

IN TIMES LIKE THESE

By

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In times like these we need to know what it's all about. The answer will not be found in test tubes, chemical formulas or in outer space. It will not come out of the economic struggle or the social revolution being sponsored by the conspirators for world control.

Of course the answer comes from God and is found in His revealed word, "even the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations; but now hath it been manifested to his saints" (Colossians 1:26). The term "mystery" does not mean something mystical or mysterious, but something held secret until revealed. It has now been an open revelation for almost 2000 years, but to most people it remains a mystery.

What Christ revealed had little to do with housing development, urban renewal, space probing and man's efforts in gaining material security. But the answer he gave encompasses the total sphere of man's life and settles these problems once for all.

(1) One of the fastest growing pains of our time is the problem of crime. The courts are jammed, the penitentiaries are crowded and city streets are unsafe after dark. Legislation and psychology fail to supply the remedy. But God reveals the problem in one word, sin, supplies the remedy in one person, Jesus, and in one act on Calvary. "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). All the social changes man can bring off will not cleanse the conscience and bring peace, nor will they make men honest and holy. Only as we know the holiness of God and see the criminality of our sin and its inevitable consequence of destruction will we undergo the humility of repentance and the change of attitude that brings us into total commitment to God.

(2) Another sign of our times is the "distress of nations." Jesus said that "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Luke 21:10) and that there would be "men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world" (Luke 21:26). Everywhere one looks he sees a certain urgency wrought in fear; fear that freedom is fast disappearing, fear that war is inevitable, fear that time is short. Business men launch new projects in fear of national calamity and seek government guarantees. Youth rush into new and destructive experiences for fear that the holocaust will begin before they have had a chance at life. Christian patriots expend themselves in a fearful fight to save democracy.

Again, knowing the purpose of God puts an end to our fears. "When these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draws nigh" (Luke 21:28). God makes it clear in the Bible that the day is coming when the anti-Christ shall gain control of nations and will deceive the whole world (Revelation 13).

“Through the misuse of technical science and industry, radio and the press, economics and politics, the nations of today are preparing the literal fulfillment of New Testament prophecy at top speed. Then, however, Christ will appear and conquer the “universal victor.” He will be in truth the eternal “king of the earth” who gives true happiness to mankind and the Kingdom of God will smash the godless world-empire to pieces (Daniel 2:34, 44, 54; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 13:7, 18; 19:11-12). [Quoted from *King of the Earth* by Eric Sauer.]

Peter has warned in no uncertain terms that this world is destined to be destroyed by fire, along with all the ungodly unbelievers. Knowing this is part of the plan of God should fit us to live in these times with poise and purpose and not be frustrated and easily stampeded as those who have no hope. The Christian will vote for that which he thinks is best, and will defend and advocate that which is right. But when the majority follow the program of Satan, he will not despair, knowing that the final and complete overthrow of the evil one will be accomplished by Christ at His coming. God has given an outline of history and the present conflict of nations doesn't distress the believer, if he knows what it is all about.

(3) At all times there are the question of personal preservation. But the more complex life becomes the greater is the need for an answer to the question, “is there life after death?” After all else is said and done, this is the one question above all others that each individual faces. What does everything else matter if one is deprived of life itself?

“If a man dies, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14). Philosophers like Aristotle and Plato have given the world their version of a life after death. Others, such as H. L. Mencken and Bertrand Russell have made their denials of a future life. Most of the widely accepted ideas of immortality are based upon rationalization and personal preference instead of God's revelation. The question is only complicated by such theologians as Tillich, Barth and Bultmann who treat the resurrection of Jesus as symbolical and mythological instead of a fact that is to be experienced by other human beings.

But above all such speculations about immortality is Jesus Who said, “Because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19).

The Gospels record a definite story of bodily resurrection. The tomb was found empty because the body placed in it had come alive again! Peter said, “This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses” (Acts 2:32). Over and over Peter and Paul refer to the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead. Yet, in spite of the clear Bible teaching of the bodily resurrection much of Christian faith is weakened by the Greek concept of soul-immortality. This idea is that each individual is already immortal, and when death comes he is released from the prison of the body. As a disembodied spirit he immediately receives his reward, hence the expression concerning those who die in Christ, “they have passed to their reward.”

But Jesus could not gain the victory, over death by shucking off the body and living on, thus actually not dying. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom.3:23) — the death of the

person. Such penalty (death) had to be met by Jesus in order to redeem man from sin and death. The scriptures point out that He “poured out his soul unto death” (Isa. 53:12). And the resurrection is the antithesis of death. It is a positive assertion. The man who has really died is recalled to life again! No wonder the early Christians were so excited over this good news! Jesus’ resurrection as a “spiritual body” is an example of what will happen at “the last day,” because Jesus was the “first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20) and the “firstborn from the dead” (Colossians 1:18).

Hence the Christian is undisturbed with death and the threat of it, because he knows what it is all about. His hope is not so vague and mysterious that he shrinks from it, but so real that he eagerly looks forward to it.

While this earth reels speedily toward its destruction, and unrepentant men hasten to judgment and death, God reveals his plan of cosmic redemption and the creation of a new universe. And in times like these we need to know these facts and proclaim them from the housetops. Knowing what it’s all about makes a real difference. Stephen F. Bayne, Jr., in his recent book, ENTER WITH JOY, has this to say: “Your neighbors live in a world in which death is the final thing. Therefore it is very important for them that this world be just as comfortable and as nice as it can be, because it is the only reality they know. Therefore it behooves them to make their peace with this world, to get the curtains up and the rugs down, and find the comfortable anodynes which dull their sensibilities, to tear down their barns and build bigger ones, to learn how to live without believing in anything very much so they may escape the collisions which conviction brings, and to live without caring for anything very much, so they may escape the pain, the passion, of losing it.”

The knowledge of God’s intention to raise up the Christian with immortal life like the resurrected Christ not only helps at the graveside, but it gives meaning to life, and makes life really worthwhile. If the message of the resurrection and the ultimate purpose of God were ever needed, it is certainly needed in times like these.

JUST FOR YOU–TH

The modern “teenager” has become the object of the greatest propaganda program in the U.S. if not in the whole world. And the motive is profit. I am writing this in the belief that there are still a good many of you who have both the courage and the will to resist those who simply want to make a profit out of your age level.

It all began after World War I, when (1) the first big crack began in the American homes and some kids began to get into trouble, and (2) when the machine-age got rolling and youth had less to do and (3) women were “liberated” from the role of mother and began working outside the home.

Adults began making “plans” for the youth - “to give them something to do.” Pretty soon we had all kinds of organizations going and a real recruitment program, backed by local

and federal officials, to enlist all youth from 13 to 19. So gradually the “teenager” ‘was born.

Soon the “teenager” had his own place of entertainment (the canteen) and his own type of dress, his own kind of language and music and even his own kind of transportation.

Then the profiteers moved in.

First the movies recognized they had a whole made-to-order customer in the millions of “teenagers.” Radio and T.V. got on the band-wagon, and they all three combined to produce a certain brand of entertainment for “teenagers.” This involves creating “teenage” stars as well as “hit tunes” for the “teenager.”

The idea was never to give teenagers what they really like. In fact, no consideration was given to the desire and ambition of the millions of youth who fall into the age group of 13 to 19.

Instead the “stars” and the “hit tunes” were the result of very clever promoters, with an eye to making money. Millions of dollars are spent on publicizing a certain person before the public has even a chance to see them in action. The idea is to create an idol, a teenage symbol, so that when the star hits the screen, the millions of young people will automatically consider him to be their choice. And any adult who doesn’t like this “star” is strictly square!

“Hit tunes” are ground out by the scores and funneled out to key radio stations, where the disc-jockeys are richly rewarded for plugging them. The tune is first made available to stations, then plugged as a “hit tune.” Then, because no teenager wants to be considered a square by not owning the latest “hit tune,” hundreds of thousands of youth buy this record. Not because they like it, but because it is announced is a hit. The record companies then make the assertion that the tune really is popular because it has sold a million copies! Obviously the promoters do not want any tune to remain a hit very long. You can’t make money unless you sell records.

The moral of all of this is simply to point out that just because a person happens to be somewhere between 13 and 19, he need not feel that he is subnormal if he doesn’t buy everything that is labeled “for the teenager.” Creators of teenage merchandise seldom take into consideration the will of God and example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is where you can test your faith between the idol of the world, and the image of God.

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