

# Hour Times

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## THE MILLENNIUM

WHAT WILL IT BRING FOR YOU?

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## COMING ISSUE



### Can the Dead Really Speak to Us?

Car phones, cell phones, wireless Internet access—it seems that everyone wants to be mobile nowadays. Is death just another form of call waiting? Just who is that calling from the other side? Read this informative issue, and we'll talk about it!

### Our Mission:

*Hour Times*, published by Remnant Publications, a nonprofit organization, is produced for the sole purpose of leading individuals, families and society to "A Better Way of Life," as found through God's Holy Word, the Bible. We believe that the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God, its principles and counsel are as relevant and binding upon humanity today as they have been throughout the ages.



## The Millennium That Matters

By Cari Haus

Probably no “turn of the century” in this world’s history has been greeted with the degree of hysteria, hooplah and celebration that met the year 2000. Dry food distributors, generator manufacturers and other disaster-related companies did a whopping business in 1999—not to mention a certain group of prognosticators who whipped business into an even greater frenzy.

Despite whatever fears they had about terrorist attacks or huge technological shutdowns, millions turned out for a worldwide array of public celebrations. New York’s Times Square even had a new, high-tech “ball” for the event.

Unfortunately for the Big Apple, the new “ball” never made it down when the great moment finally came. The very feature that had made it so expensive—the wonders of modern technology—also caused it to malfunction. Also, thanks to high winds in Europe, the clock on the Eiffel Tower in Paris wasn’t working, either. So it never got to strike midnight on December 31, 1999.

But, happily, those were about the only malfunctions related to the new millennium. In the vast majority of cases, the power stayed on and computers ran smoothly, while terrorists either got caught or stayed home. And people started to wonder whether the extensive press about potential Y2K-related catastrophes wasn’t just a lot of hype.

Presumably, the many Y2K prognosticators who made their living from millennium-related predictions and preparations have now gone on to other forms of employment. As for the general public, most got tired of hearing about the new millennium and possible Y2K-related disasters. They prepared for it, celebrated it and survived it. And now, relieved that nothing “big” happened, they just want to get on with their lives.

### A FALSE SENSE OF COMPLACENCY?

As a nation, we might be lulled into a false sense of complacency by the fact that, other than a persistent flu epidemic (which some people joked was the real “millennium bug”), nothing too consequential happened during the winter of 1999-2000.

Of course, therein lies our greatest danger, for the Bible tells us that complacency can be a very hazardous thing. Just when people are saying “peace and safety,” their

destruction will come suddenly. (See 1 Thess. 5:3.)

It seems that most of this world’s people aren’t too fond of apocalyptic predictions. Labeling those who expect bad things as “doomsayers,” they want, and expect, that the world will go on as it always has. Maybe it will even get better and better.

But that’s not what the Bible says. The Bible talks about a time of trouble at the end of the world, such as never was in all of earth’s previous history. It tells of plagues and destruction, panic and fear, persecution and heartache and tears. According to the Bible, all this will happen just before the second coming of Christ.

When the clock struck midnight on December 31, 1999, it was a man-made, human-celebrated event. But someday soon the clock will strike midnight for this world. There will be a celebration on that day by the righteous, who, after being reunited with their loved ones, will be on their way to heaven. But, sadly, there will also be sorrow, tears and destruction. The Bible tells us that there will be two groups of people on that great day—the righteous and the wicked. It also predicts that most of the world will fall into the second (wicked) category, for Jesus Himself said that while the path to destruction is broad and traveled by many people, the road to eternal life is quite different. In fact, “few there be that find it.” (See Matt. 7:13, 14.)

Now that the millennial fever of 1999 has come and gone, perhaps we should focus on the “real” millennium. In fact, that’s where our efforts should have been concentrated all along, because all indications from the Bible are that:

- it is coming,
- it is coming very soon and
- those who are ready for that great day in time will be so because they got ready now.

The fact that 1999 has come and gone without great worldwide catastrophe is no reason to be lulled into complacency. Y2K was a man-made crisis, a nonbiblical event. But the real millennium—when Jesus comes in the clouds of heaven to take us home in glory—is both biblical and coming very soon.

Jesus warned His disciples that, in preparation for His soon return, they should “watch and pray” that they enter not into temptation. (See Mark 14:38.) That is His warning for us as well. May we all be ready for that great day! ❧

**But someday soon the clock will strike midnight for this world.**

The saints share Christ's seat of judgment  
During that one thousand years;  
The lives of all the wicked are exposed  
With their follies and fears.  
All will be satisfied with God's justice—  
He only sought to save;  
Heaven did everything to rescue man  
From an eternal grave.  
—Kay Collins, *For a Thousand Years!*

“Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”—John, in Revelation 20:6 (NIV)

“The prophet Isaiah, looking forward to the time of Satan’s overthrow, exclaims: ‘How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! . . . Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that

made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?’ Isaiah 14:12-17.

“For six thousand years, Satan’s work of rebellion has ‘made the earth to tremble.’ He has ‘made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof.’ And he ‘opened not the house of his prisoners.’ For six thousand years his prison house has received God’s people, and he would have held them captive forever; but Christ has broken his bonds and set the prisoners free. . . .

“For a thousand years, Satan will wander to and fro in the desolate earth to behold the results of his rebellion against the law of God.”—Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, 659-660

“God’s people will judge the world.”—Paul, in 1 Corinthians 6:2 (New Century Version)

“God chose not to destroy Satan early in the great controversy in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding. If God had destroyed Satan quickly, many created beings might well have concluded that God was impatient and arbitrary, precisely as Satan had alleged.

“But by allowing Satan to torture and kill Him, Jesus demonstrated His own infinite goodness and Satan’s unparalleled badness. Now Jesus can eliminate oppressors and ultimately destroy the devil without being misunderstood.”—C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, vol. 2, 488

“Suppose you had a very dear friend on earth, but in heaven he was not to be found. Well, during the millennium you will find out just how God has dealt with his case and the cases of all others. God takes one thousand years for this work. He will run no risk of having one single doubt in any mind about His work for fallen man.

“During this period God allows the saved to sit, as it were, beside Him and learn how hard He tried to save every person. . . . When it is all over we shall say, ‘True and righteous are thy judgments.’”—Arthur E. Lickey, *God Speaks to Modern Man*, 594

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**Hour Times** P.O. Box 426, Coldwater, MI 49036



# When the Whistle Blows

What the "Real" Millennium Means to You

By Cari Haus

The play clock is winding down in the final minutes of an all-out, winner-takes-all hockey game, and the atmosphere is intense. Players are sailing in all directions at higher and higher rates of speed, slapping the puck from one side of the rink to the other in a last-ditch effort to score before time runs out. Meanwhile, the goalies, on opposite ends of the rink, outvie each other with a series of spectacular knee-jerk reactions and truly incredible saves.

Then a whistle blows, the action suddenly stops, and a referee waves the perpetrator of some infraction into a penalty box.

"Two minutes!" blares the loudspeaker.

"Two minutes???" wails a coach. For this time period—which seems like just a moment on an ordinary day—stretches into an eternity on ice.

You don't have to like hockey to understand it. Forget the brutality of the game, and focus on the two teams—for this tightly played battle of wits and wills has a lesson for us all.

Here we are: the saved and the lost. We are dressed in opposing uniforms (sheep and goats; see Matthew 25:31-46), protecting opposing ends of the "ice" and locked in a struggle that only one side can win.

The play clock is winding down in the final minutes of earth's history, and the atmosphere tingles with pressure. Saints and sinners sail in all directions at higher and higher rates of speed, slap-

ping ideas, theology and even one another from one side of the rink to the other in a last-ditch effort to score before time runs out. Meanwhile, Satan, defending his end of the ice, nearly outdoes himself with a series of knee-jerk reactions and truly spectacular saves.

Then a whistle blows, the crowd falls silent and the action suddenly stops. Jesus, who has seen enough enforcers, fistfights and foul plays to last an eternity, has come to rescue His team. Squadrons of heavenly paratroopers drop out of the sky to decimate the opposition, as Jesus rockets His team onto a cloud-powered "airbus" and turns His sights on home.

Then God (in the guise of a referee) waves Satan into the ultimate penalty box.

"A thousand years," He thunders.

"A thousand years?" wails the devil. But no ears are open to hear his cry. For the wicked are dead, and the saints have relocated. They are in heaven now, and they plan to stay there for the next thousand years.

"Incredible," one says.

"Far-fetched," says another.

But that's what the Bible teaches. There will be a thousand years—a soon-coming millennium—which the saints will spend in glory while

**The play clock is winding down in the final minutes of earth's history, and the atmosphere tingles with pressure.**

the devil cools his heels down on this old earth.

And this millennium is important for you to know about: otherwise, you could find yourself playing on the wrong team.

#### TIME-OUT FOR THE DEVIL

One of the prime “players” in the Bible’s thousand-year period is, of course, the devil. And it will be a real change of pace for him—going from the hectic, all-or-nothing shoot-out for souls in the end of time to a thousand years of deathly silence.

The Bible tells us that at the time of Christ’s second coming, a great angel will lay “hold on the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan,” and will bind him “for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:2<sup>a</sup>). Satan is cast “into the bottomless pit . . . so that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while” (verse 3).

Notice the three major points in the passage:

1. Satan is cast into the “bottomless pit” (God’s penalty box). In the Bible, the Greek word for *bottomless pit* also refers to the desolate state of the earth at the beginning of creation week. So at the end of time the earth will be desolate, just as it was at the dawn of Creation. And that’s where Satan will be.

2. Satan is bound to the earth. He won’t be able to leave! And what’s more, he won’t have anybody to tempt or deceive during his 1,000-year hiatus (see Rev. 20:3), because, as we shall see in a moment, the believers are all in heaven, and the unbelievers are all dead.

3. After the thousand years are up, Satan “must be released for a little while” (Rev. 20:3). At the end of the 1,000 years Satan will again have someone to deceive—though only for a little while. “Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea” (Rev. 20:7, 8). In Ezekiel 38 and 39, Gog and Magog refer to the great enemies of God’s people. At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan is released from his prison by the resurrection of the unbelievers,

#### A “REST” FOR THE WICKED

Unbelievers who are alive at the Second Coming will suffer a rather unhappy fate, for “when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe” (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

The apostle John depicted the same terrible scene as it was shown him in vision. At the second coming of Jesus, “the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’” (Rev. 6:15-17).

The lost leaders of false religion will be “cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were [will be] killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse” (Rev. 19:20, 21).

At Jesus’ second advent, living unbelievers are put to death, and those who died unbelieving remain in their graves. Revelation 20:5 explains: “The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.” The rest of the dead are the unbelievers who died before Jesus’ coming, as well as those who were put to death at His appearing.

#### THE HOPE OF BELIEVERS

Believers who died in the Lord will be raised from the dead at the second coming of Jesus. Caught up into the clouds with the living believers, they will meet Jesus their Savior, who has come to deliver them from this old world of sin. So at Jesus’ second advent, both resurrected believers and living believers are taken to be with Him in heaven.

Jesus described the same scene to His disciples, “They will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven

with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt. 24:30, 31). It is then that Jesus takes His children to His Father’s house, to the mansions He

## Believers who died in the Lord will be raised from the dead at the second coming of Jesus.

has been preparing for them in heaven; and it is there, in heaven, that the righteous enjoy the 1,000 years of peace, purity and perfection in the presence of their Lord and in fellowship with one another.

The beloved apostle John provides a graphic depiction of the believers in heaven right after the second coming of Jesus. He wrote: “I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” (Rev. 7:9, 10).

John wanted to know who these people were who were standing so triumphantly and victoriously before God’s throne. He was told: “These are the ones who came out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them” (Rev. 7:14, 15).

This great multitude of saved ones whom John saw in vision represents those who will pass through the great tribulation just before the coming of Jesus. They will be delivered from it by His coming. (See Matt. 24:21, 22.)

#### CITIZENS OF HEAVEN

The New Testament reminds us that Christian believers are or should be:

- citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20);
- earnestly desiring to go to heaven (2 Cor. 5:2);
- laying up their hope in heaven (Col. 1:5);

- mindful of their “better” and “enduring possession” in heaven (Heb. 10:34) and
- preparing for their “inheritance incorruptible and undefiled . . . that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4).

### JUDGING THE WORLD

In contrast to the fate of the devil and his followers, the believers will spend the 1,000 years with Christ in heaven. They are the “blessed and holy,” the ones who have “part in the first resurrection” (Rev. 20:6).

Jesus predicted that His disciples will “sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28). Paul said that saved believers will “judge the world” (1 Cor. 6:2) and “angels” (verse 3). Undoubtedly, he meant fallen angels, Satan’s demons that had been cast out of heaven with him (Rev. 12:9). Jesus said through John, “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Rev. 3:21).

“I saw thrones,” wrote the apostle John, “and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. . . . And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4).

### WHY WILL SAINTS JUDGE THE LOST?

“But why are the saved judging the lost during the new millennium?” you may be wondering. “Isn’t judgment reserved for God, and Him only?”

Suppose you are one of the saved in heaven, and one of your loved ones is lost. Wouldn’t you want to be thoroughly certain that your dear one had been treated with complete justice?

The Lord doesn’t want sin to appear in the universe ever again. (See Nah. 1:9.) He also doesn’t want anyone to question His love and justice at any time during the eternal ages to follow. So, in His great mercy, God will allow the saved to look into the records of the lost so that they can verify that He has handled everyone with the same infinite degree of love and justice.

### A MILLENNIAL OVERVIEW

Let’s review, then, the Bible timetable for the soon-coming 1,000-year period:

When Jesus comes again:	the living saints	the dead in Christ	the living wicked	Satan
	go to heaven.	are resurrected and go to heaven.	are destroyed.	is chained to this desolate earth for a thousand years.

“But what happens at the end of the millennium?” you may be wondering. For an understanding of this end-time scenario, let’s return to our “heavenly” hockey game. For it is there, at the end of the 1,000-year period, that Satan will be let out of his penalty box.

### WHEN PLAY RESUMES

After enduring the longest period of solitary confinement in the history of this universe, Satan is “freed” by the resurrection of the wicked. At last he has something to do again! This is his last chance, and, as he skates onto the ice to marshal his team, he knows it.

There is just one problem with the “game,” however. The heavenly team is not returning to the ice. Instead, they are high and lifted up, somewhere between the scoreboard and outer space.

But nothing—not even the exalted position of the opposing team or a view of Christ on the heavenly throne—can faze the enthusiasm of the devil. The rink explodes with activity as the wise men, the great men, the generals and knights and kings who served Satan all their lives now bend their united energies toward one united purpose: a deadly attack on the God they rejected, His followers, and the New Jerusalem.

Then the city comes down and rests on the “rink” of this earth. (See Rev. 21:2.) The ultimate rebel, the exalted angel who stood in the presence of God and even led the heavenly choir, raises his arm to attack his Maker once more. And a thousand arms rise with his, a sea of surrounding faces glare at the golden city as a million hellish weapons take aim at the heavenly portals that would have, could have and should have held their home.


But they never do fire their weapons. For God, in His great mercy, stops the game once and for all. The gates of mercy have been shut long before; this day is a day of judgment. Then Christ, sitting high on the vantage point of

His great white throne, pronounces the doom of the wicked. (See Rev. 20:11-13; Matt. 25:31-46.) It is not His choice that has led to this awful moment, but theirs. For He has wooed them and loved them to the end, giving His own life to take their place.

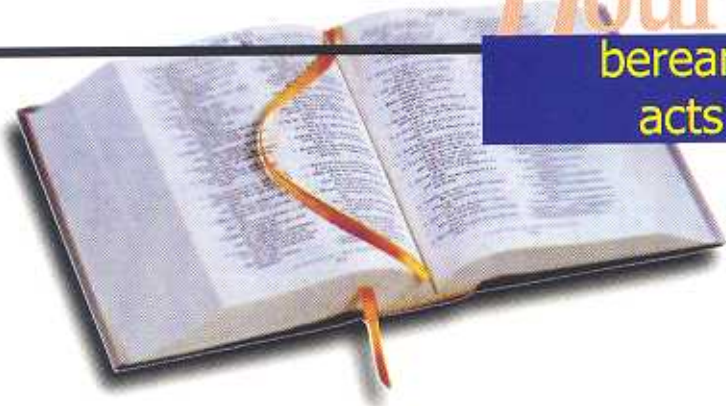
But the time has come to rid the universe of this awful leprosy called sin, and to do it once and for all. And this task may not be accomplished while the perpetrators of sin remain. Neither can they be happy, for “the way of transgressors is hard” (Prov. 13:15), and sin results in no lasting satisfaction.

A cleansing fire falls “from God out of heaven” (Rev. 20:9), devouring the maddened throng and Satan, their misguided leader. The horrible “hockey game” is over, together with the millennium and the lives of all who rejected the One who loved them so much.

And, thankfully, God will not leave the earth in desolation. No, this dark planet, which started as an “abyss” and later spends one thousand years as the ultimate “abyss,” has a happier ending than that. Our loving Lord will re-create it (Rev. 21:1). There, after the millennium, God will be tabernacled, or dwelling, with His people. And, on the earth made new, there will follow an eternity of perfect happiness for the saints—those who, in the midst of earthly activity and adversity, chose to be on the heavenly “hockey” team.

Of course, none of this has happened yet. But you can be sure that it will, for the Bible says so. In the meantime, you know that this really isn’t a hockey game. This is serious. There is still an opportunity to be part of Christ’s team. Jesus is looking for a few good men, women and children. Won’t you join Him today? 

\*All Bible texts are taken from the New King James Version.



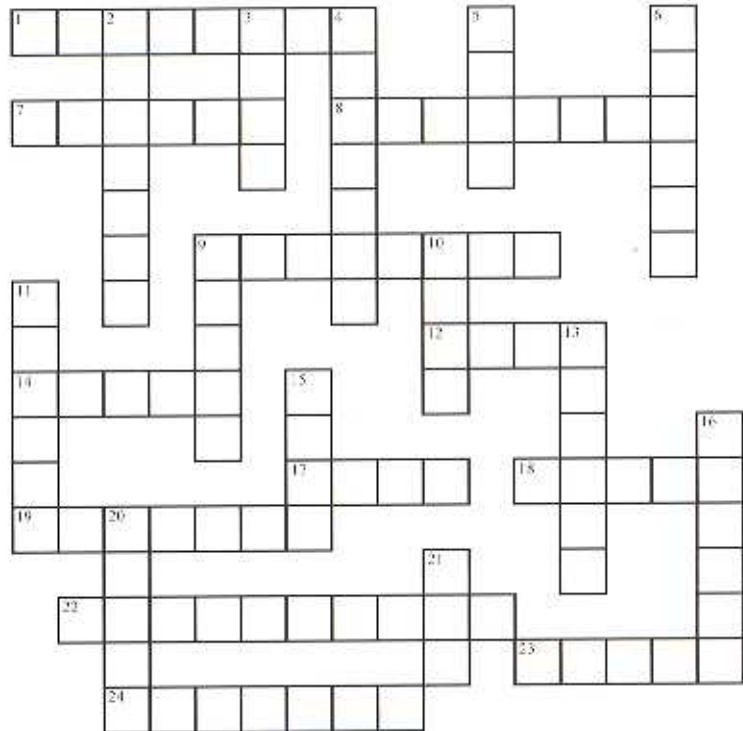
Use King James Version for answers.

### Across

1. "The Lord blessed the Sabbath day and \_\_\_\_\_ it" (Exodus 20:11)
7. Wood used in Noah's ark (Genesis 6:14)
8. Released instead of Jesus (Matthew 27:17, 26)
9. David's best friend (1 Samuel 18:1)
12. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also \_\_\_\_\_" (Galatians 6:7)
14. God told Moses to remove these, because of holy ground (Exodus 3:5)
17. He was noted for a lot of red body hair (Genesis 25:25)
18. Wise men gifts included gold, frankincense and \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 2:11)
19. Got his head stuck in a tree (2 Samuel 18:9)
22. Age of Noah when the flood came (Genesis 7:6)
23. Was criticized by brother and sister for marrying an Ethiopian (Numbers 12:1)
24. Philistine David slew (1 Samuel 17:23-51)

### Down

2. Naaman's disease (2 Kings 5:6)
3. Second animal God used in dealing with Jonah (Jonah 4:5-7)
4. Woman who judged Israel (Judges 4:4)
5. He killed Absalom (2 Samuel 18:14)
6. Better than weapons of war (Ecclesiastes 9:18)
9. David's father (1 Samuel 17:17)
10. Instrument played by David (1 Samuel 16:23)
11. He said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15-19)
13. What did Jonah do while in the fish's belly? (Jonah 2:1)
15. Noah's sons were \_\_\_\_\_, Ham and Japheth (Genesis 6:10)
16. Jesus wore a crown of \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 27:29)
20. David's weapon to fight Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40)
21. The number of horns the beast has in Revelation 13 (Revelation 13:1)



**S**tudy to show thyself approved . . . rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Tim. 2:15.

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Photo by PDBest

By Louis R. Torres

It was midnight in Alexandria, Virginia, and most of the town was asleep. Except for one resident, that is. For there, in a sleepy suburb, Evangeline Sincere has just bolted upright in her bed. Trembling in fear, it takes the 34-year-old woman more than a few minutes to remember who she is, where she is and why she is here.

Finally, as her eyes become accustomed to the dark and familiar surroundings of her bedroom, Evangeline realizes the happy truth. This nightmare—this horrible terror just past—had been just a dream.

Evangeline sighs and, sinking into her pillow, relives it once more:

She had been driving home from her job at an insurance office when it happened. Just east of Tyson's Corners on the Washington, D.C., beltway, an Itaska motor home swerved erratically and then, abruptly, swung across her lane. Desperately hitting the brakes of her '92 Camry, Evangeline skidded to a stop as the Itaska crashed into the nearby railing.

Evangeline waited in her car until the state police arrived to investigate. When she finally did get out and walk up to the motor home, Evangeline was just in time to meet a puzzled patrolman stepping out the door.

"Did you see the driver leave?" he asked. "There's no one here."

"No," Evangeline replied, "that just can't be. I've been here since the accident happened, and no one left!"

Ms. Sincere didn't know it then, but most

of the highways in the Washington, D.C., area were already blocked by similar accidents. News commentators reported still-fastened seatbelts and shaken passengers insisting that drivers had "just disappeared," while equally shaken drivers described one or more "vanishing" passengers.

At this point, Evangeline's dream shifted to the CNN evening news. There she learned that thousands of "driverless" happenings had taken place all over the world. Pilotless planes landed with or without all their passengers, and trains hurtled down the tracks minus their engineers. Meanwhile, an ominous number of ocean liners had reported missing crewmembers, who they could only assume had fallen overboard.

Could the secret rapture have happened without her? Frantically, Evangeline tried to call her parents, but they "weren't home." She dialed her best friends, only to find them missing. In her heart, she knew what had happened. Operation "Evacuation Earth" had begun, and she had been "left behind."

"Left behind" to suffer the seven years of tribulation. "Left behind" to endure the reign of the antichrist in Jerusalem. "Left behind" to hear the seven blasts of God's trumpet announcing the seven great plagues!

"I've been left! I've been left! I've been left!" Evangeline wrung her hands and cried out in despair. This is how she finally found herself, groping for a phone in the covers, there

**Could the secret rapture have happened without her?**

in the safety of her bed. Reaching for a light, Evangeline pulls out her Bible and begins to read.

"I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Luke 17:34-36).

"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Matt. 24:40, 41).

Evangeline sinks back into her pillow, so happy this was a dream—yet wondering if it will always be so.

"Is there really going to be a 'secret rapture?'" she muses. "Is that what these texts really teach—that the righteous are simply going to disappear someday soon?"

Texts such as the ones above, with one being "taken" and the other left, are used to support this view. But is this really biblical? Will the "rapture" really be secret? Will Christians really be "taken," or are they being "sincerely taken" by the whole idea of a secret rapture?

To answer these questions, let's take a look at some common teachings about the "rapture," or second coming of Christ, and the biblical facts that refute them:

**Popular Teaching 1: The coming of Jesus will be in two separate events: one before the "great tribulation," when He will secretly take his Church home, and a second stage, when He will come in power and great glory.**

Nowhere does the Bible speak of two separate "comings" surrounding a great tribulation. Even the word *rapture* itself cannot be found in the Bible. In 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Paul describes the Second Coming as happening right after the "man of sin," or antichrist. In fact, Paul says the antichrist will be destroyed with the "brightness of His coming." This is in direct opposition to the teaching that the antichrist will appear after the rapture.

Rapturists rely on two Greek words, *apokalypsis* (revelation) and *parousia* (rapture), to separate the coming of Christ into two events. They claim that the "coming" and "revela-

tion" are two separate events. But both words describe the Second Coming. (See Luke 17:26, 30; Matt. 24:37.)

**Popular Teaching 2: Because Jesus said He will come as a "thief in the night" (2 Peter 3:10), His return will be very secret.**

Jesus used the example of a thief to explain the surprise nature of His coming, not to say that it would be in secret. The fact that a thief approaches the scene of crime stealthily and unobserved doesn't mean he is invisible. A thief's arrival is tangible, physical and always unannounced. He

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**The Bible clearly teaches that the antichrist will come before Christ's second coming.**

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comes when you least expect him.

When Jesus said, "I come as a thief," (Rev. 16:15), He uses this ill-reputed character not to portray his own, for He is Holy, just and good. Neither does He employ it to hint that His coming is of an invisible nature. Rather, His coming would be a surprise. The element of surprise is also in the parable of the ten virgins. (See Matthew 25.)

**Popular Teaching 3: The righteous will be taken out of the world before the tribulation.**

Noah during the time of the flood, a type of the Second Coming, was not removed when the flood came, but was protected. The same is true of Moses and the Israelites during the ten plagues in Egypt, and so it will be with God's people in the end-time. There is no biblical example for the "secret rapture."

**Popular Teaching 4: There will be seven years of tribulation between the "secret rapture" and Christ's second coming.**

Most rapturist literature and theology mention the seven-year tribulation period without offering any Bible proof or explanation. Millions have assumed that it must be so well documented that no proof is needed. However, the opposite is true: There just isn't any evidence to give.

Instead, the seven-year theory is "justified" by lifting a prophecy in

Daniel 9 completely out of its context. In this prophecy, God foretold the exact year the Messiah would be anointed, of His death, and the end of the sacrificial system. This 70-week prophecy actually applied to 490 years (a day stands for a year in Bible prophecy; see Ezekiel 4:6). Counting 490 years forward from the decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem (457 B.C.), we come to A.D. 27—the very year that Jesus was baptized by John and the Holy Spirit anointed Him for His ministry.

Daniel's prophecy went on to say that the Messiah would be "cut off" in the middle of the week, "but not for Himself." In other words, He would be crucified after 3½ years of ministry.

Yet even after they crucified His son, God gave the Jewish nation 3½ more years of probation. During this time, if they, as a nation, had accepted the Messiah, they could have remained His special people. But, unfortunately, they did not.

So we see that the entire last week of Daniel's prophecy maps out the ministry, sacrifice and national rejection of Christ, and that it has nothing to do with seven years of nonbiblical end-time tribulation.

**Popular Teaching 5: The antichrist will appear after the "secret rapture."**

The Bible clearly teaches that the antichrist will come before Christ's second coming. In the words of Paul, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [of our gathering together unto Him] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin [antichrist] be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:3, 4).

This verse says that the antichrist will be revealed before, not after, Jesus comes. But though Paul combated the emerging spirit of the antichrist during his lifetime, the crowning act of this great deception will occur just before the return of Christ: "And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit

of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. 2:8). This clearly states that the antichrist will be destroyed when Christ comes. So he could not possibly arrive after the Second Advent.

Perhaps most convincing of all is the statement in Revelation 20:4, which assures us that some of those raised in the first resurrection are those who refused to worship the beast and his

## Nowhere does the Scripture speak of a second chance.

mark. Of course, this could never happen if those saints were raptured before the antichrist, or beast, ever appears!

**Popular Teaching 6: Those who miss the "rapture" will be given a second chance to be saved.**

Nowhere does the Scripture speak of a second chance, nor does the Bible anywhere speak of people being saved after Jesus comes:

- "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

- "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me" (Rev. 22:11,12). Evidently, probation closes just prior to the Second Advent!

When Jesus comes the second time, He comes for the harvest. The harvest represents "the end of the world" (Matt. 13:39). It is at that time that there is a separation between the righteous and the unrighteous (Matt. 13:37-39, 41-43).

When Jesus and His holy angels appear, then "before Him shall be gathered all nations" (Matt. 25:32). There will be only two classes in that great company—for the destiny of each has been set by what he or she did before the coming of Christ. This is why it is so important for us to understand these things and be ready now—for there will be no "second chance."

**Popular Teaching 7: Jesus**

**will bring the saints with Him when He comes.**

It is the angels who will accompany Christ at His second coming. And the righteous dead, rather than accompanying Him, will be raised to meet Jesus when He comes.

Jesus Himself did not teach that He would bring saints with him. His words give evidence that the dead remaining on earth necessitated His return. He said, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." "And this is the will

of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54). Four times Jesus repeated the phrase *at the last day*.

**Popular Teaching 8: The long-awaited Messiah will be reunited with the saints in Jerusalem.**

Many are expecting the long-awaited Messiah to appear somewhere in Jerusalem and restore the kingdom. All the miracles and wonders that they assume He will perform are being anxiously anticipated. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 teaches that Jesus doesn't touch the earth when He comes, but rather that the waiting saints will meet Him in the sky. The verse says, "in the air." The meeting is in the sky. This gathering, or rendezvous, will take place in the air, because this is the appointed place specified. Jesus promised that He would come and take us home to heaven. Since He is the One doing the rescuing, He, and not man, has selected the place for the gathering.

The importance of understanding what will really happen at Christ's second coming cannot be overemphasized. For if we know what is really going to happen, Satan will not be able to deceive us with a counterfeit coming, for he simply can't accomplish all that Christ has promised will happen at the real coming:

- There will be a "great earth-

quake" (Rev. 16:18).

- "The heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll" (Isa. 34:4).

- The wicked will see Him come, and be destroyed. (See Rev. 6:12-17; 2 Thess. 2:8.)

- The cities will be "broken down" and fall. (See Jer. 4:26; Rev. 16:19.)

- Every island flees away, and the mountains are moved. (See Rev. 16:20.)

- The righteous dead will literally and physically rise from their graves. (See 1 Thess. 4:14-16.)

- The righteous living will be lifted to meet the Lord in the air. (See 1 Thess. 4:14-17.)

And, finally, all God's people, those who have been dead and those who are alive, will literally meet in the air for their long-awaited trip.

To sum it all up, the rapturists are predicting only a fraction of all that the Bible describes is going to literally transpire at the Second Coming. Because there is so much left out of what is truly revealed, it will not be a great challenge to produce a false christ who will walk on the earth and deceive the populace. However, when we accept all that the Bible teaches on the subject, then no one, not even the devil himself with all his power and cunning, will be able to reproduce the splendor, glory and power necessary to accomplish all the earthly and heavenly cataclysmic episodes that will transpire at the Lord's coming, not to mention the gathering of all God's children and their transport to heaven.

What a trip that will be! Astronauts today are the only persons fortunate enough to be able to go into space. But the day is soon coming when not just a select few but all who have made the necessary preparations will be able to take that flight. What a procession that will be! Speeding through space, we will be able to view many of the splendors and glories our Maker created. Finally, we will arrive at the city, and the angels will swing wide the pearly gates and escort us into God's marvelous city. At last we will behold with our own eyes all that in this life we couldn't even begin to imagine. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9). ❧



## Water

By Vicki B. Griffin, Ph.D., MACN, Author, Lecturer, Researcher

### WHERE'S THE WATER?

How much water do Americans drink every day? Well, have you ever had the opportunity to visit Niagra Falls when it is in full flow, and watch the giant cataracts of water surge over the gigantic horseshoe precipice? If you watch for just 30 seconds, you will see 33 million gallons thunder over those falls! But that's not how much *water* Americans drink each day—that's how much *coffee* they drink!

### BUT WHERE'S THE WATER?

Well, if you check with the Beverage Marketing Corporation, you will discover that the Average American consumes 537 cans of soda pop every year. In the South, it is more to the tune of 663 per person per year! But where's the water? Perhaps we should pay a visit to the more health conscious. Many well-meaning parents are switching from soda pop to fruit juice as the beverage of choice for their toddlers and children. Children under the age of five consume an average of nine gallons of juice annually. Children under the age of 12 consume more juice than any other age group. They are getting anywhere from 25 to 60 percent of their total daily energy intake from juice alone! But where's the water?

### WATER, WATER—ANYWHERE?

Water. It covers more than 70 percent of the earth's

surface and fills a large percentage of the air we breathe. It accounts for 60 to 70 percent of our body weight. We play in it, wash in it, relax in it and float on it. But are we drinking it? Next to air, water is the most important ingredient in the recipe for a healthy life. Remember—flavored, caffeinated or sugary drinks do not take the place of Adam's Ale—which was the beverage of choice for God's first man—water!

### NOTHING CAN TAKE ITS PLACE

Some of the ingredients in many drinks can actually cause more frequent urination and subsequent dehydration. When you are dehydrated your body is stressed in a number of ways. Dehydration can cause or aggravate fatigue and irritability, and cause mental confusion and decline. It's harder to think, and it's harder for your body to excrete toxins and salts, so the body tends to become bloated. According to the American Dietetic Association, many Americans are dehydrated. Dehydration of as little as 2 percent loss of body weight can reduce your mental and physical abilities. New research indicates that reduced water consumption can increase the risk of urinary stone disease; cancers of the breast, colon and urinary tract; immune-suppression; childhood and adolescent obesity; infection; hormonal disturbances; mitral valve prolapse; and altered salivary gland function.

### CAN YOU DRINK 2500 GALLONS OF WATER A DAY?

If you had to drink all the water your body uses for its different functions, you'd have to drink 2500 gallons each day! Fortunately, your body re-uses all but a small amount—but you need that small amount! Your kidneys filter 400 gallons of blood every day, yet only about 5 1/2 glasses of water from that blood are voided as urine. Another two glasses are exhaled in breathing, while two more are lost through normal perspiration, and about 1/2 cup by way of the bowels.

### FIVE CHEERS FOR WATER!

You need about 8 glasses of water per day. Why? There are five important reasons: (1) Water is basic to balanced nutrition. It helps in the digestive process to break, soften and transport food. The blood, which is 90% water, transports nutrients. (2) Water controls body temperature—through perspiration. (3) Water is a lubricant. In the same way that oil prevents friction between machinery parts, water prevents friction between the body's joints and muscles. (4) Water minimizes dehydration. (5) Water reduces stress on the circulatory system. It enables your blood to carry life and energy-giving nutrients to the body's cells.

## Fast Facts

- **Eating a good breakfast, with plenty of fresh fruit and whole grains, enhances performance, cognition, memory, recall, and mood. *British Journal of Nutrition* 1997 April.**
- **Aerobic exercise can improve the symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome (CMS), a new study shows. "Fatigue, functional capacity, and fitness were significantly better after exercise than after flexibility treatment," researchers state. *British Medical Journal*, 1997 June.**

## CLEAR BENEFITS!

Drinking plenty of water reduces the risk of bladder cancer because water dilutes urine and increases the frequency of urination. This, in turn, can reduce the contact between cancer-causing toxins in urine and the cells of the bladder. Interestingly, drinking mineral-rich hard water may help prevent heart attacks, according to recent research. A Swedish study of women ages 50 to 69 found that those who lived in towns with "hard water," which contained high levels of magnesium and calcium, were 30 percent less likely to die of a heart attack than those who drank the softest water, which contains lower levels of the mineral. Spring water rich in these nutrients may also be protective against osteoporosis. Conversely, water softeners work by exchanging the calcium and magnesium ions in the water with sodium or potassium ions. Depending on the hardness of the inflow water the treated water can end up containing significant amounts of sodium or potassium. Patients with kidney disease, diabetes or hypertension be warned against drinking water treated in potassium-based water softeners. Bottled water will vary in mineral content. Also, chlorinated water is associated with increased risk of bladder and colon cancer.

## NOW HERE'S AN IMPORTANT TIP:

Try having a glass of water about 45 minutes before breakfast, instead of coffee. It will charge your digestive system so your stomach will be ready for breakfast! Then, instead of drinking with your meals, which dilutes digestive juices and causes indigestion, try having your water between meals. You will not go to the table thirsty, and will be able to eat the right amounts of food and relieve

your poor stomach of the extra work that snacks create! We will talk more about that later. By the way—for proper hydration, the urine should be pale.

## ARE YOU THIRSTY?

Jesus tells us, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" Isa. 55:1. When we see how vital water is to life and health, is it any wonder that Jesus refers to Himself and the precious gospel invitation as "the Water of life"? Listen. "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that beareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" Rev. 22:17. We all need plenty of water—both physically and spiritually. Will you come? Will you drink? ☩

**Drinking plenty of water reduces the risk of bladder cancer**

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## recipes

### CHICKEE CHEESE SPREAD

#### Ingredients:

- 2 C Garbanzo beans, cooked
- 1/2 C Cashews, raw
- 2 Tb Sesame tahini
- 2 tsp Onion powder
- 1 1/2 tsp Salt
- 1/4 C Lemon juice
- 1/4 C Nutritional yeast flakes
- 1/2 C Pimentos
- 1 tsp Garlic powder
- Enough water to blend

#### Directions:

- Grind cashews in blender.
- Then add ALL other ingredients and blend with enough water to make it

creamy and thick.

- If you are using a regular blender, do this recipe half at a time to ensure proper blending consistency.
- If using canned garbanzo beans, rinse first, and use 1/2 tsp less salt.
- Place in a container and chill.
- Serve.

#### Serving Suggestions:

- This one is great in sandwiches, burritos or tortillas.
- Use it just like you would any other brick cheese.

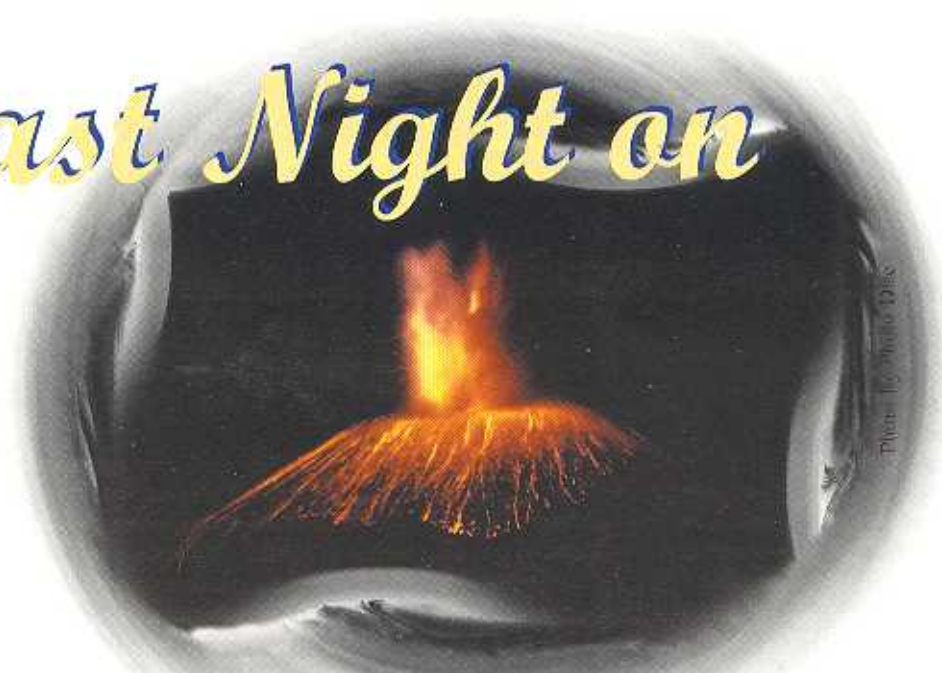


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# The Last Night on Earth



Adapted from *The Last Night On Earth*  
by Joe Crews

The lifelong alcoholic thrashed about in a hospital bed, gasping for every breath. One by one, every function of his body was shutting down, and he knew it. His mind was still clear. Above the sound of his own breathing, he heard the routine hospital noises, together with the stifled sobs and whispered conversations of his wife and children. Then above him there was a face—a face he had seen often in the last two weeks of his illness. It was his wife's minister, a man he knew, but whose appeals he had always rejected.

"Edward," the voice was saying, "Do you know that God loves you?"

"Yes." It took all the energy Edward could muster to answer that question.

"You know things are bad for you, Edward," the voice went on. "Do you want to make it right with God now?"

"Yes," the feeble voice answered again. The Baptist minister adjusted the oxygen tubes around the dying man's mouth, making it easier for him to talk.

"Repeat after me," he whispered. Then he led Edward in a simple prayer of repentance. It was the first prayer Edward

had prayed in years and, to the knowledge of his friends and family, probably his last. For that night, Edward lapsed into a coma. Within a day he was dead. And so, for Edward, that night when he finally prayed his prayer of

commitment was indeed "the last night on earth."

It's an experience that every one of us must pass through, this "last night on earth." For whether we are a deacon or a drunkard, that time will come. Yes, every person alive on planet Earth today will one day pass through his or her last night on earth. In the dramatic words of the Bible, "Evil on evil says the Lord, the Eternal . . . it is coming, the hour is striking, and striking at you, the hour and the end. Your doom has come" (Ezek. 7:5-7, Moffett translation).

After Edward's death, the Baptist minister had a few words of counsel for Edward's two sons. Like their father, they were hard-driving, hard-drinking and godless men.

"Just because your father had a chance to find Christ on his deathbed, don't ever feel certain that you will have the same opportunity," he told them. "You may never have that chance. You need to make things right with God, and do it now."

Urgently, the minister pressed home the Bible truth, knowing that someday these men would face their last night on earth. And, like the people bustling about Pompeii, the teenagers kicking snowballs on the decks of the Titanic or so many millions before and after them, they might not even know that their time has come. Just like the people who lived in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, they would be overtaken without warning and thrust into eternity—whether they were ready or not. Of course, God in His great mercy tried to warn

**"You need to make things right with God, and do it now."**

the inhabitants of Sodom. But as Lot made the rounds to his sons-in-law on the eve of that terrible event, his urgent pleas were ridiculed as groundless fears. Indeed, "he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law" (Gen. 19:14). They actually laughed at the old man as he wept over their unconcern!

How different things could have been if they had understood what was coming. How eagerly they would have hurried out of Sodom had they truly believed that it was their last night on earth.

But like the campers who refused to leave Mount St. Helens, or the victims of plane crashes, heart attacks, traffic accidents, murders and so many other causes of sudden death, they had no idea what was coming.

#### NEARER THAN WE THINK

Most of us won't know when that fatal moment approaches in our own lives, either. The truth is, none of us knows the hour of our death. Yet for many of us reading these lines, that "last night on earth" is much nearer than we can think or imagine.

Of course, Satan is cleverly exploiting this personal area of the unknown in each one of us. He knows that procrastination is his most effective weapon in causing people to be lost. The longer the decision is postponed, the easier it is to wait a little longer, until finally the putting-off process turns into a lethal addiction. The will waxes weaker and weaker, as delay saps the initiative and makes it less and less likely that the individual will act before it is too late.

#### LINGERING OVER THE CALL

It's a dangerous thing to "linger over the call" of God, for the Bible has some very sobering things to say on the subject. When Paul reasoned with Felix about righteousness and judgment, we are told that the governor trembled and promised to call for Paul when he had a more "convenient season." (See Acts 24:25.) That "better time" never came, and as far as we know, Felix went into a

Christless grave at the end of his life.

King Agrippa was also deeply convicted as he listened to Paul's testimony about Christ. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:28) were the words of this king. What a tragedy that with all the trembling and conviction, neither of those Roman rulers actually moved to obey what they knew to be right. "Almost" is not enough.

Sometimes people are faced with instantaneous choices—choices that affect the entire future direction of their lives. In these rare instances (and perhaps they are not as rare as we think), that golden moment of opportunity flashes into focus. All that remains are a few precious moments, and then the opportunity disappears forever. No doubt Felix and Agrippa faced their most significant and favorable opportunities to choose life over death when they heard the apostle Paul, and they blew it. They waited too long, and their conviction faded and disappeared.

Men and women do the same thing today. They wait for more convenient circumstances, a different job, retirement or more financial security.

"Someday I will surrender to Christ," they promise themselves. "Someday I will obey the truth—but not until the time is right."

Satan hears those promises, and immediately he begins to manipulate events so that the "right moment" never comes. As a result, many will still be waiting for the right moment when the door of probation has closed forever for the human race. No wonder the Bible declares that, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

When the flood came and the door of the ark closed, it didn't matter how near a person was to the ark at that moment. Those who were one foot outside that door were just as lost as those who were miles away. After 120 years of pleading, the Spirit of God was withdrawn from the earth, the hand of God closed the door and the fate of a world was fixed and settled. Their experience is a testimony

for us today, for Jesus said, "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37).

There was no time for delay at the time of the flood, no time for delay

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## You are gambling with the salvation of your soul.

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when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, and there is no time for delay in these, the closing moments, of earth's history.

#### YOUR LAST NIGHT ON EARTH

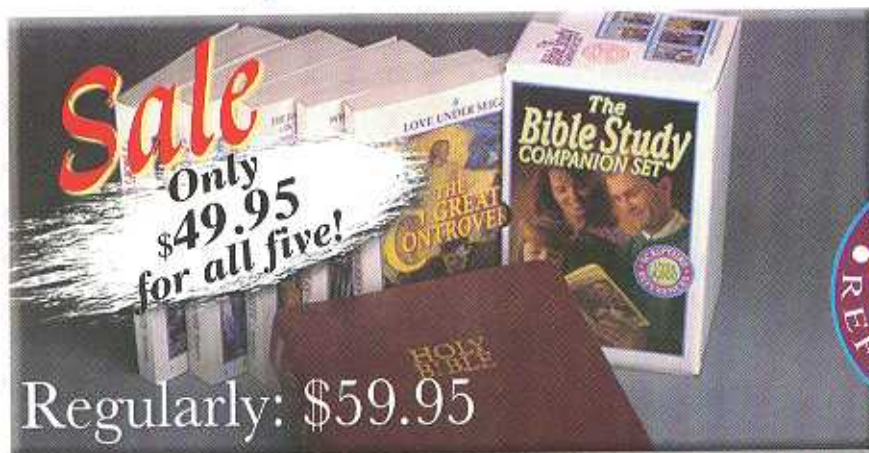
Someday soon—maybe sooner than we think—you and I will be spending our last night on earth. It may be sudden death that takes us, or a lingering illness. Or it may be when the heavens split wide open, and the glorious retinue of angels provides a dazzling freeway of splendor for the King of kings and Lord of lords. But the moment—whenever it is for each of us—will be unexpected, and it will be too late for those who waited till the door of mercy closed.

Are you one who has been postponing the day of decision, that unreserved surrender of your will? Please let me address you for a moment. There is a small chance that you may be right and that you will have another opportunity—but *it is only a chance!* There is another chance that you are dead wrong. You are gambling with the salvation of your soul. You are playing a deadly game of Russian roulette with eternal life. Everyday that passes the stakes go higher, and your chances of winning become less and less. The cards are stacked against you. Why gamble that you will have another chance in the future? You don't have to gamble. You can make a choice right now.

The door of the ark is still open, and it's only a step inside. Why not settle the uncertainty this very moment? Surrender your will and say "Yes" to the loving Savior, who longs to give you His peace and assurance. ❧

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