exactly when Christ is coming again. The reporter ceased his pencil and paper and said - tell me when. The preacher read this verse to him and said - then will come the end. Now this is the sign that has never been fulfilled until this generation. The great missionary movement for the first time - missionaries are in far corners of the earth with the Gospel message. There are a few tribes of people who have not heard. But the Bible portions have been printed in 1500 languages, and new languages are being translated year by year. The use of radio, T. V., and even telstar - man can preach to 90% of the population on the earth's surface at one time.

Do not believe that the prophecy requires that every individual will have to

hear the Gospel but rather the Gospel will be preached in all areas of the earth. And this is what is happening that Jesus said would happen in the end of time.

IV. THE MEASUREMENT OF TIME.

I believe this is another sign. In six days God created the World, a period of time, and we discover from the Psalms - the 4th verse of the 90th Psalms. "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night." 2 Peter 3:8 - "beloved be not ignorant of one day, one thing - that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years - and a thousand years as one day." Now there are people who believe that at the time of the world's creation, was 6000 years of the world's history. But God created his work in 6 days. And the 7th he rested and reviewed it. Now there are people who believe that from the creations to the flood, there was a little over 2000 years. From the flood to the birth of Christ, there was a little over 2000 years. From the birth of Christ, until the present time - 1974 years - that if history again repeats itself, his coming draweth nigh. That is, this will be the 7th year in the history.

V. THE JEWS

"Now for I will take them from among the nations and gather ye out of all countries and bring you again to your own land." Ez. 36:24. Now this is especially true of Jews, and this is something of comfort. And of course, we discover that Satan is going to make his last effort against God.

Now someone visited in New Orleans in a Hebrew cemetery. And on a marble slab, these words - the dispersed of Judah.¹¹ Something is created in the heart of a Jew to desire to return to Palestine. Multitudes of Jews are returning every year. Railroads have been built. And travel is available. And the movements in this country among the Jews - which has its chief aim - the moving of the people to Palestine.

Luke 21:24 - Jesus is talking about how the Jews will be treated, at the fall of Jerusalem with many slain and others carried captives among all the nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodded down with the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled. ¹¹ They were driven from the city for long periods. There were non-Jews - non-Jewish control. Now he says the day is coming when the non-Jewish control would end and the Gentile age would be fulfilled. Now this apparently means that until the time when Gentiles control has been completed.

In June, 1967 - the Jews had never had control of Jerusalem. Some of them had lived there through the years. They had been persecuted. And when they became a nation in 1948 - they began to build a section of the city - which was called the Jewish section of Jerusalem. Nevertheless they did not have control of the old city within the walls. Ancient Jerusalem was not under control of the Jews. However, in 1967 - in the amazing 6 day war - Jerusalem came under control of the Jews and they began to rule there once again. This was happening for the first time since Jesus spoke these words nearly 2000 years ago. Now what does this mean in prophecy. The answer, is in Luke 21. Concerning the destruction of the city, he tells how control is to be passed from them to the Gentiles - but he says, that the control by the Gentiles, is to come to an end. And the city will be under Jewish rule again. And he adds this other sign, in V. 25, 26 - and there shall be signs in the sun, moon, and stars - and upon the earth, distress of nations and perplexity - the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.

For the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

Now we do not know the meaning of all of these words. But we do know that the meaning of part of them - whether the signs are figurative - the sea and the roaring waves may be figurative. But we do know the meaning of distress of nations. Hearts failing them for fear, as they look at the things that are coming on the earth. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in power and in great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up - lift up your heads - for your redemption drawth nigh. 27, 28.

Jesus spoke of the Jews being in Jerusalem. When the Jews are in Jerusalem - in control of it - and when other signs take place, he says the son of man is going to come in the clouds. "Look up, lift up your heads. The emphasis is this - the word begin - when these things begin to come to pass. For the coming of the Lord is near.

Never before in any generation until ours, since Jesus' day have the Jews been in control of Jerusalem. But they are there now. Now does this say that the Lord's coming is near. Jesus seems to say very clearly that it is.

Suppose the present occupation in Palestine does not last. Suppose the Arabs or others drive them out. Or even destroy the nation. It is hard to believe that this can happen - since under circumstances - Israel would fight til death. But if it should happen - then it simply means that the present occupation is simply not the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. That prophecy cannot fail. If the Jew is driven out from the land now, he later will return according to this prophecy. The Jew must be in the land and in Jerusalem.

VI. THE SIGN OF COMMERCIALISM

Now this is found in Rev. 13:16-17 as we think about the beasts and the power that is going to take place. And he causes all - small and great, rich and poor, free and bond to receive a mark in their right hand or on their foreheads. No man might buy or sell say ye who has the mark, or the name of the beast on the number of his name. Now this tells us that we can look today at labor unions, we can look at trusts, we can look at co-operations, and it is impossible to carry on any business today unless your barber shop window, your office, your store is decorated with a union certificate or through membership in certain societies. Through a badge or a certificate of membership, or some mark of commercialism - the beast - is necessary to receive today in order to do business. Now in light of these things, we see that he is coming. Coming soon, I know. Coming back to this world again. And the weary pilgrim will to zion go, when the Saviour comes to reign.

The war between the North and South. The young man in Alburn City, New York, went to his perspective bride, secured his release, he promised to marry her, after he answered the call to his country. She consented. And as soon as the war was to end - he would return and make her his wife. He bid her goodbye with a promise that he would write to her every (third week) during his absence. For two years, the letters were regularly received. And then they ceased. She waited for months in vain and she received no word, from the one she loved. And she began to mourn as though he were dead. At last a letter came, addressed in a strange hand. She opened it - Dear Clara, For months I have lingered on the threshold of the grave. I was wounded in battle. The surgeons found it necessary to amputate my right arm and right leg. I am just able to dictate this letter while my nurse writes. The receipt of it releases you from your vow. I could not ask you to unite your fair young life with this mamed life of mine. I love you more today than when I asked you to be my wife, and coming years will not change that love. God bless you Clara. In tears and great love I release you. Remember through all the coming years, how madly I love you.

Goodbye, goodbye. From your mamed, heart-broken, affectionate, Will.

What do you think she did when she received that letter. She did not wait to answer, she took the first train that would carry her South. She made her way to the sufferers cot. She fell on her knees at his bedside and pressed the remaining hand to her lips, I received your letter. I read of your condition. But I love you yet. I have come to marry you. I will hold this poor left hand in mine while the chaplain makes us one. I will stay with you until you are nursed back to health. And strength. And then I will take you back to Alburn with me and I will spend my life trying to make you happy.

Friends, when Adam fell back there in Eden, he mamed the whole human race to follow him. There in our bodies today, the marks of that fall. The brand of sin. But Jesus comes tonight, all the way from Heaven, in search of us. He is standing beside you now saying, not withstanding your mamed condition - I love you yet. If you will agree, we will ask the Holy Spirit to make us one. And I will stay with you until I have nursed you back to spiritual health, and strength. And then I will take you back to Heaven with me and spend Eternity making you glad. Behold, what manner of love, a father hath bestowed upon us. That we should be called the sons of God.

We need to sing - while sinners settle up with Christ. There is a great day coming - there is a great day coming. A great day coming by and by. When saints and the sinners shall be parted right and left. Are you ready for that day to come. There is a great day coming. A bright day coming - there is a bright day coming by and by. But it's brightness shall only come to them that love the Lord - are you ready for that great day to come. Are you ready, are you ready for the great judgement day. Are you ready for the judgement day.