

Jesus is Coming to Earth Again!

What if it was Today?

By Paris Reidhead*

Jesus is coming to earth again,
What if it were today?
Coming in power and love to reign,
What if it were today?
Coming to claim His chosen Bride,
All the redeemed and purified,
Over this whole earth scattered wide,
What if it were today?

Chorus

Glory! glory! Joy to my heart 'twill bring:
Glory, glory! When we shall crown Him King;
Glory, glory! Haste to prepare the way;
Glory, glory! Jesus will come someday.

Satan's dominion will then be o'er,
O that it were today!
Sorrow and sighing shall be no more,
O that it were today!
Then shall the dead in Christ arise,
Caught up to meet Him in the skies,
When shall these glories meet our eyes?
What if it were today?

Faithful and true would He find us here
If He should come today?
Watching in gladness and not in fear,
If He should come today?
Signs of His coming multiply,
Morning light breaks in eastern sky,
Watch, for the time is drawing nigh,
What if it were today'? ¹

You might desire to keep your hymnbook open. You will notice that the theme for this evening's meditation is the first line, first stanza of the hymn we have just sung: Jesus is coming to earth again, What if it were today?

During the past weeks we have heard so much of our Lord's first coming; the Christmas carols remind us daily, almost hourly in the city it seems. For it is difficult during these two weeks preceding Christmas to get out of the sound of these carols which testify to the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. And our hearts rejoice as we see again the tableaux, watching as little children present to us by their word and testimony and action this which they understand concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus, concerning His first coming. We are told by those that have studied that there are four promises for His second coming.

¹ "What If It Were Today" By Leila N. Morris (1862-1929), 1912.

And, therefore, it seems to me that as we have allowed our hearts to open afresh to the truth that God became flesh and dwelt among us, that in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, that it behooves us I say to recognize even now that this same Jesus is so coming again, coming and this soon. I have, therefore, chosen tonight in order that there might be some means whereby these truths can tie into your heart something familiar, to use this song as the frame of reference. I think you will find the outline in the song, for I shall speak to you of *the fact of His coming*, and *the force of His coming*, and *the family for whom He comes*, and that which is accomplished or *the finished at His coming*, and *the faithful who will behold His coming*. And you will find all of this in this order in the song. In order that it might be fixed, would you open it and hold it before you, that you could see it. Our little children are singing Scripture verses these days, and by means of the song are finding that it is refreshing to their minds and their hearts; they are memorizing it with greater facility. And so I am trusting that this shall become something of the hymn of delight and expectation in your heart for the days of this New Year. Jesus is coming to earth again, what if it were today? Might you profit by writing down somewhere on a piece of paper the Scriptures that we use, and in this way you can tie it in with the hymn. If the hymnbook were yours, I would say write it on the margin. But since it is not, I suggest that you write it on a piece of paper, or the back of an envelope, or a check, or even the bulletin, for you will find that on the back of the bulletin there is room left for this evening's outline. And so, if you will just make note of the hymn #477 and then the outline and the Scriptures related to it, possibly in your meditation in the days to come this shall prove refreshment and a blessing and an inspiration, and a challenge, and give you that expectancy that you need for whatever may be before us in the year that lies just ahead.

And so I see in this first — actually, technically, the first verse of the hymn the fact of the coming of our Lord, Jesus is coming to earth again...He is coming, and we find this set forth in such clarity, such specific, exact clarity by the angel of the Lord as He spoke to the disciples as they lingered there with yearning, and longing, and loneliness on the hilltop outside of Jerusalem. "And the angel beholding them, standing there, came to them in a cloud while they looked stedfastly toward Heaven as He went up. Behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into Heaven. This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven shall so come." There it is. In Acts, Chapter 1, verses 9 to 11, the fact is stated, "This same Jesus shall so come." It will not be an angelic visitor sent to represent Him. Oh no. He is coming to earth again. Jesus is coming, and we understand that it is the same Jesus, that He will come back again with nail prints in His hands and the sword scar in His side, the tears that the iron made in His feet, and they shall look upon Him whom they pierced, and recognize that this is this same Jesus, this nation Israel that shall behold Him.

"Why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? *This same Jesus shall come.*" We understand this. The world scoffs and mocks and says, "Where is the sign of His coming?" All things continue as they were from the days of the fathers, but none of these things move us, for it is stated, "This same Jesus shall so come." Dear Heart, let this be the foundation of your confidence. Jesus Christ, the glorified Son of the living God, is going to come.

I am so happy that years ago someone gave me that little couplet. I passed it on on several occasions during the five years past:

He went away
But not to stay
He is coming back again.
And lonely though it may seem
And delayed as it may appear,
He is coming back again.

This is the fact.

We see it also set forth in Titus, Chapter 2 and verse 13. There is that portion of Scripture that engaged our attention the very first time I spoke to you back in June of 1956 when the Lord led me to use a Scripture that I had used, oh, so many places both before and since: The great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. This is the One of whom the writer speaks, saying, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior" (Tit. 2:13). So it is the One who gave Himself for us that is coming, the One who died on a Cross that is coming. This same Jesus is coming, and it is to us the blessed hope that

we are confidently expecting to see not a stranger whom we will not recognize, but God's Own dear Son. Five hundred beheld Him, and they shall be with Him, for those which have died shall return with Him, and we will have witnesses sufficient that it is this same Jesus. This is the fact. We find it set forth again in I Thessalonians, Chapter 4, verses 13 to 18. Perhaps you would like to see this Scripture and locate it. You know it. It is familiar to you, but let your heart rest in it. Let it comfort you. Let it warm you, if such be your need. But understand the truth of it; "I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." (I The. 4:13-16). (Dr. Bingham, founder of the Sudan Interior Mission, seated in the back seat of the car, working on papers and reading the Word, with Mrs. Bingham was driving, and said one day, shouting to her, "O dear, it is going to be a gloriously loud day when He comes.") And it will. Look at what you have, "The Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with a voice of the archangel, with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I The. 4:16-17). Jesus is coming to earth again, what if it were today? He is coming. This is the fact.

He went away
But not to stay
He is coming back again.

But you will notice the second verse of this song; *Coming in power and love to reign*. This it is. This is the force of His coming. He was the meek, the lowly, the lamb led as the sheep to the slaughter, as one brought thus opening not His mouth, but when He comes back again no longer the meek and lowly Jesus, but it will be the lion of the tribe of Judah in all the splendor and the glory and the authority, the might, that has been given to Him. If you turn to Revelation, Chapter 19, verses 11 to 21, as we consider the force that accompanies His return. Let me read this portion to you. Chapter 19, verses 11 to 21:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in Blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (Rev. 19:11-21). — The force of His coming. Understand that when our Lord Jesus ascended into heaven, He sat down on the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty on High, and all authority in heaven and earth was given unto Him, and this Lord Jesus is coming. Oh, it will no longer be that He shall come, as I said, meek and lowly, but He shall come in such manner that when men shall see Him, wicked men who spurned Him and rejected Him, they shall call for the rocks and the mountains to cover them, and hide them from the face of the wrath of the Lamb. So we must understand that our Lord is coming in power, and in love to reign; coming in power to put down all of His enemies; coming in love, to fulfill His purpose for mankind and for the earth which He has created. And He is coming, both in power and in love. So let your heart rejoice as you hear about the atom bomb and that Khrushchev is exploding one a hundred megatons in power. Fear not. Let not your heart be troubled; remember that the Lord Jesus is the One by Whom all things were made, and without Him would not anything made that was made. And He is the One that put the power in the atom. He is the One that has locked power in the principles

that men are just beginning to understand. And when man has gone far enough in his destruction, the Lord will raise His hand, like the policeman does on the corner, and say to the traffic of iniquity, It is full, it is enough, stop. Never fear. Things are not going to get out of His hand, not out of His purpose, not out of His will.

When I say, Never fear, perhaps some of you might mistake this and say that there cannot be any suffering for us. Isn't it a strange thing that we Americans somehow feel ourselves so favored of God that we not only should have more of this world's goods than any other, more freedom, more liberty, more privilege, but we also somehow feel that there is a sanctity about our bodies and our health and about our society. And so we fail to recognize that what has happened in Russia, what has happened in China, what has happened in Korea and other parts of the world could very well happen here. I see nothing at this moment to indicate that there is any reason from Scripture why holocaust and destruction, captivity and judgment, yes, even physical death, could and might, and possibly because of the cup of our iniquity and sin, should happen to us as a nation. I see that, but even in the midst of that I say, Fear not. Fear not. Our Lord said, Fear not him that can kill the body. Do not be afraid of that which can happen to your flesh. Do not fear that which men can do. Fear only him that has the authority and the power to cast into hell. And so I do not say, when I bring you face to face with His force, with the power with which He shall return, that this means that you and I shall be spared. I do not say that.

I agree with Stacey Woods that we are ripe for judgment, that we deserve it. No nation has had greater light, greater truth; greater blessing than ours has had and done less with it. But at the same time I say to you that know Him and love Him, Fear not. Fear not. Do not let your heart be troubled. This same Jesus whom God has exalted is going to set all things right when He comes. You say, Look at how the wicked prosper. Look at how iniquity abounds. Look at how godlessness rides. Ah, so it does, so it does, but He is coming with power and love to reign. And He will be, Just so far, and then no further.

But notice the next verse: Coming to claim His chosen Bride, all the redeemed and purified, over this whole earth scattered wide, What if it were today? And so, as we have seen the fact of His coming, and something of the force and power that will accompany His return, let us understand that He is coming for a people, a people that He has been gathering out of every kindred, tribe and tongue and nation. There was a gathered people, you know. Some have wondered why it was that our Lord said (and it was not a parable. It was a statement) Lazarus died and was in Abraham's bosom, and rich man died and was in hell. Now the reason our Lord said that is because that is exactly what happened. When the rich man died, not because he was rich but because he was impenitent and unbelieving, he was in hell. Well we believe this book (the Bible) teaches that there is just a breath away from hell. You understand, do you not, if your unsaved family and friends and neighbors, these that you may have met, with whom you may work, whom you may know and even love, because of the ties of flesh, that the Bible teaches that when they die they go immediately to the place of suffering and torment. Now we have no way to ameliorate this, no way to soften it, no way to change it. This is the testimony of the Word of God. "The rich man in hell lifted up his eyes. He could see. He could feel. He could think. He could remember. And when He said to Abraham, Send Lazarus to touch his finger to water and lay it on my lips, Abraham said, Son, remember" (Luk. 16:23-25). He had the powers of memory. Now this I say is not a parable. This is a statement. Our Lord is telling what is happening. So we understand that to be absent from the body for the wicked is to be in the place of torment, and to be in the place of suffering. But by the same token, we understand that before our Lord Jesus died there was a place called Abraham's bosom. Abraham was the father of the faithful, and so we understood the Word of God to teach that in those centuries from the time of Adam down to the day of the death of Christ the righteous went to a place of temporary bliss, a place of delight, a place of joy, a place where heaven had its beginning, sort of a front porch of glory. But they went there, because though they had believed on the Lord it was the Lord who was to come, and atonement had not been provided; sacrifice had not been made. Therefore, it was necessary for them to die in faith, and wait in faith, until the Lord should come. But it says, And He preached to these that were in Sheol, in darkness. It is my conviction that when our Lord died on the Cross, He went to the place where the righteous dead were gathered and He said, Your faith has found its resting place. Now it is accomplished. And atonement has been made. He took Abraham's bosom forever away, and into His own presence.

And now, the Bible does not say, When the righteous die they go to Abraham's bosom. Paul said, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8). So He came that first time and gathered to Him a waiting people. We understand this Book to teach that when one who has savingly received Christ dies he goes immediately into the presence of the Lord. Oh,

to see this, to recognize this, and realize for instance that in North Korea where over 400 thousand of God's holiest men and women have paid for their faith with their life, all it has meant is simply that they have been sent immediately into the presence of the Lord. Now that is why I said, Do not fear. If a hydrogen bomb explodes in New York City, and you love Jesus Christ, all it is going to do is save the friends a trip to the cemetery, and as you are going to be immediately in the presence of the Lord Jesus; you are going to be there. You are going to be there with Him and see Him, because nothing can happen to the one that has been born of God. Oh, see it, realize it, and recognize it.

Someone has made the argument to me, "Well how can this be? How can it be that when the Lord Jesus Christ comes the dead in Christ shall rise first." Well they are with Him. They are with Him now, and He will bring them back, and He will give them bodies like unto His own body of glory. And yet the argument comes, "Well how can this be? How many times are those cells, the minutiae of dust and chemical which composed the body of the one that died, been drawn up through the cycle of grass and grain and flesh and appeared in other forms and bodies?" Oh, remember if you do the message we preached some two years ago on Easter and it was published in the Alliance Witness² concerning the resurrection of the dead. Let your heart not be troubled about this. He will have no problem. He will be able to give you a body, and that body will be instantly transformed into His image and likeness, and it will be a body like unto His own body of glory. He is coming. He is coming and He is going to bring with Him all that have proceeded, and all that are alive and remain are going to be caught up, together with these He brings, and seeing Him, instantly be changed into His image and His likeness. He is coming with power and glory to reign indeed, but He is coming to claim His chosen Bride. They are going to be there from out in Congo, and from Africa, and the martyrs from Afghanistan, and the ones that have died for their faith in Tibet, the millions that have suffered for Christ in China, these that are headhunters in the present stone age from Guinea, they are going to be there, all the redeemed, all the redeemed and the purified. He is coming, and He has a family of those that He has purchased with His Blood. Isn't it wonderful to realize that your privilege now is that of being a witness for Christ.

I used to think that my primary purpose in witnessing was for the sake of the sinner, and that poor sinner should not go to hell without a chance to be saved. But as I told you before I am sure that you will agree that sinners deserve to go to hell. And so as you go into this New Year with the purpose to be an effective witness for Christ, I hope it is not just sentiment, a superficial type of sorrow for sinners; I hope it is not just a humanitarian grief that they are going to have such an awful fate. I hope you realize that there is something higher and nobler than this. May the Spirit of God impress upon your heart that He has made you a laborer together with Jesus Christ, and as you talk with that person that works with you, and as you pass out tracts and witness and share and testify, by every means He will give you among the millions of this city as you live and work and witness here. May it be not for the sinner's sake you do this, but for the Savior's sake, that His body might be complete, that His Bride might be complete, ransomed and drawn out. How do you know that that ragged little dirty fellow that plays on your front sidewalk and shouts and wakes you from your afternoon nap is not the last one that is needed to complete the body of Christ. One day someone is going to be gathered, and then our Lord Jesus is going to hear the Father say, Son, your Bride is complete. The Body is in. All the children are in. Then He is going to come. We do not know when it will be, but one day it is going to be finished, and all those whom the Father gave to the Son will have been gathered to Him. He is coming back, coming to claim His chosen Bride, all the redeemed and the purified.

While it is called day. Today it is your privilege to be a laborer with Christ. Let me ask you. Were He to come today, are you part of His family? Do you have the clear inner assurance, certainty and witness that you have been born again? Do you know that you have passed from death to life? Are you certain beyond any question of doubt that you are His? Does He look at you and call you, Son? Do you look at Him and call Him, Abba, Father? Have you been born again? Then if He were to come today, it would be come in wrath and not in ransom. It would be, come to judge and not deliver. What of you? And so He is coming. Coming to claim His chosen Bride, all the redeemed and the purified. But does this include you? Are you of His family? Have you been washed in His Blood? born of His Spirit? Do you have the witness of the Holy Ghost enabling you to know beyond any question or doubt that you are His? You can, you know. You should. What is greater folly than for you to be in the service tonight than to go out into the dark night, not only of this evening, but of the international situation, the world of iniquity and

² Alliance Witness 3-22-1961 "The Resurrection of the Body" By Rev. Paris W. Reidhead

darkness and sin threatening constantly, daily, holocaust and destruction, to go out not knowing Him whom is life eternal. No greater folly in all the world than this. When Jesus Christ is standing at your heart's door, knocking for entrance to come in to bring joy and peace, deliverance. The world has to find its peace tranquilizers, in narcotics, of one kind or another, but we have Him who is the Prince of Peace within.

Peace, perfect peace in this dark world of sin,
The Blood of Jesus whispers peace within.³

So in the midst of all that is here, to threaten, to disturb, to destroy the peace and calm and rest of your heart, are you in His family tonight. This is the question. What if it were today that He came for His chosen Bride, all the redeemed and purified, would it be you? If there was even so much as a vestige of question or doubt I would consider it of paramount importance to settle this before the New Year begins at midnight. I would not go into another year if I were you without making certain.

But notice, not only *the fact of His coming and the family for which He comes*, but notice that which is accomplished, *that which is finished*, the finished *triumph at His coming*. We see in this 2nd stanza "Satan's dominion will then be o'er. O that it were today." We know that at the Cross our Lord Jesus exposed Himself to all that Satan could do. That conflict that had begun back there before time began when Satan raised his fist in the face of God and said, I will be like the Most High, had to be settled at Calvary. Satan took as his weapons, darkness, the lie, the hatred, death, and with these weapons of destruction he sought to tyrannize and to destroy, but there came a time at Calvary when the Lord Jesus Christ, out of love for you, taking your sin, dying in your place, paying the penalty of your guilt, thus exposed Himself to Satan's weapons. And love was able to say to hate, Do all that you can. See how powerful you are. And Satan in hatred came against the Son of God, and the One who was Light was able to say to the one who was darkness, Darkness do your worst. And the One who is the Truth was willing to say to the one who is the lie, Let us see what power the lie has. Let us see what a lie can do. And our Lord Jesus thus dying for you was exposed to the power of the lie. And then the One who was Life and was yet dying that you might live was able to say to the prince of death, Death, do your very worst. And so our Lord hung there, suspended between heaven and earth, caught in the crossfire of God's wrath against sin and Satan's wrath against God. And when hatred did its worst, when darkness had done all it could, when the lie had achieved its lowest, and when death had finally conquered, Satan stood by in delightful triumph thinking that he had at last vanquished. But you know, that 3rd day that God-life which could not die returned to that broken, bruised body, and our Lord Jesus came out of the grave, breaking the bands, bursting all the bonds, taking off the shackles, and stood there in the glory of His resurrection triumph, and it says, "He led captivity captive" (Eph. 4:8).

Well now you might say, "If that is the case, why has Satan gone on reigning, seemingly, ruling seemingly and all of carnage and destruction through these centuries since the resurrection of Christ, why did not the Lord consummate it them?" Well it was not His purpose ...His chosen Bride had not been gathered. And so until the time that the Bride was complete, He allowed the enemy to reign or seemingly to reign. But when He comes back again, it is all over. It is all over. And so we see that Satan's dominion will then be o'er. It is as though he was dealt a death blow at the resurrection, the serpent was pierced, but it remains until the night of grace settles and the light of the grace of God is dim, until the writhing stops.

Let me read from Revelation 20, verses 1 to 3: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

Our Lord is coming to overthrow completely all the last vestiges of Satan's pretense of power.

But then we see something else in the song. Sorrow and sighing shall be no more. Oh that it were today. If you will turn to Revelation, Chapter 21, you find this lovely testimony concerning the coming of our Lord as He deals with sorrow. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband. And I

³ "Peace, Perfect Peace" By Edward Henry Bickersteth, 1875.

heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Rev. 21:1-5).

Sorrow is but for a little season. Sighing and the weeping is but for an hour, a brief, fleeting hour, and then when you have been given the privilege of sorrowing for Him and sighing for your sin and for the sins of others, then the Lord is going to say, It is enough. It is enough. He will come and wipe away all tears from our eyes. And so the battle of death will be over. For we see this. Then the dead in Christ arise, caught up to meet Him in the skies, When shall these glories meet our eyes? (I The. 4:17) What if it were today?

And I turn you to I Corinthians, Chapter 15, and verse 50 - 57. Here is this Chapter of the resurrection of Christ. In just seven verses they seem to gather together all of the triumph and victory that will accompany the return of the Lord Jesus. The finish of the battle with Satan. It will be over. Satan’s power broken, finally, completely. The finish of the battle of sorrow and sighing and grief will be over, and so the battle with death. We know now that it is appointed unto men to die. But one of these days the battle with death will be over. “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” May God so fix in your heart the triumph that shall be proclaimed and displayed that you long for His coming.

But you notice this last stanza of our song. “Faithful and true would He find us here If He should come today? Watching in gladness and not in fear, If He should come today? Signs of as coming multiply, morning light breaks in eastern sky, Watch, for the time is drawing nigh, What if it were today?”

When the signs of His coming multiply. I see personally not one prophecy remaining to be fulfilled. Oh, you could find some but I see none at all remaining to be fulfilled before our Lord Jesus could come again. I leave the service tonight saying, O, even so, come Lord Jesus, with no mental reservations about the possibility of His coming. You say, well what about the tribes? We hear there are 17 hundred tribes. Yes, yes, I recognize. But you know there are those that are proceeding down these trackless jungles and up these mountains and across the valleys and plains that are not listed on any roster of missionaries that are not titled by any society. There are those that are witnessing, and one day someone is going to go into a village and into a hut and there is going to be a testimony. And a heart will open to Jesus Christ and He will have His bride, and He will come back again. Signs of His coming multiply. Personally as we go into 1962, I see no reason why He could not come this year. I have said that to you, or something similar a year ago. I believe that we are to have constantly the upward look, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God our Savior Jesus Christ. And as John the revelator concluded the testimony of the entire New Testament with these words, “Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly” (Rev. 22:21). I see no reason why He could not come before this year ends and the new begins. Personally I see nothing in the Scripture standing in the way. The Gospel shall be preached to the whole world and then shall the end come, but only God knows when this will be accomplished. Certainly it does not mean it has to be done by Americans. It does not have to be done by mission societies. Some humble believer, wandering out across the plain may carry the Gospel into that place where He has purposed for it to go, and then shall the end come.

But let me ask you in the terms of the song: “Faithful and true would He find us here If He should come today?” What about you? In Luke, Chapter 18, verse 8, you have the testimony that our Lord Jesus gave. I wish you would see it, because it will move your heart, I am sure. Luke 18, verse 8: “I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” What about you? “Faithful and true would He find you here if He should come

today? Watching in gladness, not in fear, if He should come today?" Do you understand what the coming of the Lord means to you as an individual?

Well two things, the first we find over here in II Corinthians, Chapter 5, verse 9 - 11. And this you ought to note and record so that you could read it: "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we, persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive the things done in his body whether they be bad or good. Do you realize what this means? The words you have spoken, the thoughts that you have countenances and allowed and nourished and nurtured, the deeds that you have performed. The same is true of me. All of this is going to be unfolded at the judgment seat of Christ. Do you not understand the implications of His coming? Perhaps it is for this reason that in 1 John, Chapter 3, verse 1-3, John the revelator writes, instructing us as to what our attitude should be. Hear it now. 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

Jesus is coming to earth again, What if it were today? Would He find faith in your heart? Would He find expectancy? Would He find that you are living in that moment by moment anticipation that He could come, that there are places that you might have gone, but you could not go for two reasons, one *that He might come*, and second, *you are going to give an account of it*. There are things you might have done that you could not do because one, *you are going to account for it at the judgment seat*; and secondly, *He is coming*. There are things that you might have said, that you just are not going to say because well you are going to account for it at the judgment seat of Christ when He comes, and He could be coming. Are you living in moment by moment expectancy? "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as He is pure."

As you go into this New Year, I trust that the Spirit of God will take the words of this song. I wish you would memorize them. I wish you would sing them over and over and over again until the words sing their way into your heart. What if it were today? And glory! glory! This is what it means, what He wants it to mean, glory at the prospect of His coming, joy at the anticipation that He shall return. Is this true. It should be, you know. It can be. What about it? He did not come this year. You say, "Well I'll just take a chance He won't be here next year either." Oh no. "He that hath the hope of His coming purifies Himself as He is pure." Perhaps we could say, and properly, that the attitude you have toward the coming of Christ is actually the measure of your faith in Christ. The attitude you have toward the coming of Christ is the measure of the genuineness of your relationship in Christ. If you love someone, truly love them, and they are away, you long for their return to see them, to be with them. And you understand why John said, "Even so, Come come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). Do you long for His coming? Is this the blessed hope? Are you preparing? Are you preparing? Company going to be with you tomorrow at your house? You do not pay any attention to your meal; you do not do anything about it? They are going to be so disappointed.

Years ago I was invited to a home in Minneapolis. They were students. They had just married. They invited me to their home. Talked about it for weeks, every time I saw them. Talked about it. They said, "Be sure to be there at 5." I got to the apartment at 5. The husband was not there. The wife said, "Well he had something to do at the library." So I was there at 5 and he did not get home till after 6. There was not a thing on the stove. Table was not set. Laundry was on the dining room table. I felt so sick. I just wanted to turn and leave. I liked both of them, they were fellow students. But somehow they did not seem to understand what it meant to invite someone - the preparation, the anticipation, the expectancy, the delight. What about you? You have invited the Lord. You have told Him you long for Him to come? What about you? What of you?

Let us bow our heads in prayer. The fact of His coming is clear, the force of His coming with all the omnipotence of God, not the meek and lowly Jesus, but the lion reigning in glory, the family for which He has come, His Bride, the redeemed, the purified, What about you? What about you? Are you part of that family, waiting longing, expecting, yearning? I think the most

wonderful way you can close this service in this year will be just to lift your heart and tell the Lord Jesus that you do ask Him to forgive you and pardon you, and cleanse you from everything that has grieved Him, that it is your purpose to purify yourself by bringing every stain and all that has shamed Him, grieved Him to the fountain of His precious Blood, then to tell Him that you are going into this New Year longing for His return, praying that when He comes He will find faith in your heart, anticipation—that you will be watching, ready, purifying yourself in anticipation, making every preparation, living in that blessed hope, expectantly anticipating the return, the coming of Jesus Christ. I am sure this is what He longs for. He longs to be longed for. He died out of longing for you. And He longs for you to long for Him.

Father of our Lord Jesus, the angels declared that this same Jesus shall so come in like manner as we have seen Him go. There are some here tonight that do not realize the imminence of His coming. There are some that, if He were to come, are not part of His family. They are not among the redeemed, the purified. They are still in Thine eyes loaded with the filthy rags of sin, unconfessed, unforgiven, under the sentence of death. Oh, God of grace, we pray that Thou by Thy Spirit will show them the imminence of the Coming of Thy Son, and that there may be preparation made while it is called day. For the night is going to come, and it will be too late. Then, our Father, we pray for Thy children, those that have been born into Thy family. How, Lord, it grieves parents when children that are dressed for company go out and play in the mud just before they arrive. And so how it must grieve the Lord Jesus to see those that are washed in His Blood and redeemed by His grace soil themselves with the things of time and sense, and of the world. We have the statement of the Word: “He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself.” Bring us, Lord, to the laver that we may know cleansing through the washing of the water of the Word, that we may be presented to Him, spotless, without wrinkle or blemish or any such thing, and that in us He may see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Prepare our hearts, Lord, for the fact that this could be a year of judgment, a year of destruction, a year of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and grant that our hope and confidence shall be so perfectly anchored in Thy Son that nothing that happens can move us, nothing can disturb the peace and calm that is there, not because of self-hypnosis, but because we know Thee, the living God, and have the fruit of the Spirit, love and joy and peace, because of Thy presence. Meet us now. For us this service closes, and the year of ministry closes, and we cry again, Even so, Come Lord Jesus.

With our heads bowed and eyes closed this last moment of lingering fellowship, do you want the Lord Jesus to come back? Are you ready? Are you waiting? Are your garments ready? Lamp filled with oil? lighted, trimmed? He is coming you know. Jesus is coming to earth again. What if it were today? Just take this moment and tell Him whatever it is He is waiting to hear from you. Talk to Him...”Even so, come Lord Jesus.”

Let us stand for the Benediction. Now may the love of God the Father, the communion and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be and abide with each of us now and until Jesus comes again. Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Evening, December 31, 1961 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.