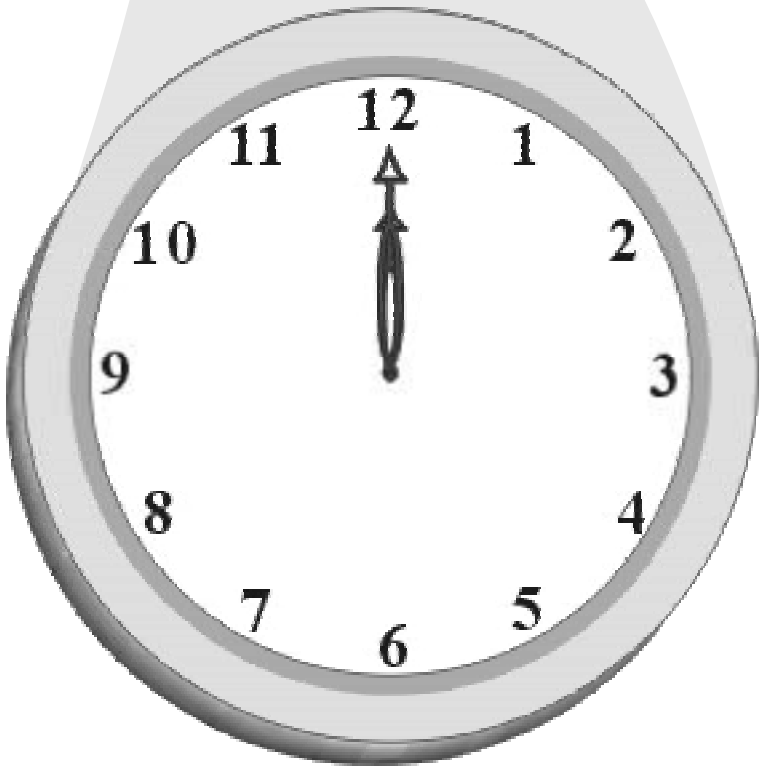


The Midnight Cry

"Behold, the bridegroom cometh"



C. Parker Thomas

This booklet represents a compilation of two articles published several years ago in the **Midnight Cry Messenger**. This publication, a quarterly tabloid-sized paper edited by Bro. C. Parker Thomas, has been sent to many parts of the world for nearly 40 years. The central vision from the beginning has been the nearness of Christ's coming, the need for God's elect to get ready, and the sounding of the midnight cry. The **Midnight Cry Messenger** is available free to all who write in and request it.

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The Midnight Cry

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Matt. 25:6.

It is evident from a study of the scriptures in general that the blessed hope of Christ's return has been uppermost in the minds of believers from the beginning. When I say believers, I do not mean everyone who professes to believe, but true believers.

The longing for deliverance from this body of death and all the pain and sorrows of this world under the curse is what christianity is all about. This is what motivated the disciples to ask the Lord, "... tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Although the disciples at this time didn't understand many things it is evident that they associated Christ's return with the end of the world. We could dismiss this as mere human curiosity if the coming of Christ and the end of the world were not constantly linked together in so many other scriptures.

As a result of the disciples' questions to Christ as he sat upon the mount of Olives (Matt. 24:3) he gave them certain criteria by which they could know his coming was near, even at the doors. Matt. 24:33. However some of the things he told them have already spanned almost two thousand years. And much that he said is veiled in such language that it can only be understood by revelation.

Knowing of the concern and desire of christians to know more about the return of Christ and subsequent end of the world the Lord dealt with this question in many places. Even the Old Testament looks into the prophetic future and gives us many things pertaining to Christ and the course of events including the destruction of the world by fire. Mal. 4:1-6. Paul went to great effort to comfort and allay the premature fears of believers concerning the return of Christ. II Thess. 1:7-10, 2:1-12.

Like many of the things Jesus said, much of Paul's teaching is also shrouded in mystery and not discernable to most Biblical scholars. In fact, it is my conviction that many of the things taught in these scriptures were purposely hid until the time of the end. Dan. 12:4.

II Thess. 2:1-12 gives us a picture of the sequence of events that precedes the coming of Christ. However these scriptures, like many others, have been grossly misinterpreted by religious expositors. Man's effort to interpret these scriptures apart from revelation by the Holy Spirit is responsible for the error and confusion that exists concerning the end of the age and the coming of Christ.

In fact, it is this type of man-inspired interpretation that is responsible for so much divergent opinion and religious confusion. Let's remember I Cor. 14:33 says, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

As we continue to consider the coming of Christ, let's think about the midnight cry that awakens the sleeping virgins. Some of the things we wish to consider are the time element or why is it said to be midnight, who makes the midnight cry and what is the message or the substance of the midnight cry?

Midnight

So far as a specific time such as the day or the hour when this takes place is concerned, this is something that is hid in God. When the prophets of doom or Biblical prognosticators come forth with their various revelations as to the day or hour of certain endtime events you know they are not getting their wisdom from God. Matt. 24:36 says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

Another thing we need to realize is that the sounding of the midnight cry will cover a period of time. How long, only the Lord knows. The awakening of the virgins and their preparation will take some time.

Certainly there has to be some significance to the fact it is said to be midnight that the awakening cry goes forth. Symbolically the midnight hour is looked upon as the darkest hour of the night. Traditionally, midnight has often been associated with something ominous or evil. It is under the cover of darkness that crime, violence and demonic activity has its greatest freedom.

Translated into spiritual terms the midnight hour would represent the time of earth's greatest spiritual darkness, or the time when Satan's delusive power will exert its greatest influence upon the minds of men. The midnight hour will afford Satan his greatest hour of triumph and accessibility to mankind. It will be the climax of the loosing of Satan when his sway of influence over mankind will be at its zenith of power and glory. He will at last liken himself to the Most High. Rev. 12:12, 20:7-9, Isa. 14:12-14.

The gross darkness of Isa. 60:2 will certainly prevail at this time. As it was in Noah's day before the flood, the imagination of men's hearts will be only evil continually. Gen. 6:5, Matt. 24:27.

The midnight cry will be the sounding of the long awaited death knell upon a world cursed with death since the serpent beguiled Eve in the garden. We will have a repeat of the days of Noah, except this time it will be eternal fire instead of water. II Peter 3:1-13.

Noah — A Type

There are many reasons why Jesus compared his second coming to the days of Noah. "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." Gen. 6:12-13.

As God spoke to Noah who warned the world before he destroyed man with the flood, he will speak again before he destroys the world by fire. The midnight cry will be another voice in the wilderness, warning us to prepare for the coming bridegroom.

Since there have already been numerous individuals who were supposedly this last day messenger, let me hasten to say that it might not be one single individual. With God's people scattered all over the earth rather than being concentrated in a small geographical area, it seems there will be more than one man. Although the revelations will have to start somewhere with some individual, it will be the message that is emphasized and not the messenger.

However, we do need to realize that the midnight cry will come forth through anointed lips.

Seventh Trumpet

Even as God said unto Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before me", he will once again speak to someone who in turn will blow the trumpet in Zion. "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand." Joel 2:1.

Peter the apostle understood Joel's prophecy had reference to the last days and the coming of the Lord. Acts 2:16-20. The midnight cry which will herald the coming of Christ and the end of the age will also be the beginning of the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet. Rev. 11:15-18, I Cor. 15:51-52, Matt. 24:31.

Whoever God chooses to make the midnight cry will be someone that has ears to hear what the Spirit is saying. By far and large the professional ministry will be bypassed because they are bound to their traditional religious concepts. Their doctrinal positions will forbid them to even consider the message or the messenger. To them it will be heresy.

I doubt seriously that those whom God uses will be part of the so-called mainstream of christianity. Neither will they be hung up on doctrinal extremes of religious tradition. Much that has been taught relative to the end time and the coming of Christ is hand-me-down tradition and not Holy Ghost revelation.

Sovereign

The method used by religious man to learn about God is wrong. God is sovereign in the matter of revelation. You cannot pry into God's secrets until he is ready to reveal them. He is also sovereign in those to whom he chooses to reveal his message. Psa. 25:14, Deut. 29:29.

Those who make the midnight cry will not be a part of the unbelieving world nor will they be among the ten sleeping virgins. Of all the multitudes of people in the earth, they alone will realize the coming of the Lord is very near.

Their belief, which will be by revelation rather than the letter of the word or religious tradition will motivate them even as Noah was motivated. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. 11:7.

However, let me hasten to add that the revelation will be through the word and not apart from it. Much of the word is hidden through types, shadows and symbols. This is the time of the opening of the book that has been sealed since the Lord told Daniel to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end." Dan. 12:4, Rev. 5:1-9, Rev. 22:10.

Noah, a type of the ministry that will awaken the sleeping virgins, simply relayed God's message to his family. The world as a whole paid him very little attention and they perished in the flood. Although conjecture and speculation can be carried to an extreme, I think we would be safe in saying that many who heard Noah and observed his ark being built considered him a religious fanatic.

No doubt many scoffed at Noah building an ark on dry land and telling them a flood was coming. Peter says, "... there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." II Peter 3:3-4.

This brings us to an important point or principle in our study of this subject. The

vast majority of mankind in their deluded condition of unbelief have never given heed to the voice of God. Most of them are too occupied with gratification of the flesh to take time for God. Those who are religiously inclined simply make themselves garments of fig leaves and hide behind some religious or do-gooder front. Gen. 3:7-8.

The voice of the Lord is never heard from within the camp or system. This is another reason such a ministry is looked upon with suspicion. Such a ministry walks a lonely road. Matt. 7:13-14.

Not being accepted or recognized by the establishment, the message of such a ministry is always to come to him (Jesus) without the camp, bearing his reproach. Heb. 13:13, Rev. 18:4.

A truly Holy Ghost ministry cannot function within the confines of any traditional religious system. This is simply because they will not tolerate their traditions or doctrinal positions to be violated.

Only the sheep will hear the voice of the shepherd and follow him. John 10:27. The sheep are the wise virgins with oil in their lamps. The foolish virgins without oil are goats in sheep's clothing.

Being with the wise virgins they will hear the midnight cry and try to get ready for the coming bridegroom but it will be too late for them. At this point in time the harvest will be passed. Jer. 8:20.

It is also obvious and significant that the ministry or those who make the midnight cry that awakens the sleeping virgins are not among them. It is from without the camp that the cry, "... behold the bridegroom cometh ...," will be heard.

Only Noah's family believed in what he was preaching and cooperated with him in the building of the ark. This is a type of God's family or household which will believe in and respond to the midnight cry. The world in Noah's day did not realize that the harvest was over. Neither will the world recognize their day is over when this message goes forth.

As we continue to consider the ministry of those who make the midnight cry, we must realize that it is a ministry that God raises up just for that purpose. If you will notice in the scriptures, every momentous event involving God and man is preceded by a ministry of warning or preparation.

Amos 3:7 says, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."

Examples of this are Noah and the flood, Jonah and Nineveh, Abraham and Sodom, John the Baptist, Christ, the apostles and other prophets. In fact, Malachi (Mal. 4:1-6) prophesied of an Elijah type ministry that must precede the coming of Christ and the destruction of the world by fire.

The purpose of this ministry is to first turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers. Mal. 4:5-6. The fathers and children represent the true ministry and the children of God who will be united and prepared for the coming bridegroom.

The substance of the message of the midnight cry not only arouses and awakens the ten virgins but it is also the beginning of the separation of the foolish virgins from the wise. Not able to obtain the necessary oil (Holy Spirit) from the wise virgins at this late hour, the foolish virgins go elsewhere looking for oil.

I believe this is taking place now and it will accelerate as the midnight cry message increases in clarity and volume. The world's greatest increase of cults and reli-

gious sects has been taking place before our very eyes. People have been turning to cults and sects by the millions.

Some of them are foolish virgins in search of oil. Instead of oil, many of them are believing the lie and receiving strong delusion. It's evident that the foolish virgins believed they were going to get in or they wouldn't have come back and knocked on the door.

In our own ministry, I believe many who have rejected the truth and have gone out from us are foolish virgins and don't know it. These are people who never fully opened their heart and received Christ through the truth. Self on the throne with rebellion in control is the great cause.

Those who make the midnight cry and the wise virgins will be together when the bridegroom comes. Like Noah's ark, when they go in the Lord will shut the door. Gen. 7:16, Rev. 3:7.

Notice in the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:24-30) it is while men sleep that the enemy sows the tares among the wheat. Who put the foolish virgins in with the wise virgins?

It will also be noticed that the tares and the wheat were allowed to grow together until the harvest. The first thing the reapers do is gather the tares together into bundles to burn them.

What are the bundles? The bundles are cults, sects, denominations and religion in general. I might also add that this conglomeration is "... Mystery Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." Rev. 17:5.

The gathering of the tares together has intensified in the last few years. The midnight cry will complete this work of separation.

The message of God to Noah warning him of the destruction of man by the flood brought Noah and his family together in the building of the ark. The midnight cry will bring the true spiritual fathers and children together in preparation for the coming of the Lord. Satan's counterfeit of this true union is organized religion and the ecumenical movement. Isa. 4:1.

In fact, Isa. 4:1-6 gives us a picture of the true and the false church systems at the coming of Christ. The many bundles of religion, like the seven women of Isa. 4:1, will put on a front of getting together, but the only true unity will be the wheat which is gathered into the one barn.

Although many have focused their attention on Elijah as an individual ministry in the prophecy of Malachi, I fear they are missing its true significance. What made Elijah great was the anointing or mantle of authority that rested upon him. Whatever we, Elijah or any man has in the way of spiritual power or virtue comes from God.

Elijah the man has finished his earthly work. Rev. 14:13. Under some conditions Elijah, Moses or one of the prophets might make a brief appearance and minister to an individual from the spiritual realm but this can in no wise be construed as another tenure of earthly ministry or reincarnation. Matt. 17:1-4, Rev. 22:8-9.

According to Matt. 17:9-13, John the Baptist was God's Elijah to that generation. And Jesus confirmed Malachi's prophecy that another Elijah was yet to come preceding his second coming. It was this last day Elijah whom Malachi said would turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers.

From the scriptures we have already considered it is evident that the Elijah ministry is not so much a man as it is an anointing. A good example of how the same

anointing can come upon a multiple ministry is found in Num. 11:16-17 where the Lord took of the Spirit that was upon Moses and put it upon seventy elders to share the burden of ministry with him.

No Open Vision

The last days of the prophet Eli before Samuel replaced him as God's prophet are another type of the conditions that will prevail just before the coming of Christ. The word of the Lord was precious in those days and there was no open vision. I Sam. 3:1. This simply means there will be great spiritual darkness with very little of the word being manifested. No open vision means just that. They had no revelation as to the future or what was actually taking place.

It was also a time of transition when God was replacing one ministry with another. He was through with Eli and his sons because they had despised their ministry and miserably failed in their mission. It required a new ministry and a new dedication to impart the new vision that God was about to give.

God's prophetic schedule is always on time regardless of what man thinks or does. The nearness of Christ's coming will be revealed to a few and they will be anointed to give forth the midnight cry.

At the midnight hour most of the professional ministry will be oblivious to what is taking place and sleeping right along with the ten virgins. Professing christianity as a whole will have Ichabod (the glory is departed) written across their church doors. I Sam. 4:21.

Except for those who actually make the midnight cry, the whole world will be doing their own thing and completely oblivious to what is about to take place. The cares of this life and fleshly indulgence will occupy them. Peter said that the last day scoffers would be walking after their own lusts. II Peter 3:3. Religious man will be geared to his particular religious program and just as oblivious to spiritual reality as the rest of the world.

Signs of Christ's coming will be everywhere but not recognized as such. Actually, the erroneous prophetic teaching traditionally believed and taught by most groups is responsible for this lack of discernment. They will be as blind to Christ's second coming as the world was to his first coming.

As John the Baptist was the messenger sent before his face to herald his first coming, the midnight cry message will herald his second coming. Their messages are almost identical in pointing to the soon coming of the Lord and the need of preparation. Except for strong delusion and a more universal condition of reprobation, Isaiah's prophetic description of the Jews at Christ's first coming (Matt. 15:7-9) will be repeated at his second coming.

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men; Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. Isa. 29:13-14.

The message of those who make the midnight cry that heralds the second coming of Christ will have a positive ring of authority in it. Unlike those described by Isaiah and Jesus, their message will be by revelation and not by the precept of men. The difference between Holy Ghost revelation and the letter of the word is the differ-

ence between life and death. One quickens and the other kills. John 6:63, II Cor. 3:6.

Of all the people in the earth, including the sleeping virgins, only those who make the midnight cry will be awake and see what is actually taking place. People who are asleep are not aware they are sleeping. Only when they awake do they realize they were asleep.

It takes something unusual or different from the sleeper's present state to awaken him. This is why the message of God (the midnight cry) is likened to a trumpet. Rev. 11:15-18, I Cor. 15:51-52, Matt. 24:31. A trumpet is loud, clear and distinct in contrast to a quiet, peaceful sleeping environment. The purpose of a trumpet is to give a positive and certain sound.

The sound disturbs, arouses and awakens the sleeper. His first impulse is to resent and reject the message. At ease in Zion the sleeping virgins will be snug and comfortable in their soft religious beds. It would be much easier to turn off the alarm and go back to sleep. Getting up, getting dressed and facing the day's responsibilities requires effort, discipline and work. Isa. 52:1-3.

Traditional religion will not be disturbed by the midnight cry and they will utterly reject the message because it is so different from their supposedly fundamental concepts. However, those who are awakened to its message realize it cannot be rejected but must be reckoned with.

It will be too late for the foolish virgins. Even though they are at last concerned, like Esau (Heb. 12:17), they will not be able to get in. Actually the destinies of the two groups are sealed before the midnight cry goes forth.

As A Thief

Four times we are told by Jesus, Paul, Peter and John that Christ's coming will be as unexpected as a thief in the night. Matt. 24:42-44, I Thess. 5:1-2, II Peter 3:10, Rev. 16:15. This applies to the world as a whole, including most of the professing christian world.

It certainly seems strange that the world's most unexpected and earth-shattering event could take place with so much warning in the scriptures about it. The pieces to this puzzle come together when the Lord grants us spiritual discernment to understand the scriptures and to interpret them in the light of world conditions.

Paul's statement in I Thess. 5:1-6 gives us some very enlightening truth. In this scripture Paul repeats the well known fact that Christ's coming will be as a thief in the night. Although it would be useless to suggest a specific time element, he says, "But ye brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

He contrasts earth's two general groups of people by saying, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

Although these children of light and children of the day are christians, it is obvious they could get careless, fail to watch and go to sleep. The purpose of the midnight cry will be to awaken these sleeping ones.

As we have previously said, this slumbering and sleeping is not a simple case of indifference or spiritual lethargy. It will be the result of the lack of awareness of the imminent return of Christ. This will be caused by wrong believing or inability to see what is actually taking place in the world.

Awareness of Christ's soon coming is predicated upon the ability to see what is actually taking place. Jesus said, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; 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. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Matt. 24:32-34.

This being true, the midnight cry message will be an expose of the error and deception that has blinded most of our professing christian world. The midnight cry message will be truth revealed by the Holy Spirit. Its power and design will cause a great shaking that will disturb, arouse and awaken. It will be truth, powerful and clear, versus a confusing maze of tradition and error. It will be man's last warning before the coming of the Lord.

In the message to the seven churches or church ages, Rev. chapters 2 & 3, it is evident that conditions varied from church to church. However, in each age the Spirit of God had a message and was speaking to those who had ears to hear what the Spirit was saying.

Is it possible that earth's greatest event, and the climax of the ages can take place without God speaking again to those who have ears to hear? Beloved, I believe the time of the sounding of the midnight cry is upon us.

Sleeping Virgins

As we have brought out previously, the ten virgins (wise and foolish) will be slumbering and sleeping at the midnight hour just before the bridegroom comes. Beyond doubt this slumbering and sleeping covers a period of time that we can't be specific about. Although they had a knowledge of his coming they had more or less grown weary with the seeming delay and gone to sleep.

Nothing makes you more weary than unfulfilled anticipation that finally turns to unbelief and boredom. And lifeless sermons whether they are loud and noisy or quiet and dignified in the same religious atmosphere puts more people to sleep than anything else. It's my conviction that the virgins were asleep because they had become so accustomed to the same traditional sound. It was like a broken record playing the same old tune over and over again.

II Peter 3:3-4 says, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scornors, walking after their own lusts. And saying, Where is the promise of his coming: for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

After you hear something over and over again long enough, your brain accepts it as part of your normal and proper environment. You actually reach the place where you don't want to hear anything different because it would disturb your tranquility. Yet, it's going to take something different to arouse and awaken the sleeping virgins. The awakening itself will also involve a time period.

The scriptures point to the general condition of religious mankind in the last days which is certainly typical of today. Paul said, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." II Tim. 3:5.

This form of godliness has reference to the manifestation or outward show of religion that has no capacity for spiritual reality. In fact, its spiritual structure is such that true spiritual reality is excluded.

The purpose and design of such religious form is to bring man into captivity to a system devoid of the life of God. It either appeals to his intellect or his sensual being and thus his religious quest is satisfied, but he is still in his sins.

Historically, religion, both pagan and christian, evolves or degenerates into spe-

cific forms of worship. Their doctrines and governments are cleverly designed to hold captive within its bounds its adherents. This was the spirit that built the first Babylon and it is still true of Babylon today. Gen. 11:4. However those who are enmeshed in religious Babylon are not aware of it.

In order to perpetuate, preserve and continue their traditional concept of things, "... they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

"And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." II Tim. 4:3-4.

This scripture is saying that they will assemble or gather to themselves teachers (preachers, ministers) that will preach what their ears want to hear. This is exactly what every denomination, sect and cult does.

Like manufacturing plants, their churches, schools and seminaries produce preachers that will nourish and perpetuate their particular church systems. All of these together with their divergent doctrines, religious concepts and traditions, constitute "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." Rev. 17:5.

The wise and foolish virgins have drunk from Babylon's golden cup for many years. Many of the doctrines and religious traditions of the Great Whore have filtered down to her many harlot daughters even before the protestant reformation.

Something Different Needed

If the virgins are to be awakened to the reality of Christ's soon return they must listen to something different from what they are used to within the confines of Babylon. Let's not forget the woman on the back of the beast has many daughters that have excelled her in witchcraft and religious sorcery. Before the slumbering virgins will consider something different from their religious seduction they must be disturbed. They must begin to see the hopelessness of the world system, both religious and political.

As long as they feel comfortable and at ease in Zion they will not be interested in anything else. Babylon must fall. The beginning of the fall of Babylon comes with the realization that there is no hope or future in apostate religion or the world system. World conditions plus the threat of nuclear war will be a big factor.

The present hue and cry for a nuclear arms freeze and a world peace treaty will continue until they think they have accomplished their goal. I Thess. 5:3 says, "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

Thank God! As Lot was called out of Sodom before the fire and brimstone fell, God's people will come out of Babylon before she is judged. Rev. 18:4, I Thess. 5:9, Luke 17:28-30.

The greatest shaking the world has ever experienced is coming. It is time for the wise virgins to arise and trim their lamps. The climax of the ages is upon us. It is time for the sounding of the midnight cry.

The end result of all this will be the destruction of the kingdoms of this world and the establishment of a kingdom that cannot be moved. Heb. 12:25-29, Rev. 11:15-18, Isa. 24:16-23.

The midnight cry will be unique and different. It will be light that dispells the darkness that put the virgins to sleep. Have you ever noticed that early morning

light arouses and awakens you after a night's sleep? The only people who can sleep on after light comes are those who are drunk, drugged, dead or in a coma.

This light will be the revelation of God's word. It will be Holy Ghost revelation in contrast to the darkness of tradition and error. Those who receive the light first will be those who make the midnight cry. Like Noah being warned of God of things to come they will move with fear and cry out, "... Behold, the bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet him." Matt. 25:6.

The Book Opened

The light, of course, involves much more than a simple cry of warning. It will be the opening of the book that has been sovereignly sealed till the time of the end. I do not mean by this that we haven't had a measure of truth since the Lord said, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Dan. 12:4.

Those things that were hidden in Daniel's time pertained to the time of the end. And one of the keys to understanding when this time comes is men running to and fro in the earth and knowledge being increased.

I am persuaded that this scripture is in process of being fulfilled. The increase of knowledge from the standpoint of science and technology staggers the imagination. This is the age of the computer, the splitting of the atom and the exploration of outer space.

Think also of how common it is for men to span oceans and continents in a matter of hours. Jet planes, helicopters, automobiles and trains enable people to go anywhere they want to go. World events and happenings are brought right into our living rooms by television. Satellites are circling the earth spying on our enemies.

I personally think there is a parallel in the increase of human knowledge and the increase of divine knowledge. However, we are not to confuse the two or in any wise think they are the same. In fact the more man learns naturally or scientifically the less capacity he has for God.

This is simply because he becomes puffed up in his mind and feels self-sufficient. I Cor. 8:1. Speaking specifically of the last days, Paul said that men would be "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." II Tim. 3:7.

The spirit of Babylon still rules in the hearts of men. The increase of human knowledge without God results in more world empires whose design is to glorify man instead of God. Gen. 11:1-9.

Divine knowledge or revelation has the opposite effect on man. It humbles him and makes him more God conscious and dependent upon the Lord. Isaiah's vision of the Lord high and lifted up is a good example of the transforming effect of the revelation of God to the heart of man. Isa. 6:1-8.

Dead, formal religion or the letter of the word does not stir or move people. If anything, it lulls them to sleep. Divine revelation infuses life and becomes a catalyst that awakens and moves man. Noah is a good example of this. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. 11:7.

Light That Awakens

The midnight cry is the revelation or the light that will awaken the sleeping vir-

gins. This awakening light will also be a restoration of apostolic truth and revelation that was purposely hid until this climactic day.

Much that was understood by the apostles and the early church has been buried under a morass of error and religious tradition. This began shortly after Pentecost as uninspired and apostate leaders took control of the church.

Zechariah spoke of a day known only to the Lord in which the light would be neither clear nor dark. Zech. 14:6-7. Paul confirmed this even in his day. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." I Cor. 13:9-10.

The church made its entry into the world in a blaze of pristine glory and power and it will go out the same way. Pro. 4:18-19 says, "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble."

As the light grows brighter, the darkness will intensify and increase its grip upon the minds of unbelieving men. The end result will be strong delusion and damnation for the wicked and glorification for the righteous. II Thess. 1:7-10.

Isaiah speaks of this coming light and the gross darkness that will cover the earth. In fact, the darkness and the light is increasing rapidly as this age comes to a close. Rom. 9:28. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Isa. 60:1-2.

Although many Bible expositors think this applies only to the beginning of the church age, I believe its greater fulfillment takes place as the age comes to a close.

The sleeping virgins cannot rise and shine until their light comes. And only the wise virgins with oil (Holy Spirit) will be able to get ready and go in with the bridegroom.

Did it ever occur to you that these great revival crusades bringing tens of thousands of people together in one place to hear such men as Billy Graham may be part of this awakening process? Think of the millions all over the world who have heard Billy Graham alone, by radio, television, movies and in person.

Although I do not agree with much of this, some measure of truth mixed in with tradition, error and easy believism has created religious excitement and served to arouse some. A few have come to faith and, like the foolish virgins, some have gone in search of oil elsewhere. The end result of many of these union revivals is to tell the seekers to join the church of their choice.

Time Involved

There could be more time involved in the awakening than we realize. Although Christ's coming is recognized and preached in a measure by most ministers, much tradition and error is mixed in with it.

The last phase of the awakening will deal with the specifics of his coming and clear up the tradition and error that exists. However, we must realize that much of the professing christian world is in an apostate condition of unbelief and they will not be able to see what is taking place nor will they recognize or hear the midnight cry.

Awareness of Christ's soon coming is predicated upon the ability to see what is actually taking place. Only a few will have ears to hear and eyes to see what is taking place and be able to relate those things to the scriptures. Most of the world will be totally blind to these things, including tradition-blinded professors of christianity.

The last phase of the awakening will not only arouse and awaken the sleeping virgins but it will also separate the foolish from the wise. Not able to obtain oil from the wise virgins, the foolish virgins will go to the churches of their choice seeking oil.

Wherever they go it will be too late to get oil. At this point in time the withdrawal of God's Spirit because of the hardness of men's hearts will be universal. Like those who rejected Noah's warning, the day must come when the Lord will no longer strive with man. Gen. 6:3. This will actually be the condition just before the Lord comes.

When the imagination of men's hearts reached the place where they were evil continually God was through with them. The next thing in order when this happens is judgment. God first removes the righteous and then judgment is poured out.

This was the pattern when God destroyed mankind with the flood. Gen. 6:5-18. This was the pattern when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Gen. 18 and 19. And this will be the pattern when God destroys the world by fire.

Coming Near

I personally believe we are much nearer the coming of the Lord than we would dare realize. This means the deliverance of God's people and the destruction of the earth by fire: only this time it will be eternal. When man reaches a place where God no longer deals with him, there is nothing left but judgment. II Thess. 1:7-10, II Peter 3:10-14, Luke 17:28-29.

I concur with the observation of many that man in general has reached the place where he has no desire or capacity to turn to God. The message and emphasis of the Holy Ghost is to get the wise virgins ready for the coming bridegroom. This also involves coming out of Babylon before she is destroyed by fire.

The messenger who appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos said, "... Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

"And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:10-12.

Please note that this was God's message just before the return of Christ. In contrast to the sealing of the book in Daniel's time (Dan. 12:4), the book could no longer be sealed. Because the time was at hand, everything hid in God for future generations could no longer be hid. This was the last generation. There would be no more. All things must be fulfilled.

Jesus said, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; 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.

"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Matt. 24:32-34.

At this point in time everything was finished and the climax of the ages was at hand. Man's time had run out. He that was unjust or filthy had to remain in that condition. There would be no more opportunity because the door of salvation was closed. Of course, he that was holy or righteous would remain in that blessed state at Christ's coming.

With destinies sealed, the only thing left was Christ's coming and the great white

throne judgment where the Lord will reward the righteous and the unbelieving according to what is written in the books. Rev. 20:11-15.

I am fully aware of traditional theology which says there will be two judgments, one for the righteous and one for the wicked. The first one is the judgment seat of Christ in which the righteous will receive their rewards. And the second is the great white throne judgment supposedly a thousand years later plus a little season.

And there are some who believe in additional judgments such as the judgment of the nations and the judgment of angels.

Belief in these various judgments is for the most part the result of traditional theology which says the world will continue on for seven years plus a thousand years, plus a little season after Christ comes.

This type of thinking is a conspiracy of Satan to cause people to think they will have another opportunity after Christ comes. As Paul said to the Corinthians, "...I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. II Cor. 6:2.

Restoration

As Noah, the father, was given God's message for his family, the midnight cry message will be given to the spiritual fathers who love the children and feel their responsibility toward them. And the children in turn will respond to the love and concern of their spiritual fathers.

This turning of the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers speaks of the love and unity that is so necessary for the church to manifest Christ in the earth. This will also be the answer to Christ's prayer that we might be made perfect in one. John 17:21, Mal. 4:5-6.

The church started out with such great love and unity that they had all things in common. And God was in the midst in such a way as the church has never experienced since. Matt. 18:15-20, Acts 2:41-47.

The father ministry will not only be a ministry that will awaken the sleeping virgins but the restoration of apostolic truth will restore the glory and power of the early church.

The apostasy is responsible for professionalism in the church. Ministers who are bound by tradition and are more interested in a big church and a fat check cannot help God's people. Paul says, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." I Cor. 4:15.

The ministry gifts given by Christ for the work of the ministry and the perfecting of the saints are even now being restored. Eph. 4:10-16. The church Christ is coming for will be a glorious church without spot, wrinkle or blemish. Eph. 5:26-27.