

Sabbath School Today
With the 1888 Message Dynamic

“Feed My Sheep”*: *First and Second Peter
Lesson 10. Prophecy and Scripture

For many faint-hearted Christians the second coming of Jesus is receding more and more into the background. For them the return of Jesus is being eclipsed by the darkness of the world.

The Apostle Peter sets forth two profound reasons why “the power and coming of our Lord” are not “cunningly devised fables” (2 Peter 1:16). The confirmation to Peter concerning the coming of Christ came when God spoke at the Mount of Transfiguration, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 17:5). This was a foreshadowing of Christ’s coming in the glory of His Father. At the transfiguration the apostles saw with their eyes and heard with their ears in miniature, a prescient forecast of Christ’s coming. “The transfiguration stands for us, as it did for the apostles, a sure pledge of Christ’s second coming in power and great glory. ...” [1]

But there is another evidence of Christ’s coming, and that is the “more sure word of prophecy” because it is spoken by the Spirit of God. “It is possible that a person’s eyes or ears might deceive him, but there is no possibility of doubt in regard to the prophecy. And why not? Because it did not come ‘by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.’ The prophecy, therefore, is as reliable as God Himself. There are very few things in this life upon which we can depend implicitly; how gladly, then, we ought to receive this sure word, and how eagerly we ought to search it.” [2]

Peter uses the analogy of a light which shines in a dark place; we are in darkness until the day dawns. But we cannot understand the “sure word of prophecy” until it breaks through into our hearts like the dawning of the day when the morning star must arise in our hearts and illuminate God’s character of glory to us.

The present age is called night. Paul says, “The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light” (Rom. 13:12). And this he says in view of the fact that it is high time to wake out of sleep, because our salvation is near. “The dawning of the day, and the rising of the Day-star, refer to the coming of Christ, who is ‘the bright and Morning Star’ (Rev. 22:16).” [3]

Just before the coming of the Lord, His Word is to be proclaimed, and His life is to be manifested, to an extent and with a power never before known. This will be the shining of the Day-star, which will usher in the perfect day, when “the Sun of Righteousness” will shine over all the land, and “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9).

Christ cannot come until the power and love of God have been demonstrated in the lives of His followers to the same degree as in His own life. God will show by means of the church,—that is, all true believers in Jesus,—His power to work perfect righteousness in sinful mortals, thus accomplishing a work even greater than that which Satan set himself to overthrow.

In his chapter 60, Isaiah is overjoyed to write about the time when the earth will be drenched with a special “light” of “the truth of the gospel.” He says to God’s people, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee” (vs. 1). We have usually thought of this as the time when we will have more radio and television stations, greater technology for increased volume, so everybody in the world will at last hear what has been our traditional understanding of the message.

There is an identical “loud voice” in Revelation 14:9 and 18:1-4 that characterizes the last soul-winning ministry of all time. Will it be a greater noise level that will command the world’s attention? We have talked, and prayed, and sung about it for generations. Have we assumed it will be a glorious and triumphant success for the church, to validate all our past labors? Millions who have gone to “sleep in Jesus” have dreamed of living in those awe-inspiring days when the earth will be “lighted.”

But wait a moment: The Bible is not talking about an increased noise level, but of increased “light.” It’s to be a clearer grasp of what Paul repeatedly calls “the truth of the gospel” (Gal. 2:5, 14). Jesus said, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Greater light in understanding the gospel of righteousness by faith brings that freedom.

But if someone feels “rich and increased with goods” in his understanding of the message, it could mean he has no “hunger and thirst after righteousness” (see Matt. 5:6). Emotionalism can easily be mistaken for truth. The “glory” spoken of in Isaiah 60:2 and Revelation 18:1-4 will be a clearer grasp of justification by faith. We don’t want to be blind to the light when the Lord sends it as the Jews were blind to their Messiah when He came. You can “follow” Jesus only if you “take up [your] cross daily” to be “crucified with Him” (Luke 9:23, Gal. 2:20).

Scripture prophesies a worldwide proclamation of pure gospel truth. We know it as the 1888 message. “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14). “Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem” (Zech. 14:8). “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 ... Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isa. 60:1-3). “In the last days, saith God, ... on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit” (Acts 2:17, 18). “I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory” (Rev. 18:1). It is great Good News!

—Paul E. Penno

Endnotes:

[1] E. J. Waggoner, *Prophetic Lights* (1888), p. 30.

[2] E. J. Waggoner, "The Sure Word," *The Signs of the Times* (Feb. 15, 1883), p. 77.

[3] E. J. Waggoner, "Testimony of the Centuries. The Sure Word," *The Present Truth* (Dec. 20, 1894), p. 803.

Notes:

Pastor Paul Penno's video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://youtu.be/Nzt2Rcli6Mc>

You may subscribe to the e-mail version of *Sabbath School Today* by sending a request to sabbathschooltoday@1888message.org