

Wise Men Still Seek the King!

LHC: Message Fifty-Two (041212AM)

Week 52: Wise Men Still Seek the King!

(Matthew 2:1–11 and Luke 2:8–20)

As the end of days approaches, you can find hope as you become one of the King's seekers!

SUNDAY: When Life Is a Blur — Focus!

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

—Psalm 46:10, emphasis added

Sometimes our lives fly by so fast that the days begin to blur. That is especially true at the holiday season. When that happens we can often miss the beauty around us. For example, as we drove back from taking our children to college we went by the Great Smoky Mountain National Park on Interstate 40 in Tennessee. As we sped along we saw a sign that said: Scenic Parkway. Looking at Bonnie, I said, “Let’s try that!” Suddenly we were off the seventy-mile-per-hour river of cars and trucks jockeying for one car length over each other, and on a quiet winding road through the mist-covered Smoky Mountains.

Soon, even the children were crowded at the windows pointing out barns, fields, colored leaves, and waterfalls. *It is amazing what you can see when you slow down and look!*

How about it? Have you been looking for Jesus during this Christmas season? Or has Christmas already flown by the windows of your life so fast that you missed what God was offering you? Everyone who *looks* for Jesus to come will enjoy His arrival!

My prayer is that you will pull off the “rat race highways” and take the scenic route to enjoy Jesus Christ the Lord! One way to do that is to take a lingering look at the First Coming of Christ, which is the greatest event since Creation. Therefore, we will spend another week on that all-important event.

When God came from heaven, wrapped in baby clothes, and laid in a stone feeding trough called a manger, He was only welcomed and worshiped by two groups of people outside of His own family. Those two groups, the wise men and the shepherds, were poles apart socially, economically, culturally, ethnically, and in every other way but spiritually. However, when the wise men and the shepherds knelt at the feet of Jesus, they worshiped on common ground.

The wise men and the shepherds stand out at the First Coming of Christ because, of all the creatures on earth created in His image, they were the only ones who came seeking the newborn King! Thus, I call them “the King’s seekers.”

What does Matthew 2 record as the reaction of these seekers of the King? Worship. Shortly after the birth of the Messiah, Judean shepherds bowed at His feet, singing His praises. Then later, Babylonian Magi from the East arrived in Jerusalem asking King Herod where the *real* king of the Jews was born. As we discussed last week, the response of the Bible scholars of Herod's court was "*in Bethlehem.*" The still startling fact is this: although they could recite the right answer, their hearts were indifferent to the Truth of God's Word. Their reaction revealed the terrible condition of indifference to God. They knew the Scriptures—they just did not believe them. What a tragic indictment upon these servants of God! They did not want to travel the five or so miles to Bethlehem to see their Messiah!

How far will you go to see the King? What is it costing you to serve Him?

My Prayer for You This Week: *Father in heaven, I thank You for the blessing of these wise men. I pray that we would each exhibit faith like the Magi. They were drawn by You, oh God. They were most likely instructed by Your Word, but it was a heart-felt response. It wasn't academic like the religious leaders. It wasn't hatred or indifference. It was love. For that is what You have told us—no one who loves You will ever miss out on seeing You. And that is true this Christmas season. I pray that we would pull off the highway onto the scenic parkway and in our hearts love You, come to You, see You, fall before You, and worship You. For then You will draw from us as we open to You what we have and give it to You. Oh, make this the most precious, worship-filled, Christ-exalting celebration of the Christmas season of our lives! We pray in the name of Jesus and for His glory, Amen.*

MONDAY: Wise Men Believe Christ — Sight Unseen

"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.'"

—Matthew 2:2, emphasis added

What does Matthew record as the first response of those who found Jesus? Worship. As the Holy Scriptures pull back the cloak of time, with vibrant freshness, let us further consider this hallowed moment—the moment God entered time and space as an infant!

In Matthew 2:1–11, Scripture records three responses to Christ which are still present today: Herod hated Him, the leaders ignored Him, and the Magi loved Him. Because the Magi "*came from far away*" (v. 1), it shows that they had a single-minded devotion because they kept asking everyone where King Jesus was (v. 2). In verses 3–8 Matthew paints the drama of all the possible detractors and how the wise men were not daunted in their mission by false seekers like Herod or the religious professionals. In verse 9, Matthew shows how they just kept following God's leading until they found what they were seeking—Jesus—the King of their worship. Their emotions in finding Jesus at last were revealed by their great anticipation (v. 10). Finally, the Magi fulfilled their purpose in coming so long and so far: they came to see Jesus, to worship Him, and to give to Him. When they "*had come . . . they saw, . . . fell down, . . . worshiped, . . . opened [and] presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh*" (v. 11). The significance of these gifts is beautiful.

Gold speaks of Christ as the King of Heaven, or His Deity, as a study of the tabernacle makes plain. **Frankincense** speaks of Christ's role as both our Great High Priest and the Perfect Lamb of God, just as it gives forth its *perfume* only as it is brought into contact with fire. **Myrrh** speaks of Christ's sacrificial death as myrrh is only harvested after the tree is bruised with stripes cut into the bark. Resin that flows as a healing balm to the damaged bark of the tree's *suffering*, has always associated myrrh with the death and burial of our Lord.

Thus these wise men, by the gifts they presented to Him, expressed first, their faith in His Deity; second, their adoration of His sinless life; and third, their anticipation of His sacrifice of Himself for the sin of the world by His death.¹

What simple lessons can we draw from the wise men? God has servants in unexpected places; He gets glory from unexpected people; He is found only by hearts and not heads; finding God is costly; and true faith is unstoppable.

The Magi were willing to follow God's way anywhere in order to find the promised King and Savior. Are you seeking the King? If you want to seek and find Him, here is God's pattern for how to do that.

Come to Jesus personally. Do you see the lesson in the way these wise men gave? They did not send their gifts by another's hand; they brought them personally to Jesus. God wants you, in person, to come to Him. Undaunted by the long and arduous journey, they must have been astonished to find a mere Baby in a stable. After the magnificence of King Herod's palace, and his overpowering presence, it is incredible that they fell down to worship Jesus as they did. Choosing to disobey Herod's demand that they reveal the location of Jesus indicates their faith. That choice could have cost them their lives. So, in every way, their lives were marked by a personal coming to Jesus.

Have you come personally to Jesus in prayer, worship, and adoration? Have you given *yourself* to Jesus this Christmas season? That is the first gift He wants (2 Corinthians 8:5)!

Give sacrificially of your time, freedom, and comfort for Jesus. From the two year calculation of Herod's death-warrant on the babies of the region, we can infer that it took many months for the Magi to travel to Jerusalem. Herod added some months on each end to cover any potential birth near that time. Back then, it was difficult traveling 1,100 to 1,200 miles. From the regions of Babylon, Persia, or Media, they would have had to walk and ride across hot and arid deserts, through rivers, and cross over cold and dangerous mountain passes to get to Christ's birthplace. Even today, that journey would be very difficult and dangerous. What are you giving to Jesus that really costs you something?

Immediately present what you have to Jesus. The wise men brought prophetic gifts that pictured what Christ's earthly work was all about. They brought what they had in their lives as wealthy rulers. And that is what God wanted; that is why He chose them. When God chose you it was not to bring their kind of gifts, but yours. Remember how the Lord accepts the gifts of each individual. None are the same; all are precious to Him.

Present what you have to Him today. Give Him your mind, and let Him fill it. Give Him your hands, and let Him guide and use them. Give Him your future, and let

Him plan and direct your life. Give Him your treasures—He can store them and invest them in safe places that bring everlasting rewards!

Reverently offer your worship to Jesus. More than the coming and presentation of gifts is the greatest moment of all: they fell down and worshiped Him! Worship is a rare and easily lost atmosphere of devotion, adoration, sacrifice, and communion. Those wise men were overwhelmed at the sight of the One they had come so far to see, had waited so long to honor, and had paid so much to sacrifice their gifts upon. When at last they saw Him, they could do nothing less than fall down and worship Him!

As you end this year and start a new one, measure your personal worship temperature. To help you do that, consider William Temple's definition of worship: "[Worship is] to *quicken the conscience* by the holiness of God, [Worship is] to *feed the mind* with the truth of God, [Worship is] to *purge the imagination* by the beauty of God, [Worship is] to *open up the heart* to the love of God, [Worship is] to *devote the will* to the purpose of God."²

TUESDAY: The Shepherds Were Wise Men

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."

—James 4:10, emphasis added

Before the Magi ever arrived, who came first to the birthplace of the King? The first to arrive were men who were wise in the eyes of God, but in man's eyes they were the humblest, lowliest, and most unworthy of all who lived around Bethlehem—the shepherds. These humble men were of the least likely profession to see a King, and yet the shepherds were the most honored of all Christ's greeters and seekers. You see, God really loves and responds to humility! (That Truth has shaped my whole outlook on life, on worship, on Bible study and, most of all, prayer.)

Shepherds of the first century lived in a world that made it hard to make a living. They struggled and scraped along on minimum wages. In fact someone has described the first century like this: "Taxes were high; wages were low, hypocrisy was rampant; honesty was rare. Freedom was gone; Roman occupation was hard. The rich were getting richer; the poor were always struggling. Morality was ebbing; rebellion was brewing; cruelty was reigning."

Life for shepherds was difficult at best. They experienced cold nights, long days, distant family, and rare friends. Also, sheep stank, and shepherds had to continually search for them because they wandered. Life was never restful and work was never done. But that was all part of what could be expected in a shepherd's life.

In the community at large, shepherds were at the low end of Jewish society. Away from the synagogue, absent from the temple, and defiled by dead animals, they were outcasts to the Jerusalem crowd. Unable to even be a witness to special events they seemed to almost be outside of the culture. But then everything changed.

God captivated the humble shepherds. On the hillsides of Bethlehem, under the stars, the angel's glorious announcement of Christ's birth left one band of shepherds stunned: "*Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy*

which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. . . . You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’ (Luke 2:9–14).

That was an awesome, fearful moment! The first angel’s glorious words would always echo in their hearts. And that blazing light of heaven, accompanied by the praises of those angelic multitudes, was captured forever in their minds. The shepherds rushed from the glowing skies over the fields and searched diligently until they found Jesus. I wonder this Christmas season: *Will you allow God to captivate you?*

God changed the humble shepherds. The scene they witnessed in the stable would forever change their lives—they had found Jesus, and they would never be the same again. In just a moment, everything they had ever heard about the Scriptures came alive: God, angels, heaven, Messiah, promises, and prophecies suddenly became real. I wonder this Christmas season: *Will you allow God to forever change you?*

God became near to the humble shepherds. Those endless sacrifices, countless lambs, myriads of offerings, innumerable sins, and promises of forgiveness became intensely personal. The ordinary sheep they watched and sold became the extraordinary pictures of God’s mercy and grace. The temple they supplied now became the place where sacrifices for their sins were offered. At last all those mysteries, rites, and ceremonies made sense: they had found the promised Lamb of God! I wonder this Christmas season: *Will you allow God to become personal, real, and near to you?*

God started the humble shepherds down a new path. Up until that night of nights, their lives as shepherds had been monotonous and predictable. They were used to sheep which varied little in their habits. They had walked so often down the same path that it soon became a rutted canyon. But now, with the advent of Christ, life took on a whole new meaning! Nothing would ever be the same again—even though sheep would still be helpless, dumb, and dirty! Because of Jesus, the shepherds’ whole perspective on life had changed, and they had fresh hope. I wonder this Christmas season: *Will you allow God to start you down a new path, His pathway for your life?*

So then, a group of wise and patient men, who sat on the same hills their grandfathers had sat upon, were watching the stars and talking that night—and then God came down to earth. Wow!

WEDNESDAY: The Wise Humbly Seek the King

*“Seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you **seek Him with all your heart** and with all your soul.”*

—Deuteronomy 4:29, emphasis added

The shepherds remind us of how God comes to mankind. God is the seeker; He is the initiator; and He responds to those who humble themselves before Him. Humbly, and wisely, the shepherds responded, willing to listen and obey, proving once more that God can use the most distant, defiled, and outcast. For *“God has chosen . . . the base things of the world and the things which are despised . . . that no flesh should glory in*

His presence. . . . As it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the LORD' ” (see 1 Corinthians 1:27–31).

The shepherds humbly came to God—just as they were. Instead of backing away with the excuse of lack of education, lack of clothing, or lack of standing, they welcomed God’s message in wonder, in fear, in uncertainty, and in hope. There was no time to become someone else; God called them just as they were (Luke 2:8).

The shepherds humbly responded to God at once. When God spoke, they listened! They received the message and acted upon it immediately (Luke 2:15a). They did not doubt; they did not disagree; they did not question; and they did not hesitate. They just heard and responded, so they were thus the first to see Jesus. The shepherds had little knowledge, but great faith. Since Jesus would soon be moved by His parents, had they hesitated they would have missed Him. But their simple faith was richly rewarded. The journey that began in faith would end in joy!

The shepherds went against the tide of the crowd. In their day and time, they were not welcomed by others. They often heard, “Stay where you came from! Go away! We don’t like you! You smell!” They were outcasts, and were unwelcome in public. Yet, they ignored public opinion and earnestly sought for Jesus: *“They came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger”* (Luke 2:16). They kept searching and never gave up, and when they found Him, they believed in Jesus.

The shepherds humbly told everyone the Good News: *“They made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. . . . Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them”* (Luke 2:17–20). Just like the rest of the New Testament would record, these shepherds went back to their old jobs—but *as new men*. If anyone is in Christ Jesus, he or she is a new creation; old things pass away, and all things become new (2 Corinthians 5:17)!

So how can we, like the shepherds, see Christ this Christmas season? By humbling ourselves just as they did!

The Greatest Plague on Earth—Pride: Most people have missed grasping the significance of the First Coming of Christ because of pride. Wanting our own way instead of God’s is how He described our pitiful condition as lost ones: *“All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”* (Isaiah 53:6).

Just as humility is the root of all virtue, so pride is the root of all sin. John MacArthur comments, “Pride is the sin of competing with God, and humility is the virtue of submitting to His supreme glory. We all tend to exaggerate our own good qualities and minimize the good qualities of others. Humility takes off our rose-colored glasses and allows us to see ourselves as we really are.”³

Pride is the ultimate sin. Pride is the supreme temptation from Satan, because pride is at the heart of his own evil nature. It was pride that caused Lucifer to challenge God and be cast out of heaven and ultimately into the Lake of Fire. Our only protection against pride, and our only source of humility, is a proper view of God.

James 4:6 tells us that “*God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.*” In verses 7–10, He then gives us the pathway to genuine humility: “*Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands . . . and purify your hearts.*”

Humble yourself in the sight of God. Pride comes in many forms. We may be tempted to be proud of our abilities, possessions, education, social status, appearance, power, and even our biblical knowledge or religious accomplishments. All conflicts and troubles are rooted in pride. The source of every gossip, hurt feeling, church division, and departed “sheep” is pride. At the heart of every fight is pride. But throughout Scripture the Lord calls His people to humility. God therefore says, “*Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips*” (Proverbs 27:2; see also Proverbs 15:33; 22:4).

Humility begins with proper self-awareness—“the virtue,” said Bernard of Clairvaux, “by which a man becomes conscious of his own unworthiness.” It begins with an honest, unadorned, un-retouched view of oneself.

Humility produces spiritual blessing. Just as every sin starts in pride, every virtue begins in humility. And just as pride is behind every conflict we have with other people and every problem of fellowship we have with the Lord, so humility is behind every harmonious human relationship, every spiritual success, and every moment of joyous fellowship with the Lord. Humility allows us to see ourselves as we are, because it shows us before God as He is.

What we all need today is to cultivate godly humility: “*As the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on** tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering*” (Colossians 3:12, Emphasis added; see also 1 Peter 5:5).

What are you wearing today? The righteous garment of humility—or the filthy rags of the proud?

THURSDAY: The Wise Humbly Serve the King

“*And Samuel answered, ‘Speak, for **Your servant hears.**’*”

—1 Samuel 3:10b, emphasis added

Have you decided to be among those who are seeking the King this Christmas season? You can if you will come humbly like the shepherds. The shepherds were truly wise men! They represent the best of all God’s Word about the rewards that come to those who seek and find the Lord. Will you experience the glad tidings of the gospel? Will you experience great joy? You can if you humbly choose to follow the pathway they followed!

Decide to listen to God when He speaks. Like the shepherds, tune your heart to listen and look for God while you are at work, at school, or at home. Remember that the eyes of the Lord are looking down for someone looking up and seeking God: “*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him*” (2 Chronicles 16:9a).

Decide to come to God just as you are. Recognize the doctrinal Truth of the third stanza of this classic song: *Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, Wilt welcome, pardon,*

cleanse, relieve; Because Thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come! Ask Him to change you, melt you, mold you, fill you, and use you! Tell Him, "O Lamb of God I come just as I am—for you to fix." There is no time, no reason, and no ability to become someone else; God calls you just as you are so He Himself can make you anew!

Decide to seek Jesus until you find Him—don't delay. Just as the shepherds would have missed that precious moment if they had waited, so the Lord says, "While you hear My voice—don't wait!" So respond to Him: "*O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You!*" (Psalm 63:1). Seek Him with your whole heart while He may still be found!

Like Peter, Andrew, James, and John, drop your net and follow Him. Like Peter say, "I have left all behind to follow You!" Like Paul, say, "I count everything else as trash so I can have You." Like David, say, "One thing have I desired above all others, and that is *You*, O Lord."

Jesus tells us that the gate is narrow, and the road is hard. We must press into His Kingdom. We must draw near to Him. We can't serve two masters—only One. As Joshua declared: "*Choose . . . this day whom you will serve . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD!*" (Joshua 24:15). For as Paul confessed, "for me, life is Christ—and death is only better because I am with Him" (Philippians 1:21).

Decide to tell everyone the Good News. Be like those at Christ's resurrection and at Pentecost—they couldn't stop telling the great news. They went everywhere and told everyone what He had done in their lives. In His power, you can do the same in our generation: "*Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life*" (Acts 5:20).

As this year is fast coming to an end, will you be among the wise who still seek the King? Will you serve Him like the humble but wise shepherds? Will you experience and share the glad tidings of the gospel with others? Will you experience great joy?

FRIDAY: The Wise Still Seek the King!

*"He . . . is the blessed and only Potentate, **the King of kings and Lord of lords**, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, . . . to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen."*

—1 Timothy 6:15–16, emphasis added

The First Coming of Christ is all about a holy God, Jesus, coming into the world to die for sinners. Holman Hunt, a famous artist, painted what has been called "Jesus at the Door of the Carpenter's Shop in Nazareth." In that painting, Jesus is depicted as a boy. Coming out of His dad's shop He is shown as going to the door to stretch.

His limbs . . . had grown cramped over the bench. He stands there in the doorway with arms outstretched, and behind him, on the wall, the setting sun throws His shadow, and it is the shadow of a cross. In the background stands Mary; as she sees that shadow there is the fear of coming tragedy in her eyes. Jesus came into the world to live for men, and, in the end, to die for men. He came to give for men his life and his death. Gold for a king, frankincense for a priest, myrrh for the One who was to die—these were the gifts of the wise men, and, even at the cradle of

Christ, they foretold that He was to be *the true King, the perfect High Priest*, and in the end *the only Savior of mankind*.⁴

As we rejoice these days in the First Coming of Christ, may we not be neglectful of rejoicing in the anticipation of His Second Coming as well. For this true King, this perfect High Priest, the only Savior of mankind, will return soon to take us home—and so shall we forever be with the Lord!

But if you are only *acquainted* with Him, and do not yet really *know* Him, you need to be mindful that the days of promised terror loom on the horizon. Christ's description of these days includes people dying of heart failure because they witness such inescapable horrors. Thus, now is the time for the wise to seek the King—to flee to the safest spot in the universe—Jesus Christ!

Are you wisely learning to seek and find Him with all your heart? Are you learning to worship Him in the power of the Spirit and in the truth of His Word?

Make a Choice to Live in Hope: Martin Luther, who experienced more intense and ongoing trials than most of us will ever experience, chose to live, come what may, in the enduring hope of our eternal Refuge, Jesus Christ. Luther's life testimony ended up impacting the world to this very day.

From what Luther said about the power of music, I believe that God ministered comfort and strength to his tried soul through music as well, for he said: "I am strongly persuaded that after theology there is no art than can be placed on a level with music; for besides theology, music is the only art capable of affording peace and joy of the heart . . . the devil flees before the sound of music almost as much as before the Word of God."⁵

As these end times become increasingly more difficult and painful, remember Luther's testimony. Like Luther, choose to live in enduring hope through basking in both the power of God's Word and biblically-based music that exalts the King of Kings and Lord of Lords as you eagerly look forward to Christ's soon return!

May you be strengthened, comforted, and encouraged by these excerpts of devotional comments by John MacArthur on Horatio Spafford's lyrics to the timeless song, "It Is Well With My Soul." I believe they embody what it means to possess living hope for the end of days.

John MacArthur writes:

The . . . songwriter's focus was on an objective spiritual reality that anchored him at all times—whether he was experiencing "peace, like a river" or whether billowing sorrow overwhelmed him [as when his four daughters drowned at sea]. In the midst of both emotional extremes, his heart and mind returned to the truth that kept him spiritually anchored—the promise that his soul was eternally safe from God's judgment. . . .

Spafford's hope was in Christ, who 'shed his own blood' on the believer's behalf. So when Spafford tasted the anguish of human sorrow, his mind turned to the infinite suffering that Christ had already borne on his behalf. That is why in circumstances when most men's minds would have been consumed with self-pity

and bitter emotions, Spafford wrote a gospel song of gratitude for Christ's vicarious atonement.

This song is a potent reminder of how every Christian should respond to the vicissitudes of life—particularly life's heartaches. Whatever the source of our sorrows ("Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come"), we can find a powerful comfort in knowing that Christ literally shed His own precious lifeblood for us [see Romans 8:31–32]. . . .

Although Spafford's earthly sorrows were an excruciating burden for him, he knew those sorrows were temporary. And that temporal burden served as a poignant reminder that an even greater, eternal burden had been lifted from him by Christ, who took the full guilt of sin and carried that guilt to the cross. Thereby paying the full penalty for our sins, He canceled forever every claim that the law of God had against us. It was as if He took all the divine ordinances that demanded our condemnation and nailed them to the cross (Colossians 2:14). "O the bliss of this glorious thought!"

The closing verse looks forward to the day when the Lord will consummate our redemption. Even our bodies will be redeemed, and everything good we have hoped for will be realized ("the faith shall be sight"—cf. Romans 8:22–25). In the meantime—and even while we're suffering unspeakable earthly grief—true believers in Christ can find sufficient comfort in knowing that all is eternally well with their souls.⁶

It Is Well With My Soul

*When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

*Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And has shed his own blood for my soul.*

*My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought;
My sin not in part, but the whole
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*

*And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend,
"Even so," It is well with my soul.*

—Horatio G. Spafford (1828–1888)

SATURDAY: Come, Lord Jesus!

"Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

—Hebrews 12:1b-2a, emphasis added

To us who love and serve God, the goal of the Book of Revelation was to show His Son, Jesus Christ. I hope that is what you have seen in this year long devotional contemplation of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

God the Father gave the Revelation of Jesus Christ—which shows Jesus in all His beauty—to be shared with us, His servants. In its pages God reveals that we shall forever be satisfied as we behold Him whom we love.

- Christ is **the key** to Living Hope.
- His Word is **the food** for Living Hope.
- His Spirit is **the power** for Living Hope.
- His presence is **the guard** for Living Hope.

Living hope comes down to you through Christ—who has done it all—so believe what He has said and receive His hope!

When we get to the end of everything--what is left? In other words, what will last forever? Revelation 22 ends with God, Heaven and one more element—**servants serving God**.

Who are those surrounding God's Throne?

*And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and **His servants shall serve Him**.*

—Revelation 22:3, NKJV, emphasis added

*Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to **show His servants** the things which must shortly take place. . . . Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am **your fellow servant**, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."*

—Revelation 22:6, 9, NKJV, emphasis added

All who love and serve God long to hear Christ say, "Well done, My good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Master's home!" A "Well done!" from Him will make this life on earth all worthwhile!

When We See Christ

*Oft-times the day seems long, our trials hard to bear,
We're tempted to complain, to murmur and despair;
But Christ will soon appear to catch His bride away,
All tears forever over in God's eternal day.*

*Life's day will soon be o'er, all storms forever past,
We'll cross the great divide to glory, safe at last.
We'll share the joys of heaven—a harp, a home, a crown.
The tempter will be banished, we'll lay our burden down.*

Refrain:

It will be worth it all when we see Jesus,

*Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ;
One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase,
So bravely run the race 'til we see Christ.*

—Esther Kerr Rusthoi (1909–1962)

Through this book, *Living Hope for the End of Days*, we have had fifty-two weeks to learn how to live in hope, strength, joy, purpose, and peace! As you read through this entire book, you discovered the precious topics contained in Revelation, each of them rich in hope. And, as you read every word of God's final book of the Bible, you reaped a harvest of promised blessings!

Hope for the end of days.

Strength for when we are weak with fear.

Joy when surrounded by dread.

Purpose in the midst of an aimless culture.

Peace when storms of anxiety roll across our horizons.

So how do we have this Living Hope for the End of Days? Only in Christ! Jesus offers to each of us to be our Living Hope when we are unclean, when we are weary, when we are homeless, when we are helpless, when we are hopeless, and when we are tempted.

Christ is the closest, safest, and only Living Hope for us through all of life—to the very end!

Have you fled to the safest spot in the universe, the open arms of Jesus? If not, do so today. If you have, look around—Christ wants to be your moment by moment Living Hope for the End of Days!

*“Surely I am coming quickly,’ Amen. Even so, **come, Lord Jesus!** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen”*

—Revelation 22:20–21, emphasis added

¹ A. P. Gibbs, *Worship* (Kansas City, MO: Walterick Publishing, 1950), p. 45.

² William Temple, *Readings in St. John's Gospel, First Series*. (London: Macmillan and Company, 1940), p. 68. (Emphasis added.)

³ John F. MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Ephesians 4* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), electronic edition, in loc.

⁴ Paraphrased and quoted from William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of Matthew-Volume 1 Chapters 1–10, Revised Edition* (Louisville: Westminster Press; 2000, 1975), electronic edition, in loc. (Emphasis added.)

⁵ Quoted in *Hymns for the Family of God* (Nashville: Paragon Associates, 1976).

⁶ Quoted in Joni Eareckson Tada et al., *O Worship the King* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2000), pp. 27–29.