

*IS THIS
THE END
TIME?*



Cover — U. S. Air Force Photo

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“There have ALWAYS BEEN false prophets, wars and rumors of war, famines, pestilences and earthquakes . . .” some will claim. “It’s nothing new.” How can you KNOW whether this really IS the end-time generation? Can you PROVE it?

**THE
END
IS
AT HAND**

(I. PET. 4. 7.)



Chapter One

"THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN . . ."

YOU ARE living in *the time of the end*. But people have said that for centuries, haven't they?

Yes, they have.

And, surprisingly, we say it again today.

You are living in the time of the end — at the close of an age.

But, where do we get off telling you *we are living in the end time* when people have been saying the same thing for centuries?

After all, we could practically fill a room full of old and ancient books about predictions of the end of the world. As the story goes: "There have always been people who have said that." There have been people wandering around in religious and astrological circles talking about "the end of the world" from time immemorial.

People Have Always Said — "The End Is Nigh"

Throughout history men have been jeering at the proverbial picture of the eccentric, slightly mad, self-appointed "prophet of doom" who belligerently marches in

Ambassador College Photo

"DOOMSDAY PROPHET" — Hyde Park Corner, London. Note the skeptical or amused looks on audience's faces.

the face of general ridicule loudly proclaiming that "the end of the world is nigh." Usually such a person is pictured wearing what looks like an ankle-length "bedsheet" and open-toed sandals. His hair looks as though he had just received a severe electric shock — snow-white and wildly dishevelled. His eyes burn in darkened sockets sunken deeply into an ashen face. He carries a placard or sign emblazoned with crude lettering announcing his message of destruction.

His pessimistic diatribe is often referred to as a "Jeremiad." The term means "... a prolonged lamentation or complaint by one who is pessimistic about the present and who foresees a calamitous future." This definition is taken from a *misunderstanding* of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah.

Others Believed It Too

Not just the sunken-eyed "prophets of doom" believed the end of the world was near. Many types of other individuals in every age believed it too.

Some thought that the world surely couldn't go beyond 1,000 A.D.

There was the Black Death in Europe, the many medieval wars, mechanized warfare, the industrial and social revolutions of the 1700-1800's. All were thought to signal the end of the world.

And sometimes very sincere religious organizations have set specific dates and have had entire church memberships believing those dates signaled the end of the world.

Perhaps the most famous was in 1844-45. Notice an encyclopedia account:

In 1831 [William Miller] began to lecture, arguing that, the "two thousand three hundred days" of Daniel viii.14 meant 2300 years, and that these years began with Ezra's going up to Jerusalem in 457 B.C., and therefore came to an end in 1843, and urging his hearers to make ready for the final coming of Christ that year In spite of disappointment, many still



Above, UPI Photo;
Right, Wide World Photo



Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "... Science seems ready to confer on us, as its final gift, the power to erase human life from this planet."

believed with him that the time was near (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XVIII, p. 465, 1911 edition).

In the time of the early church it was generally believed that the fall of the Roman Empire meant that the end of the age was near. Tertullian's *Apology* records the following statement:

We know that a mighty shock is impending over the whole earth — in fact, the very end of all things threatening dreadful war — is only retarded by the continued existence of the Roman Empire.

But Rome fell and Christ didn't come. And He didn't

come in the Middle Ages, or in the time of the Crusades, or even by World War I.

So, all these people have something in common. They were all wrong. Not one of them was right. The end of the world hasn't come yet. We're still going along on a kind of disequilibrium. But, going along nevertheless.

Yes, all such individuals have ended up with "egg on their faces," because their prophecies haven't come to pass, much to the delight of a generally cynical and sardonic public. *The world is still here.* And so are the "prophets of doom"!

World Leaders Predict Impending Catastrophe

But the *general laughter* has been *dying down* as the world gets shakier. The world, it seems, is getting nervous. Many are beginning to shift uneasily in their once comfortable seats of cynicism.

Why?

Because *new* and *prestigious* voices are chiming in — the chorus grows louder! Now learned and dignified men of *science* and representatives from the hallowed halls of learning around the world are adding their voices to the frantic shrieks of impending catastrophe. *World leaders* are saying mankind's days are numbered unless we solve the problems of war, overpopulation and the destruction of our life-sustaining environment.

For example, Dr. George Wald, a Nobel Prize winner and professor of Biochemistry at Harvard, recently said, "*Civilization will end* within fifteen to thirty years unless immediate action is taken against problems now facing mankind, especially pollution, overpopulation and the possibility of nuclear war." It is "utterly meaningless and bankrupt," he says, "to believe that merely increasing food production will answer the problem of a growing population."

Dr. Herbert F. York, former chief scientist of the Pentagon, after describing the destructive power of the latest weapons of war, warned that "unless the nations agree to an arms rollback, our *civilization is doomed.*"

And in his inaugural address, the late President

Dwight D. Eisenhower stated: "In the swift rush of great events, we find ourselves groping to know the full sense and meaning of the times in which we live . . . How far have we come in man's long pilgrimage from darkness toward light? Are we nearing the light — a day of freedom and peace for all mankind? Or are the shadows of another night closing in upon us? . . . Science seems ready to confer upon us, as its final gift, THE POWER TO ERASE HUMAN LIFE FROM THIS PLANET."

These are sober men of science and seasoned world statesmen talking. Not wild-eyed fanatics walking around in togas and open-toed sandals with signs on their backs.

Yes, in spite of the fact that "*there have always been*" people telling us "the end of the world is nigh" — we say, THIS IS THE TIME OF THE END. NOT the end of this physical globe. But the end of man's age. And the dawning of a new age — *The Wonderful World Tomorrow*.



Chapter Two

NEVER BEFORE IN HISTORY

HISTORY has always had its skeptics. This generation is no exception.

In spite of the pressing realities of pollution, overpopulation, ever-escalating wars and the constant threat of new conflicts, growing rebellion of youth, the breakdown of world morality, the looming spectre of planet-wide disease epidemics and a host of other life-threatening problems — somehow these “optimistic” idealists feel the “greater good in human nature” will somehow prevail! Everything will be all right. Somehow we’ll weather the storm. There’ll be a brighter day tomorrow and the sun will arise on a peaceful, deliriously happy, utopian world of harmony and plenty produced by the twin gods of science and human rationalism.

These skeptics scoff at Biblical prophecy. Wars, famines, and disease epidemics are nothing new to them. “Such catastrophes have always been with us,” they claim.

Earthquakes and other natural disasters occur in cycles and are based on the “law of averages,” they assert.

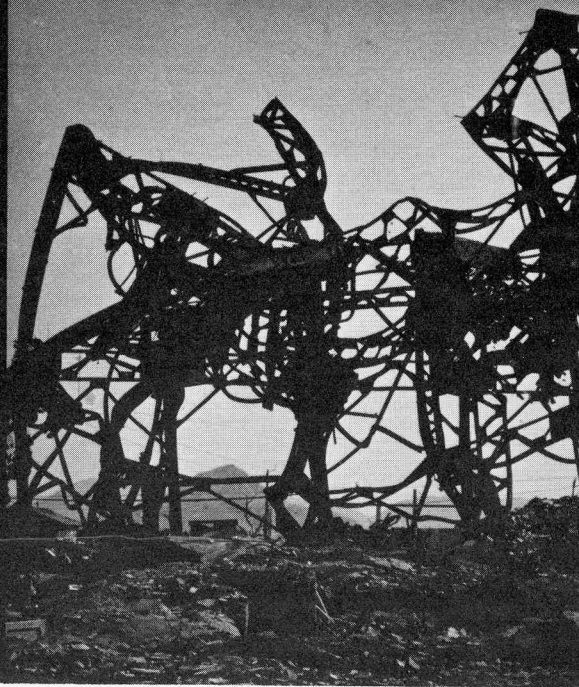
So when someone can’t believe that anyone in the 1970’s would be so incredibly unaware, uneducated, un-

Wide World Photo

HIROSHIMA AFTER THE BOMB — Will mankind yet witness such atomic devastation on a grand scale?

AN EERIE SCULPTURE
formed by that first
"primitive" atomic bomb
at Hiroshima,
8:15 a.m. on August 6,
1945. The 100,000 who
perished at that instant
never knew the agony
that afflicted thousands of
survivors. From this
miniature forerunner
mankind has developed
nuclear capability
which can destroy all
forms of life many
times over.

Photographer Unknown

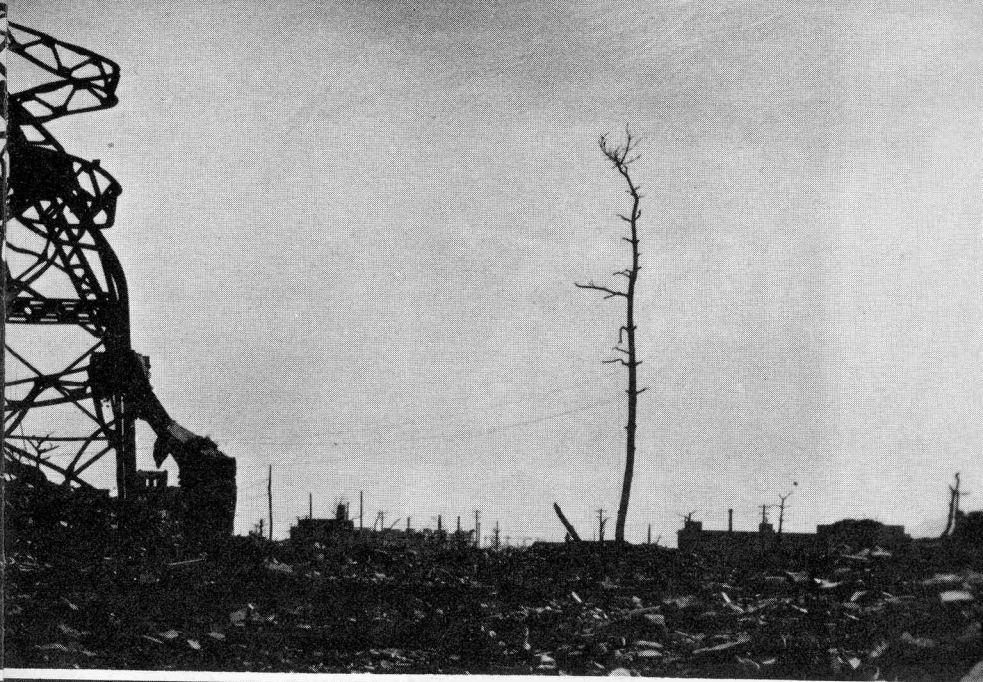


scientific, and unintelligent (other than a Bible-belt fundamentalist) to think in terms of the *literal* (not figurative) "end-time generation," "last days," "great tribulation," etc., we must understand his feelings. As a matter of fact, Peter prophesied of precisely this approach in II Peter 3:3-4, followed by a powerful description of what would happen thereafter. But if someone can't see it yet, it's not his fault.

We fully admit that it takes a certain amount of perception and savvy to scan through the usual news reports of local murders, national politics and international gossip and to be able to locate, collate, and correlate the significant happenings of our time. Then to go further and to *understand* what the trends mean when projected forward into the future takes a mind well-versed in Biblical prophecy.

The Proof

There is one statement in the Bible that is beyond refutation. In the year 1975 it stands unequivocally above the convenient ploy of academic argument.



It is a short comment in a long prophecy. It is a simple declaration that Jesus Christ made in answer to His disciples' direct question: "What shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" (The original Greek word is *aion*, meaning AGE — not the physical earth on which we live.)

It must have sounded utterly absurd to that small audience about 1940 years ago. It sounded just as absurd to an audience about 41 years ago, in 1934, when Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God) first began to preach it to the world.

Yet suddenly, some 11 years later, in the year 1945, it began to make sense. Today it makes *full* sense. *Today, everybody knows.* *Today*, right now, it is being repeated across the length and breadth of the United States and on around the world. Scientists and heads of governments alike are proclaiming it. And as they do, they are *unwittingly* "usurping" the responsibility of the theologian. Because what they are in fact doing is paraphrasing Matthew

Statesmen and Scientists Warn of Impending Disaster!

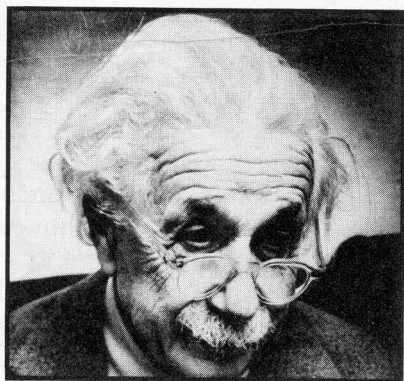


U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations: "... the problems... will have reached such staggering proportions that they will be beyond our capacity to control."

UPI, Wide World Photos



Dr. W. H. Pickering, Jet Propulsion Laboratory: "In half an hour the East and the West could destroy civilization."



Dr. Albert Einstein: "There is no defense in science against the weapons which can destroy civilization."

Presidents and Educators Fear World Destruction!

Late President John F. Kennedy: "Together we shall save our planet — or together we shall perish in its flames!"

*Ambassador College,
Wide World Photos*



Barry Commoner, environmental scientist: "... we run the risk of destroying this planet as a suitable place for human habitation."



Late French President Charles de Gaulle: "... the great powers are facing their 'last moment'"



24:22: *If this time of world trouble is not cut short, not a single human being will be saved alive.*

Check several Bible translations to get the full import of this shocking scripture.

First examine James Moffatt: "Had not those days been cut short, *not a soul would be saved alive . . .*"

Then, the Phillips translation: "Yes, if those days had not been cut short *no human being would survive.*"

And finally, *The New English Bible*: "If that time of troubles were not cut short, *no living thing could survive.*"

Those words could never have begun to be understood in correct context *until 1945* when the first Atomic Bomb burst upon an unsuspecting world. At that time, we began to become aware of the vast potential of science and technology to erase human, animal, and plant life from the face of this earth.

For the First Time

Never before in history has man been able to literally exterminate *every* human being on earth. Not just a large part of the enemy's army, not even most of the opposing civilian population — but every last man, woman, and child *on earth*: in Canada, Australia and South Africa; in Honduras, Peru and Chile; in Indonesia, Southeast Asia and Korea; in Manchuria, Iceland and Antarctica — *all over the world.*

We've all heard the gruesome statistics that there are enough nuclear weapons stockpiled right now to kill every human being 5, 10, 50 — or is it now 150 times over?

When are the nations going to decide they've stockpiled enough?

Conservative estimates show that the world nuclear stockpile is equivalent to 50,000 megatons of TNT. But, more recently, American Nobel Prize-winning scientist Dr. Linus Pauling estimated that there were 500,000 megatons in the world nuclear stockpile. Reduced to simple terms, this would mean the explosive force of 150 tons of TNT for every person on earth.

So, we may have reserved for ourselves our own little "150 tons of TNT," when one tiny portion of one stick of

dynamite would be sufficient to kill any one of us. In one sense, it really doesn't matter how much *overkill* there is. It doesn't matter that we've got enough nuclear weapons stockpiled to obliterate 50 worlds. There aren't 50 worlds of humanity. There is only one — OURS.

And so, why overkill? Why kill somebody more than once?

We can't help but agree with one well-known British official. "Once would be quite enough" was the way he put it.

Additional Gruesome Statistics

Then, in addition to finishing everything off, the world would be made so radioactive that *no* living thing, human or otherwise, could survive. And all of this was *before* MIRV — the Multiple, Independently-targeted Reentry Vehicles — which multiply the number of nuclear bombs that every ballistic missile can carry from one to three to ten!

When the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, the military commander of that B-29 bomber had the power to destroy one medium-size city. Today, a scant twenty-eight years later, the military commander of a nuclear submarine — still just one man, remember — wields the power to obliterate over 150 large cities. (Each submarine carries 16 Poseidon missiles and each missile has 10 or more nuclear warheads.)

Think of it! Nuclear-armed Russian submarines prowl the Pacific and Atlantic. Their computers are whirring and clicking away as they change courses on pre-assigned paths in the sea. And any one of them could obliterate over a hundred large cities.

The Ultimate Weapon

"There have always been 'ultimate weapons,'" retort the skeptics. Axes, bows and arrows, gunpowder, rifles, cannons, machine guns, tanks, etc., are all brought up as "pseudo-ultimate weapons" of the past. So how can we in God's Work be so sure that nuclear weapons are *really* THE *ultimate* weapon — which they must be if we are to prove that today is the end time?

Good question — with a very simple two-part answer:

1) No other “ultimate weapon” could ever kill every human being on earth. Nuclear weapons can. 50 times over! (How much more “ultimate” can we get?)

2) Nuclear weapons work by exploiting the most fundamental physical law in the universe — the equivalence and interconvertibility of matter and energy. The hydrogen bomb works the same way the *sun* works! All future “ultimate weapons” could only be refinements of this basic process — they would still have to work on the same basic equation: E (energy) = M (matter) C^2 (the speed of light squared).

What About Poison Gas?

Sooner or later this argument always comes up. It goes something like this: “Nuclear weapons will *never* be used. Each side, the United States or the Soviet Union, for example, knows that the other side has the same incredibly destructive capability. And in any nuclear exchange, the entire world (which happens to include both sides) would be devastated. Consequently, this ‘balance of power’ [or, more accurately, a “balance of terror”] will maintain the peace. Neither side would ever dare precipitate a nuclear exchange. A solid precedent in this regard was set during World War II when both the British and the Germans had vast stores of poison gas, but neither side used them because each knew the retaliatory capacity of the other side.”

Unfortunately, there are at least six fundamental reasons why the above argument is invalid:

1) Nuclear war by *accident* is a frightening reality. Considering the accumulation of nuclear weapons, the proliferation of countries in the nuclear club, nuclear bombs inadvertently dropped from aircraft, the unidentified blips on radar screens, wrong messages flashed on wires, off-course missiles, etc., the statistical “improbability” of an accidental nuclear war is tragically no longer so “improbable.”

2) The “balance of terror” theory is founded on the axiom that the men in control of every power, the men



WAVES OF ALLIED BOMBERS destroyed sixty percent of Hanover, Germany during World War II. This required strategic planning and many trained men. Today, *one* man controlling *one* nuclear device can devastate an entire country!

Photographer Unknown

whose fingers rest on "the buttons," are, if nothing else, *rational*. Now, while the great majority of world leaders today are indeed rational, we are not dealing with a democratic procedure. All we need is *one* irrational leader in *one* country which happens to possess a nuclear capability. And then, even though all the rest of the world's leaders are perfectly rational, this one man can trigger the feared chain reaction of a gigantic nuclear exchange. Do such men exist? Even recent history has seen national leaders who are mentally troubled come to power and quickly degenerate into becoming mentally deranged. Hitler would have used nuclear weapons had Germany developed them in time. Other leaders of other countries as well, distinctly paranoid in their thinking, could indeed choose to use nuclear weapons in some last-ditch, self-destructive, suicidal urge. Remember, nuclear holocaust doesn't require a majority of world leaders to be mentally sick; it doesn't even need two of them. *One* is unfortunately quite sufficient.

3) An *unauthorized* nuclear attack, launched by a group of desperate and diabolical individuals *without* the government's consent, must not be discounted in this age of rampant revolution and irrational activism. Writing in *Commonweal*, Dr. Edward S. Boylan, a mathematician at Rutgers University and a consultant on strategic issues to the famous Hudson Institute "think-tank," poses the following frightening scenario: "Suppose, for example, that a civil war breaks out in Communist China, that rebels capture the Chinese ICBM weapons and that they threaten to attack the United States unless it intervenes on their behalf. . . ."

4) Even more chilling is the prospect of an *anonymous* nuclear attack. Here an *unknown* government could think to gain enormous geographical, political and/or economic advantage by triggering a nuclear war between the super-powers (or at least by blackmailing one or more of them). We again quote Dr. Boylan: "One can conceive of a tense diplomatic crisis occurring between the United States and the Soviet Union. A Chinese Communist leader might seek to instigate a war between the two nations by sending submarine-launched ballistic missiles at New York or Moscow

[or both] . . . In a similar vein one can conceive of the White House receiving an anonymous message that unless the United States stops supporting Israel one submarine-launched missile a week will destroy an American city."

5) One nation might think that it could most effectively protect its own *vital interests* by a quick preemptive strike against any and all real or imagined foes. Such an attack would be designed to destroy the enemy's missiles in their silos on the ground. If such an attack succeeds, half the world dies. If it fails — as it would — *everybody goes!*

6) We haven't forgotten about the poison gas analogy. It is indeed crucial to the whole point. Let's go back to World War II. True enough, poison gas was never used. But had Germany launched her much-heralded invasion of England, that statement would no longer have been true. William L. Shirer, in his classic work, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, reports that British plans called for the extreme all-out utilization of poison gas had conventional methods of defense failed — even though such action would have surely meant a brutal German retaliation on the British civilian population.

"Had the invasion been attempted the Germans would not have been received gently by the British . . . [Peter Fleming in his book, *The Sea Lion*, says] the British had decided . . . as a last resort and if all other conventional methods of defense failed, to attack the German beachheads with mustard gas, sprayed from low-flying airplanes. It was a painful decision, taken not without much soul-searching at the highest level; and as Fleming comments, the decision was surrounded by secrecy at the time and ever since" (William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1962, p. 1030).

In other words, when the vital interests of a nation are being threatened, when that nebulous line "*here and no further*" is crossed, a nation will use every weapon at its disposal to defend itself. And as more and more countries acquire nuclear capabilities, the number of "*here and no further*" lines likewise increases. Imagine India and Pakistan, Israel and Egypt, East and West Germany, North

and South Korea! — bringing new perils into an already precarious situation.

Matthew 24:22

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be *saved*: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”

In this popular King James translation, the meaning of “saved” is ambiguous.

What is meant by “saved”? Spiritual salvation? Or simply, as we have explained here, the preservation and continuance of physical human life? If this verse refers to the *spiritual* condition of individual human beings during a certain period of history, then the whole prophetic significance would be lost. The original Greek can go either way. The answer must be determined from the context.

And the context is very physical. The entire twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew deals with the basic problem of *staying alive* during wars (verse 6), famines, pestilences and earthquakes (verse 7), religious persecution (verse 9), great tribulation (verse 21), etc. Consequently as mentioned before, more modern translations emphasize that Matthew 24:22 refers to the fact that human *life* would literally be on the verge of total annihilation — and this was to be a sure sign that the last days of the end-time generation had arrived.

Review several translations:

“If that time of trouble were not cut short,” begins *The New English Bible*, “not a soul would be saved alive,” continues Moffatt; “not a mortal would survive,” states the Berkeley Version of the New Testament; “no living thing would have escaped,” paraphrases E. V. Rieu; “no human being would survive,” concludes Phillips.

When Is the End Time?

We have faced the question: How can we prove that *this* generation is the end-time generation as described in the Bible when there have always been wars and famines and pestilences and . . .?

Matthew 24:22 gives the answer: The time of Christ’s

second coming and the end of the present age would occur at a time when mankind would be on the brink of the ultimate abyss of complete destruction. All human life on earth would have to be in danger.

Mankind now has *the capacity* to self-destruct! Modern weaponry has now made possible the realization of what once was science fantasy — the doomsday weapon. Ultimate oblivion!

This is precisely the situation *today*.

It has *never* been this way before.

This is the end-time generation.



Chapter Three

“THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS”

MEN HAVE been speculating on the return of Jesus Christ for *millennia*. There were those in the latter part of Paul's day who thought the return of Christ was imminent. The apostle to the Gentiles had to warn the Church in his day not to be deceived by unfounded and unreliable information concerning the return of the Messiah. “And now, brothers, about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and his gathering of us to himself: I beg you, do not suddenly lose your heads or alarm yourselves, whether at some oracular utterance, or pronouncement, or some letter purporting to come from us, alleging that the Day of the Lord is already here. Let no one deceive you in any way whatever” (II Thes. 2:1-3, *The New English Bible*).

Christ WILL Return

But there is no doubt that the Messiah *will* return to this earth to set up the everlasting Kingdom of God! The Bible is filled with prophecies describing the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Why?

Photographer Unknown

MAD DICTATOR ADOLPH HITLER. Could yet another such despot rise to master-mind a plot of world domination?

Because the heart and core of the New Testament message concerns HIS RETURN to this earth to set up a ruling, governing kingdom. That's what the true gospel is all about. "Gospel" is an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning "good news." Today, the gospel (or good news) of the Kingdom of God is being preached and published. And *that gospel* is part and parcel of the second coming of Jesus Christ. (Ask for the free booklet *What is the True Gospel?*)

The very first message that ever came back from heaven — after Christ began to ascend to God's heaven — was that He was going to return to this earth.

In Acts 1:11, Christ's disciples were told: "Men of Galilee, why stand there looking up into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken away from you up to heaven, will come in the same way you have seen him go" (*The New English Bible*).

This scripture alone is conclusive proof of Christ's second coming to this earth. But, read just one more, this time in the King James version. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear *the second time* without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

So the question is not *whether* He will return, but **WHEN!**

Human speculation on this has come to nothing. The truth must be revealed. Those sections of God's Word, the Bible, which reveal future events are known as *prophecies*. Only those who have been given special wisdom and insight by God are able to comprehend the meaning of prophecies and rightly use them. "... None of the wicked [those not living in God's right way of life] shall understand; *but the wise shall understand*" (Dan. 12:10).

Peter, referring to the Church, said, "*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed . . .*" (II Peter 1:19).

It is through this "sure word of prophecy" that we can understand the truth about the return of Jesus Christ. And the Bible reveals that Jesus Christ is likely to return to set up His world-ruling kingdom in *your lifetime and*



THE FORMIDABLE FIREPOWER of a Polaris submarine. The vessel has 16 large hatches through which can be launched Polaris missiles capable of producing unbelievable atomic devastation. The ballistic rockets can be fired from beneath the water, making the point of launching extremely difficult to detect.

Keystone Photo

mine! (That is, barring any unforeseen termination of your life or mine!) *Christ's return will likely occur in this very generation!*

It is entirely possible that YOU, as an individual, will live to witness this greatest event in contemporary history!

But you say, "How can you be so sure? Aren't you sticking your neck out too far this time?"

Not at all! The answer is simple. Jesus Christ personally stated, "Verily I say unto you, THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:34).

Moffatt has it: "I tell you truly, the present generation will not pass away, till all this happens." Phillips translates: "Believe me, this generation will not disappear till all this has taken place."

Which Generation?

But how can we know Jesus is talking about OUR GENERATION TODAY? How can we be sure He wasn't talking about the generation of *His* day? Let's get our bearings.

Matthew 24 records what is commonly called the "Olivet Prophecy." It is so named because it was on the Mount of Olives that the disciples of Christ came to Him and asked about the prophecies concerning His *second coming* and of the *end of the world* [age — verse 3].

The whole prophecy is about *the age* in which we live — this generation.

In answering the question about the end of the world, Jesus foretold a series of events that would *intensify just before His return*. He told about false prophets in this end time (verse 5). He talked about war and rumors of war, about world war (verse 6). He foretold famines, pestilences and earthquakes in different places (verse 7). (Most have been occurring for 2,000 years, but never as intense as today.)

Then Christ explained that this Gospel of the Kingdom would be "preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the END come" (verse 14).

He foretold great tribulation and heavenly signs just before His return.

Then to make it abundantly clear what He was talking about, Jesus gave a parable of the fig tree. He said, “. . . When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that *it is near*, even at the doors” (verses 32-33).

Christ showed that when these great earth-shaking events began to happen the time of the end of the age was at hand. Today, these events are beginning to really intensify.

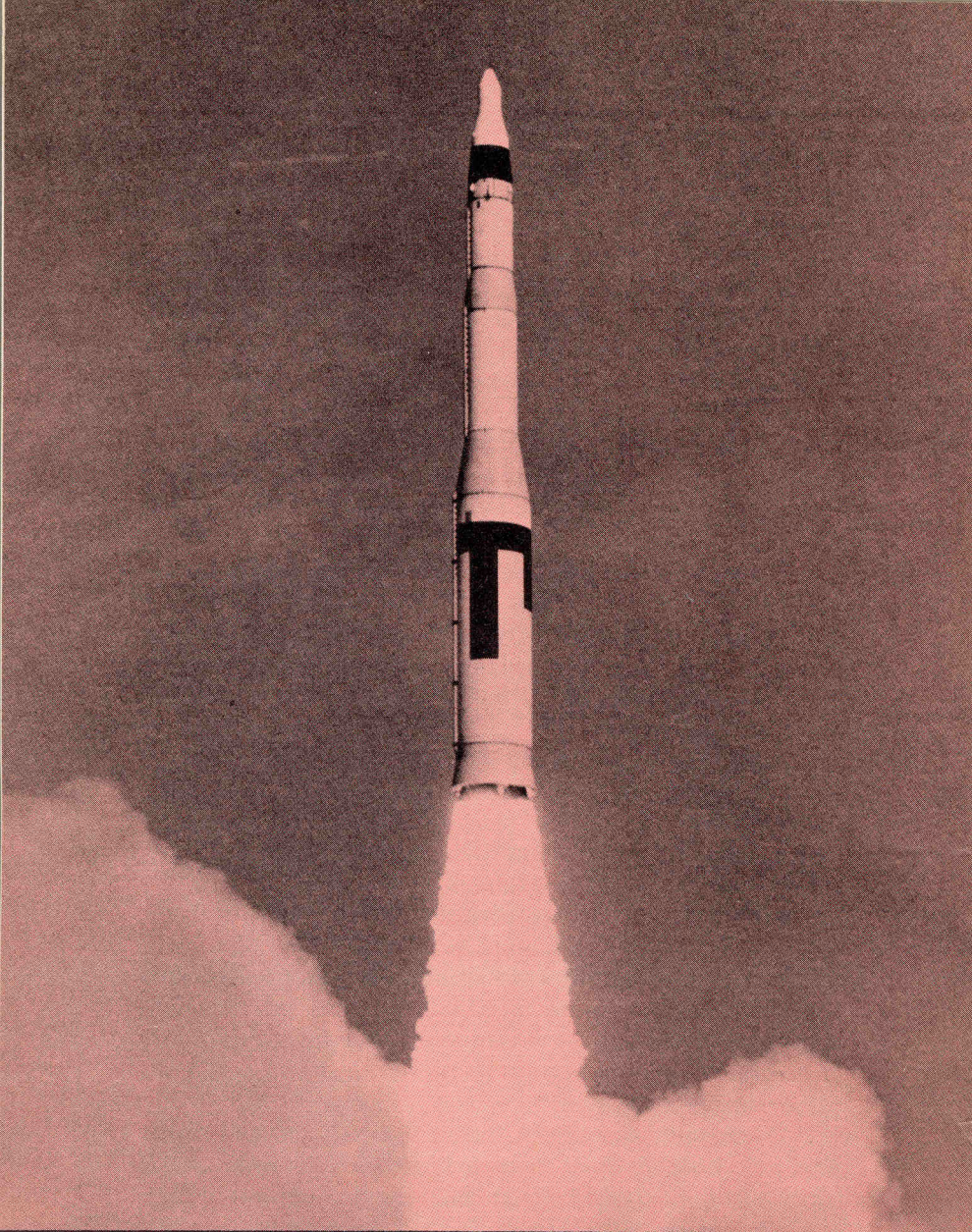
We’re in the time when God must intervene, or there will be no flesh saved alive. Jesus was talking about our day today. He said true Christians would know when He is about to intervene in world affairs *by* world conditions. There is no question about it — Jesus Christ was talking about **THIS GENERATION**.

And He said, “So likewise ye, when ye see *these things* come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, *This generation* [during which you see “these things” occur] shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled” (Luke 21:31-32).

Other translators corroborate this King James rendering. See Phillips, Moffatt, and *The New English Bible*.

We have the SURE word of prophecy and it says all these things must come to pass first, and they haven’t come to pass yet. On the other hand, that same “sure word of prophecy” says **THIS GENERATION** will not pass, till all these things *are fulfilled!*

When will Jesus Christ return? In **THIS GENERATION!** And *on a notable day* — which surprisingly is NOT necessarily a 24-hour day. The next chapter explains.



FROM AN UNDERGROUND SILO, the Minuteman leaps skyward with a potential range of 5,000 miles. This U.S.A.F. intercontinental ballistic missile can carry several warheads programmed to hit separate targets — a total destructive force at least ten times as powerful as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima!

Boeing Photo

Chapter Four

"IN THAT DAY"

FOR CENTURIES men have proclaimed the end of the world with the same fervor and sincerity as is being done today. But, there is more to proclaiming the end of the world (age) than just saying when it will occur.

What to do about it is of utmost importance!

Some will tell you: "Repent" — (with no explanation).

Some may say: "Leave California. It's falling into the sea."

A few might say: "Dig bomb shelters."

And some may even tell you: "Prepare to meet your God." But the question is — HOW?

We shall see how — very shortly.

"In That Day"

This phrase frequently occurs in Biblical prophecies. What "day" is being spoken of? You need to know the vital significance of this important term! Shocking events are prophesied to occur "in that day," and surprisingly enough *they concern your very life!*

Occasionally the term means an event that was to occur at some historical time already past. But often the phrase "in that day" is referring to the cataclysmic times *we are now entering!* It applies to the general end time in prophecy.

Notice Isaiah 24:21-22, for instance: "...*In that day... the Lord shall punish* the host of the high ones

that are on high, and the *kings of the earth upon the earth . . .*” Here we see “that day” is a time of punishment upon *world rulers*.

It is to take place *on this earth*. It is a time when strong armies and normally courageous men will run and hide (Amos 2:15-16).

The Day of the Lord

“That day” is also called the “day of the Lord” in many scriptures. Notice Zephaniah 1:14-17: “The great *day of the Lord* is near. . . .” That day is a day of wrath, a time of trouble and distress, a period of desolation and destruction. It is described as a time of darkness and gloominess. It is a day of WAR, when the alarm — the “trumpet” — is sounded against those areas which will be militarily fortified. Zephaniah continues to describe “that day” as a *period of punishment* on those who sin against God by violating His great Law! Read the remainder of Zephaniah 1.

Sin is the transgression of God’s Ten Commandment Law (I John 3:4). If you break the laws of God, *they break you!* If you keep them, they keep you! Those who insist on continuing to fly in the face of God’s eternal spiritual laws will incur His wrath. He will punish those who continue to sin.

“Behold, *the day of the Lord* cometh, cruel both with *wrath* and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall *destroy the sinners* thereof out of it” (Isa. 13:9). “In that day” God will destroy His enemies (Jer. 46:10).

Christ’s Return

The “day of the Lord” is also the “day” or time of the imminent return of Jesus Christ to this earth to set up *world government!* In Zechariah 14 we find Christ returning to fight against those who resist His government. (And there will be whole *nations* fighting Him at His return!) His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives in modern-day Israel, and from that point He will begin to consolidate His rule over all earthly nations. Read Zechariah 14:1-9 for yourself.

Jesus Christ warned Christians not to lose sight of the

significance of these sure prophecies. His warning is found in the book of Luke. "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so *that day* come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass . . ." (Luke 21:34-36).

Jesus again spoke of *that day* when He said: "Many will say to me *in that day*, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils [demons]? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22-23).

Many professing Christians will find out they were not *really* Christians after all. They had merely appropriated the name of Jesus Christ but were not willing to obey Him and follow His example.

You need to write for our free booklet *What Is a Real Christian?*

God inspired the ancient prophet Malachi to prophesy of "that day." He said it would be a time when the wicked would be burnt to a crisp. A day when they would become *ashes* under the feet of God's saints (Mal. 4:1-3).

But God holds out a different promise to those who are willing to obey Him "in that day"! He says of those who have been willing to commit themselves to Christ in obedience to His Law: "... they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, *in that day* when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Mal. 3:17-18). God likens true Christians to jewels and says that they will be rewarded when Christ returns to this earth.

Malachi 4:5 is a prophecy being fulfilled in your lifetime — right now! "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Luke 1:17 says that John the Baptist came "in

the spirit and power of Elias [Elijah]" to prepare the way before the first coming of Christ. Another "Elijah" is prophesied to warn the world "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" — the return of Jesus Christ *in power* and glory to punish the unrepentant nations of the earth!

You are being warned in advance! The Day of the Lord is coming. The question is which verses will apply to you? Malachi 3:17-18 or Malachi 4:1, 3?

The decision is yours.

Why not *choose* righteousness and be guaranteed ETERNAL LIFE in "the next world" — the dawning of a new age? Read how in the concluding chapter.

II PETER 3:10

Many wonder about II Peter 3:10. Didn't Peter say this globe would be *destroyed*? Was Peter really talking about the total destruction of the earth? Notice what the context tells us: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (II Pet. 3:7).

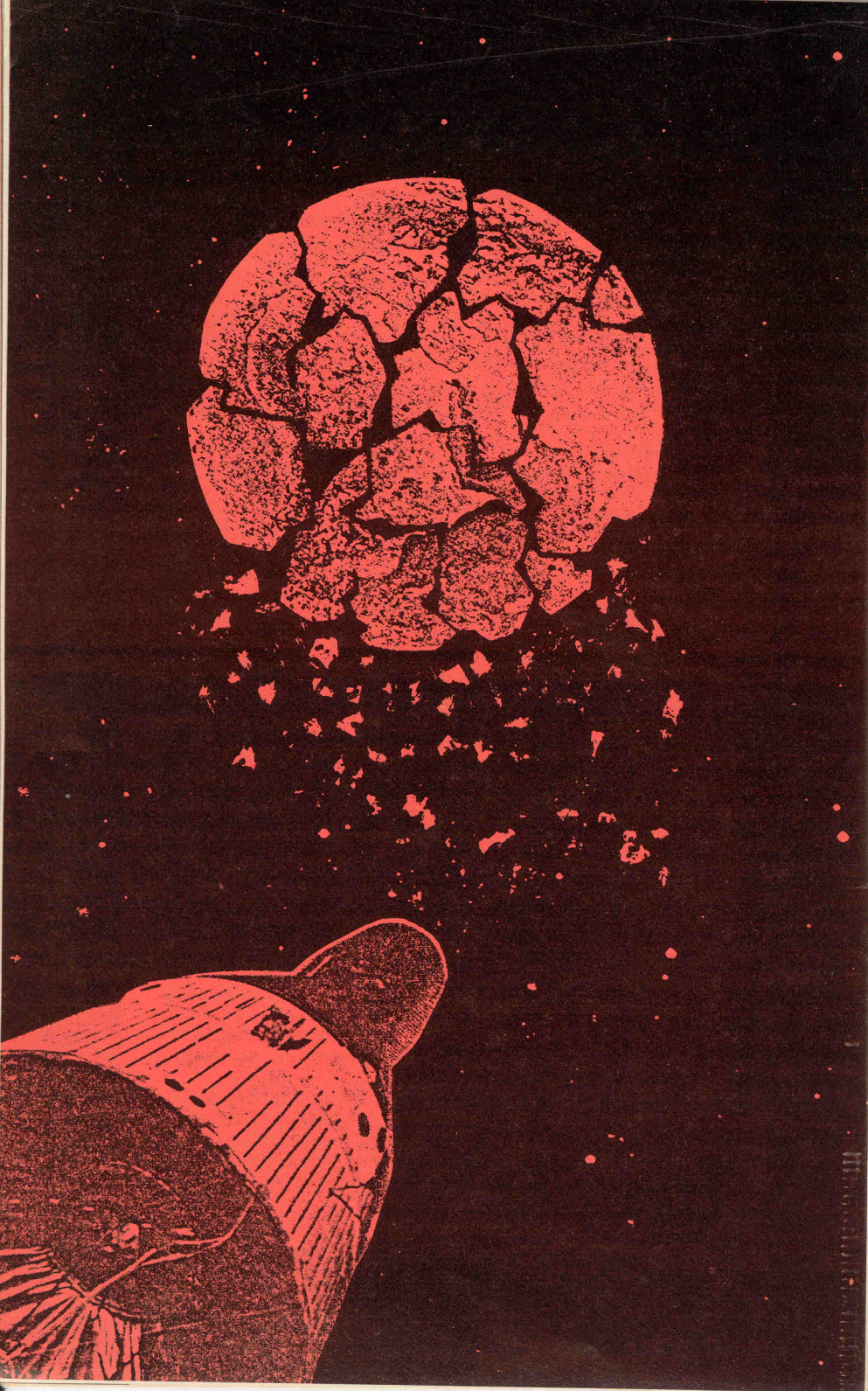
This fire represents the final judgment of ungodly men. This is the Lake of Gehenna Fire which is the second death (Rev. 20:14), the unquenchable fire that will burn up the unrepentant (Matt. 3:12).

Peter goes on to describe the effects of this unquenchable fire: "In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Pet. 3:10). An unquenchable fire is one that cannot be put out. It burns until it has consumed all combustible material. Then it dies out for lack of anything else to consume. Everything will be burned up except for spirit beings who are *not* affected by physical fires.

He used the example of Noah's Flood as a type of the future cleansing of the earth by fire. "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (II Pet. 3:6). Just as the earth continued to exist after the Flood, so it will continue to exist after the coming worldwide Gehenna Fire.

Continuing with the context of II Peter 3 we find in verse 13 that: "We . . . look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." In Revelation the new heaven and new earth are mentioned immediately after the account of the Lake of Fire. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away [by fire]; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven . . . the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them [on the earth]" (Rev. 21:1-3).

The *earth will still exist* (Eccl. 1:4). The simple explanation of II Peter 3:10 is that the surface of the earth and everything on it, including the incorrigible wicked, will be destroyed by fire. God will then remake the surface of the earth for a habitation for Himself and the rest of the God Kingdom (Rev. 21, 22).



THE END OF THE WORLD?

MAKE NO mistake about it. THIS IS THE END TIME! This booklet proves that.

But the world itself (the physical globe) is NOT going to cease to exist. Planet earth has a *permanent* and vital place in the universe! Nor will mankind bring about his own extinction — almost, but *not quite!*

There will *be a world tomorrow!* And it will be a UTOPIA of peace and plenty. Such a world is *just around the corner.* You can bank on it!

But it will *not* be brought about by man's efforts! It will be introduced *in spite* of him!

Let's understand.

What, Then, Does "End of the World" Mean?

The expression "end of the world" needs detailed defining.

Granted the Bible *does* use the term. Let's examine one such instance in Matthew 24:3: "...The disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us . . . what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the END OF THE WORLD?" No-

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SOME RELIGIONISTS IMAGINE the Bible speaks of a bizarre destruction of our physical planet.

tice the phrase "the end of the world" is related to the *return of Jesus Christ to this earth*. Does this mean Christ will return only to *destroy* this earth and blast to oblivion the planet He Himself created? Not at all! The word "world" in this verse comes from a Greek word, *aion*, which does not signify the physical globe we call the "world." It means "age" and has been so rendered by a number of competent translators.

The return of Jesus Christ signifies the conclusion of this age and the commencement of another — a millennial age — upon this earth. Beginning at His arrival, Christ will subdue all earthly kingdoms and assume the reigns of *world government* (Dan. 2:44; Rev. 11:15). This will signal the opening of a thousand-year period known prophetically as the *millennium*. It will be a time of constantly increasing peace, prosperity and plenty. It will be a period of the rebuilding of this *ravaged earth*.

Great *ecological restorations* will be enacted and after a while even the old *cities* of this present age will be rebuilt (Acts 3:20-21; Isa. 61:4). Of course, this rebuilding will be done in an *orderly* and sensible manner. There will be no urban sprawl or slums in the cities of tomorrow. It will be God's world. And *God is not the author of confusion!* (I Cor. 14:33, 40.) Today's cities are disorganized, confused botches on the face of the scarred and polluted landscape. Tomorrow's cities will be orderly and free of pollution.

The End of This Age

Before Christ's millennial rule begins, however, man's allotted 6000-year age will come to a tumultuous climax! Many prophecies will be fulfilled in a relatively brief period of time. In the Bible this mind-shattering climactic period is known as (we have proved) — "*the time of the end.*"

The Apostle Paul in describing this period said, "In the last days the time will be *full of danger . . .*" (II Tim. 3:1, Phillips translation). Conditions on this earth will be so dangerous that ALL LIFE, human or otherwise, will be *threatened with EXTINCTION!* Only the intervention of the returning Christ will prevent *global catastrophe*. Notice, once again, how Jesus Himself described this now soon-

coming period in Matthew 24:22, "And except those days should be shortened, there should *no flesh be saved* [alive]. . . ."

Christ will have to step in and *save man from himself!*

Brink of Cosmocide

In recent decades man's technological knowledge has rapidly increased at a staggering rate. But so have man's *troubles!* Why? Because man does not have the *wisdom to rightly use* the technology at his disposal. For example, every new weapon that has been invented has eventually been *utilized*. Now man has the hydrogen bomb stockpiled in *overkill* proportions!

And yet newer and more bizarre weapons of mass destruction are on the drawing boards. The military potential of orbiting satellites is inconceivable. Laser beams and bacteriological agents are weapons too horrifying for the average person to consider.

But the solution to war and international struggles and conflicts is not a change of weaponry to more lethal and devastating munitions. Nor is it the ever-growing stockpiling of existing weapons of mass destruction. It is a *change of heart* on the part of mankind in general. MAN MUST DEVELOP THE WISDOM TO AVOID WAR — NOT THE WEAPONRY TO WAGE IT! As wise old King Solomon said centuries ago, "Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but [weapons in the hands of?] one sinner destroyeth much good" (Eccl. 9:18).

When Will Christ Return?

This has been the question of the ages! Great theologians have pondered this question. Wild-eyed religionists have cried "wolf" too many times. The public is skeptical about the whole subject. Society has even coined an expression which mirrors this doubt. When someone is slow in arriving, people have been overheard to say, "He's slower than the second coming of Jesus Christ."

God, of course, prophetically anticipated this attitude. Notice the words of Peter, "... There shall come *in the last days scoffers* . . . saying, *Where is the promise of his com-*

ing? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Peter 3:3-4).

The Prophet Ezekiel also spoke of this feeling that the return of Christ and the accompanying prophecies were not working out as anticipated. He expressed it this way, "Again a message came to me from the Lord: 'Son of dust, what is that proverb they quote in Israel [modern America and Great Britain] — *"The days as they pass make liars out of every prophet"*'" (Ezek. 12:21-22, *The Living Bible*).

But the time *has come* to silence this doubting, skeptical and cynical attitude.

"The Lord God says, I will put an end to this proverb and they *will soon stop saying it*. Give them this one instead: 'The time HAS COME FOR ALL THESE PROPHECIES TO BE FULFILLED' "(verse 23).

As you learned in Chapter Three, *we are living in that one generation* during which much prophecy will be fulfilled! Read Matthew 24:34 once again.

False Prophets Cry "Wolf"

For centuries a wily and crafty adversary of God (Satan the devil) has sent his false prophets to delude man into expecting the imminent return of the Messiah. Always there has been a letdown. Christ did not show up when these misguided self-appointed "prophets" said He would. Consequently, people have become doubtful that Christ really will ever return. This is exactly what the devil has desired! Because when God's *true* servants stand up to announce the imminency of Christ's return, a "once bitten, twice shy" public will not believe it! They've been "had" too many times!

But who can you believe? Before you accept the words of any alleged servant of God, "... believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because **MANY FALSE PROPHETS ARE GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD**" (I John 4:1). You need to *prove* who God's servants really are.

God dogmatically states whenever He does a major act *He will inform His servants beforehand* (Amos 3:7).

God's Word, the Bible, *tells* how to recognize the conditions that will precede Christ's second coming. When the disciples asked what the sign of Christ's coming would be, He gave them a *number* of such signs! They are listed in the 24th chapter of the book of Matthew. He listed an ever-skyrocketing curve of wars and rumors of wars, famines, disease epidemics, coexisting with a dramatic increase in religious fervor which would culminate in the arrival on the world scene of one great false religious leader of enormous influence and power. Read it for yourself in Matthew 24:3-15 and II Thessalonians 2:3-9. Accompanying this would be persistent rumors that Christ's return has already taken place (II Thes. 2:1-2). Notice also Matthew 24:23-24. *Do not be deceived!*

God's Word plainly says, "Watch therefore, FOR YE KNOW NEITHER THE DAY NOR THE HOUR WHEREIN THE SON OF MAN COMETH" (Matt. 25:13). *This Work has never set an exact date for the return of Christ!* After all, who are we to dictate to Christ when He must arrive on this earth?

Though we cannot know at this time the precise day of the return of the Messiah, *we can know the approximate time in history* — "THE TIME OF THE END." We can watch the news of the world fulfill the specific and meticulous end-time prophecies of God's Word. When we see these prophecies being fulfilled (which they are!), we can also recognize that they are the signs of Christ's arrival. As John the Baptist prepared the way for the first coming of Jesus, *this Work is preparing the way for His second arrival!* (Mal. 4:5-6.)

What You Can Do

In the light of this most cataclysmic time in human history, many readers of Ambassador College publications have asked: "*What can I do as an individual?*"

Watch world news. Study the prophecies of your Bible and observe their fulfillment every day in your newspaper (Luke 21:36). Realize that "...when ye shall see all

these things, KNOW THAT IT IS NEAR, EVEN AT THE DOORS" (Matt. 24:33).

And get your name on the mailing list for the Ambassador College Correspondence Course. World news will come alive before your very eyes!

Begin to be *serious* about your relationship with your Creator. Prove the Bible is His very inspired Word. Find out where God is working. And, finally, *get involved!*

How? For a start, compare what you read in this booklet with what you read in your Bible. Then consider. Is this just the wild-eyed ranting of another "sect"? Or is this the message of the WORK OF THE LIVING GOD? You *can prove it*. Your *eternity* could depend on it! Your immediate future will *surely* depend on it.

This is the End Time! Yes.

But no "Doomsday" — and no end of the world either. It will NEVER occur. This world (physical globe) and the race of man that inhabits it both have a brilliant, glowing future! But *only* because a loving and compassionate Creator is waiting in the wings to *save* man *from himself*. And in this generation! □

ADDITIONAL READING

The Worldwide Church of God publishes many colorful, informative booklets on a wide range of biblical topics. Four are listed below.

Why Were You Born?

Was humanity created and put here on earth by an intelligent and Almighty Creator for a definite purpose? And if so, what is that purpose — and why is humanity so totally unaware of it?

What Is a Real Christian?

What are the very basic, down-to-earth fundamentals of Christianity — the very heart, root, and core of the teachings of Christ? And did Jesus teach that real repentance and water baptism are necessary for salvation?

The Ten Commandments

Are the Ten Commandments obsolete in today's chaotic world? Or are they as applicable now as they were when God gave them on Mount Sinai? Here is a book explaining this inexorable living law — soon to become the basic law of the peaceful, prosperous, joyful World Tomorrow.

This Is The Worldwide Church of God

This is the true story of a unique Church that has found the solution for the world's ills, and puts it into a living application that is producing a harvest of peace, happiness and abundant well-being worldwide.

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The Bible is a *NOW* Book

BELIEVE it or not, the Bible was written for our day, this age — this generation! The Bible is the most up-to-date book you can read today.

In the pages of this "Book that nobody knows" are revealed the causes of all of today's ills — the social problems, the economic problems, and even the threat of nuclear annihilation hanging over mankind today.

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But ironically, this "Book of all books" is the LEAST UNDERSTOOD of all books!

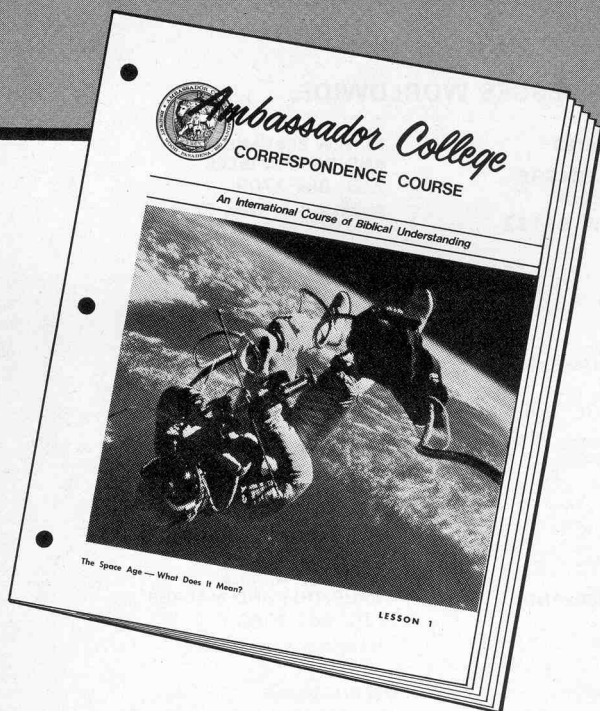
Why?

Simply because when most people try to read the Bible, they can't understand it. Consequently, they assume it's out of date and irrelevant in our modern age.

But you can understand it.

Here's how!

For more than a decade and a half, Ambassador College has been helping thousands to become "Biblical literates" through the Ambassador College Correspondence Course. This unique course of *Biblical*



understanding has led over 200,000 students in nearly every country on earth to a greater knowledge and understanding of the Bible.

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