

The Dark & Glorious Future



by Dale Rumble

(Isaiah 60: 2-3)

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Introduction

This tract has been written as an overview of events that make up the last days; events that lead up to the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ. No attempt was made to set dates.

I have sought to limit my personal words in this text by selecting and highlighting specific scriptures to more clearly communicate what the Holy Spirit is saying.

Many scriptures that I have selected in the context of end-time events are also applicable to earlier generations; for example:

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps. (1 Peter 2:2)

Christianity Today

Because of her Christian heritage, a good place to begin the overview is by examining the church in America. A recent survey of religion in America¹ revealed that 3.5% of the population identified themselves as Charismatics or Pentecostals, and 14.2% considered themselves to be Evangelical believers. These two groups could be viewed as generic Christians, that is as sincere, committed believers in Christ.

The remainder of those surveyed were made up of groups from Eastern religions, New Age, Protestant denominations such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, the Church of Christ, and finally, the groups who had some level of identification with a mainline denomination, whether Protestant, Orthodox or Catholic. This latter group was the largest in a numerical sense. However, the fastest growing of all groups was those who professed atheism or *no* religion at all.

The spiritual state of the church in America is not good, but what does the future contain? There are wonderful reports of God moving in great power through miracles of healing, salvation and deliverance in the underground church of China, as well as in scattered places in Africa and in the Far East. There are growing reports of

God sovereignly moving in dreams and visions among people of the Moslem faith in Islamic nations, and many are being saved!

In fact, Christianity is the fastest growing religion in the world, and there is an increasing sense that a great move of God will soon sweep the earth; a move that will prepare the church for the growing darkness that is emerging.

The conflict of the ages lies ahead, and we must prepare for it.

End-Time Darkness

The greatest threat of spiritual darkness to the believer is deception. Consider the following scriptures:

*And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. **For many will come in My name, saying, I am the Christ, and will mislead many.**" (Matthew 24:4-5)*

*But the Spirit explicitly says that **in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.** (1 Timothy 4:1)*

*Many **false prophets will arise and will mislead many.** (Matthew 24:11)*

*For **false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.** (Matthew 24:24)*

The greatest protection against deception is not simply knowing correct doctrine, but maintaining a pure, obedient heart relationship with the Lord Jesus.

*But false prophets also arose among the people, **just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be maligned.** (2 Peter 2:1-2)*

Not only must the end-time church walk in truth and righteousness, she must do so despite growing darkness in the world.

*But realize this, that **in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irrec-***

oncilable, malicious gossips, without self control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power. Avoid such men as these. (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

. . . in the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts. These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly minded, devoid of the Spirit. (Jude 1:18-19)

To help us understand and prepare for the coming darkness, it is vital to recognize the darkness that is even now beginning to arise in the world.

Islamic terrorism is spreading an ever-widening spirit of death over the Middle East; a curtain that is beginning to threaten European nations. This sphere of terrorism also seeks to attack America with missiles or bombs after the deceptive pattern of the 9/11 attack.

Political parties in Western nations, that were once bastions of the Christian faith, are now voicing a growing hatred of the Person and gospel of Christ. This mind-set is seen in America by the growing practice of abortion, legalized homosexual marriages, the acceptance of evolution as truth, and the many efforts by the A.C.L.U. to remove all identity with the Christian faith in America. Secular humanism is being promoted as the god of this age, where it is more important to be “politically correct” than *morally* correct.

The curse of anti-Semitism is spreading throughout Europe as well as in the Middle East.

Drug addiction is growing in all nations, and competitive cartels have arisen to control the sale and distribution of drugs to ever younger children. Evil around us, and evil before us; what is the answer?

God’s Answer for Darkness

God has purposed to fill the earth with His glory, to bring forth a family of sons who bear the image of Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit, and upon the foundation of His only begotten Son, God is bringing forth an organism of the fulness of His Son, the body of Christ. *Glory is God’s answer to spiritual darkness!*

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold darkness will cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord will rise upon you and His glory

will appear upon you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. (Isaiah 60:1-3)

The glory of the Lord will rise upon the church, which is His body; as Christ is received by believers as head over all things to the church, this truth *shall* become a reality.

. . . God raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:20-23)

God revealed a verbal description of His glory to Moses in terms of the following seven character qualities (Exodus 33:18-20)

Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, **compassionate, and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness (mercy) and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished . . . (He is just)** (Exodus 34:6-7)

We believers exult in the hope of one day receiving the glory of God (Romans 5:2). The vital key to our expectation is, “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Colossians 1:27). He is the radiance of His Father’s glory (Hebrews 1:3). This requires more than just making a decision for Christ; it requires a transformation, a work of the Holy Spirit to develop in us the qualities of God’s glory.

But we all, with unveiled face, **beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)**

To combat darkness in the world, we need the glory of God to arise upon us. This will come, not from seeking experiences, but from making Christ the central focus in our lives.

A highway will be there, a roadway; and it will be called the “**Highway of Holiness.**” the unclean will not travel on it, **but it will be for him who walks that way, and fools will not wander on it. (Isaiah 35:8)**

Go through, go through the gates, clear the way for the people; build up, build up the highway, remove the stones, lift up a standard over the peoples. (Isaiah 62:10)

We are called to remove all religious rubbish and superficial traditions that men have built in the name of “church,” and make the way of the Lord clear.

When there is no awareness of the sinfulness of sin, or a lack of repentance that will change hearts, when there is no sense of direction from Christ, our lives and activities become stumbling blocks to others on God’s highway. Great change must come to the church.

Restoration of All Things

There can be no glory apart from restoration. Scripture speaks of the restoration of all things (Matthew 17:11).

Jesus, who is the Lord of glory, will not return until such restoration takes place.

. . . and that He (God) may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. (Acts 3:20-21)

All that God has promised to His people will be restored; thus, Israel shall be saved, and the church will be restored.

*. . . that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the **fulness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved**. . . . (Romans 11:25-26)*

The early church was built upon three bodies of truth:

- The recorded words of Jesus to His disciples
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit to empower and enlighten the disciples to proclaim the gospel and to build local churches in every nation
- The record of their persecutions, successes, problems and revelations that the disciples recorded in their epistles; especially those of Paul.

These three bodies of truth, when documented, are of course, the New Testament. This is the body of truth that must be fully restored in local expressions of the body of Christ.

The New Testament had been documented for little more than a generation, when certain leaders began to lead the church into error. In brief, organization replaced spiritual organism in church life; hierarchical government replaced the headship of Christ in church oversight. Many other errors followed, leading into the great apostasy of the Dark Ages. This trend continued until the Reformation began in the 16th century when God used Martin Luther to restore the fundamental truth of “justification by faith.” Since then there have been many visitations of God, where specific truths were restored, although they were not always received by every denomination in Christendom. Some examples are: baptism in the Holy Spirit; the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit; sanctification; the five ministries of Ephesians 4:11-13; etc.

Such expressions of restored truth reveal the mercy of God. One such expression of mercy was the many Catholics who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit during the Charismatic Renewal.

Many practices in churches today will slowly disappear as the Lord restores His church. Some examples are: titles; offices; distinctions of believers into clergy and laity groups; competition between religious bodies, and programmed agendas.

A believer who has his identity in a title or office as his qualification to minister will not be as fruitful as one whose qualification is his anointed relationship with Jesus. The authority of the Lord is invested in His anointing, not in titles or offices!

But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher and you are all brothers. Do not call anyone on earth your father, for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. (Matthew 23:9-11)

Imagine Paul, the apostle, signing his epistles, “The Reverend, Apostle Paul.”

Certain Greek words which some Bibles translate as “office,” literally mean “a function,” not an office with resources and authority invested for whoever occupies the office. For example, 1 Timothy 3:1 is properly translated as follows:

. . . if any man aspires to the overseership, it is a fine work he desires to do.”

I believe that the glory of the end-time church will be greater than that of the early church. Through hurricanes, floods, tornadoes,

earthquakes, wars, economic upheaval, etc., the Lord will shake the realms of man to bring him to repentance.

... once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. (Haggai 2:6-7)

The church that Jesus returns for will be an overcoming body of believers who have endured great tribulation and persecution. She will be a mature bride clothed with the glory of God.

End-time Tribulation

Teaching that Jesus will return and rapture the church before the great tribulation occurs is false. Trials and tribulation are used by God to purify, strengthen and mature His people. Martyrdom is a path to glory.

... but we also exult in our tribulation, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope . . . (Romans 5:3-4)

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you. (1 Peter 4:12)

... for if we died with Him we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him . . . (2 Timothy 2:11-12)

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison. (2 Corinthians 4:17)

... through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22)

... if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him . . . (Romans 8:17)

Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. (Daniel 12:10)

And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. (Revelation 12:11)

Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you shall be hated by all nations because of My name . . . but the one who endures to the end shall be saved. (Matthew 24:9, 23)

The above verses of scripture express God's agenda to restore the church and to manifest His glory. James expresses our responsibility for this truth.

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4)

The Glorious Harvest

Jesus is Lord of the harvest; everything that takes place in the end-time is addressed by His strategy for the glorious harvest that will close this age of grace.

First of all, there will be a harvest of judgment when the Lord removes from His kingdom that which does not belong to Him. He has allowed the tares to remain with the good grain until the time of harvest. Then they will be separated forever.

Allow both (good grain and tares) to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them into bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into My barn." (Matthew 13:30)

. . . and the harvest is the end of the age . . . (Matthew 13:39)

Each false religion will be bound together as a unique bundle of tares. Jesus refers to the tares as "stumbling blocks" and "those who commit lawlessness" (Matthew 13:40-42). Each bundle is unique in its error. For example "Universalism," "New Age," and "Jehovah's Witnesses" would be distinct bundles.

There will be many who fall away from the faith in the end-time; those who have not been born-again, or who have become tares and stumbling blocks.

The Lord is also going to cleanse the heavenly portions of His kingdom. When Jesus arose from the dead, He made a public display of the angels who Satan had placed as authorities or principalities over regions of the earth (Colossians 2:15). However, after He disarmed them, Jesus did not remove them from their place; He also al-

lowed Satan to remain in his place, where he could harass the church with spirits of condemnation, accusations, and demon activity on earth. This became the sphere of the church's spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18).

The Lord will begin to cleanse the heavens by anointing Michael, the Archangel, to initiate war against Satan and his angels, who will be cast out of heaven onto the earth (Revelation 12:7-9). The result will be twofold: first, Satan's incarnation of himself on earth as the "man of sin,"² and secondly, his presence bringing great tribulation and persecution to believers. However, for the first time in church history, the heavens will be open over the church; there will no longer be a prince of darkness over believers. This truth is expressed as follows in scripture.

Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. (Revelation 12:10)

The open heavens will result in unbelievable miracles and demonstrations of the power and love of God, as the gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed and demonstrated around the world, multitudes will be saved. Jesus had promised the church that they would do greater works than He did because He was returning to His Father (John 14:12). This is that time.

Our heavenly Father has promised all nations to His Son, and much of this promised harvest will take place in the end-times.

Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as your possession. (Psalm 2:8)

In a parable, Jesus gave some insight into the kind of people who will be saved in this final harvest (Luke 14:16-24).

. . . go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame. (verse 21)

This implies a great harvest from the poor and underdeveloped nations. Children will quickly respond to the gospel.

. . . Your people will offer themselves willingly in the day of your power; in the beauty of holiness and in holy array out of the womb of the morning; to You will spring forth Your young men who are as the dew. (Psalm 110:3 AMPLIFIED)

There will be a significant harvest from the Islamic nations (Isaiah 60:4-7). Israel will be saved, and see fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles.

The restored church will not move as an organization, but each believer will be called and equipped as a living member of the body of Christ.

. . . when you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. (1 Corinthians 14:26)

The gospel will not be presented as it so often is today, by a well publicized minister with his performance agenda. The message of the restored church will be Jesus working as Lord and head of His body. He will be seen in His compassion, power, mercy and headship working through His people. His strategy will not be to bring unsaved persons into the church, in hope of their conversion; but rather to send members of His body out to the “market place” to find the lost, and to demonstrate the love and power of God in healing and saving them. Then they would be brought into the church for discipling.

The godly qualities of the early church will be evident; the centrality of Christ and the preaching of His cross will undergird all ministry. There will be new realms of worship. There will arise broken men with hearts of bondservants, in whom will be seen the ministries of apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers and evangelists that God has given to equip and shepherd the saints. House churches will be everywhere. The presence and ministry of angels will be evident.

The final climax to the glorious harvest will be the return of Christ for His church (1 Corinthians 15:49-54).

But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the power of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:29-30)

When Christ comes in His glory, all believers, both the living and the dead, will be caught up to meet Him in the air. We will partake of His glory, since each believer will receive a glorified body like unto His body of glory. This miracle will be the final act in our full adoption as sons of God, the redemption of our body (Romans 8:23).

The harvest is complete, the bride has made herself ready and she now enters her glorious future!

References

1. Cathy Lynn Grossman, AMERICAN RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION SURVEY, as published in March 9, 2009 issue of U.S.A. TODAY.
2. Dale Rumble, THE UNVEILING OF THE MAN OF SIN, Fountain of Life Tract, 2008.

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