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Reading the time on the face of God's clock!

As we come to the fourth study in this series, I will remind you of the introduction we have been using at the beginning of each of our studies.

As we may look abroad and see the evidences of the passage of the weeks and months of the year in the realm of nature, in the evidence of the physical decline of the human body, not to mention the movement of the hands on our clocks and watches, even so may we look around and note the indications of the passage of time in the lifespan of this world as it is revealed to us in the Bible.

Christian, the Bible is a map by which we find our way to heaven but more than that, it also marks the present position of mankind on the way to the end of the purpose God has for this earth!

Satellite Navigation is not new! Just as I can insert a destination into my Sat Nav and then watch my progress upon its screen as I journey toward my destination, even so I can observe exactly the present position of humanity on its journey toward eternity!

In keeping with my title, the Bible will tell us of the passage of time and the approach of the final hour for this world.

There are given to us in the Bible certain features that will mark the end of this age. These features may be seen in times past, but never to the degree of union and fusion as they will be seen in the last days!

I want to look at some of these features and observe their pre-eminence in the affairs of today, from the nations afar off to our own doorsteps. I think that as we look at these increasingly predominant elements of life today we will see that one is linked to another. There is a successive springing forth and developing out of each other. One wickedness gives birth to another of great depravity!

Part 4: Gross immorality!

Immorality was ever a feature of the conduct of mankind. As we have seen in our second study, violence showed itself early in man's history in the murder of Abel by his brother. "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him," Genesis 4:8.

In like fashion, immorality, the abandonment of the holy Law of God and the adopting of the lustful impulses of man's corrupt and depraved flesh as the rule to live by, was swiftly adopted.

"And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah," Genesis 4:19. As John Gill, in his commentary, says: "He was the first we read of that introduced polygamy, contrary to the first institution of marriage, whereby only one man and one woman were to be joined together, and become one flesh, Genesis 2:24. This evil practice, though it began in the race of wicked Cain, was in later ages followed by some among the people of God, which was connived at because of the hardness of their hearts; otherwise it was not so from the beginning."

Lewdness spread wherever mankind expanded its territories from those earlier times. Even, as John Gill said, the ranks of the righteous were defiled by it. Abraham, Jacob, Elkanah, David, Solomon - sadly the list is very long indeed!

With this departure from God's ordained order for marriage, there came misery, unhappiness and strife. We only have to think of the sufferings of Hannah as a result of her husband's decision to take another wife. "And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb," 1 Samuel 1:6.

I have often thought of why Elkanah took a second wife. I believe it was because Hannah could not have children and as sons were considered necessary to ensure commercial success as a farmer and also for the



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continuance of his lineage, he took a second wife.

He should have waited on the Lord, as did Hannah. Her wonderful answer to prayer is proof that he could have had a son, had he only had faith and waited upon the Lord rather than resort to and act upon the carnal and worldly-wise man's answer, and seek another wife who would bear him children.

Poor Hannah suffered as a result of this second wife being brought into the home. The second wife, Peninah, became an 'adversary' to gentle Hannah, verse 6. The word means "trouble, distress, affliction." That is what she brought into the home!

We cannot depart from God's law without reaping such a harvest!

Of course, such breaches of God's moral law did not remain 'within the bounds of apparent decency' as within the domestic scenes we have referred to in the instances of Abraham, Jacob etc. No, where there was no restraint at all exercised by the Law of God, then licentiousness and promiscuity abounded and reigned. The unbounded moral excesses of the empires of Babylon, Greece and Rome, and indeed all such powers, testify to this shameful fact. We have only to think of our Parliamentarians and the Royal Household to see this demonstrated.

Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:1-5, a passage we have often referred to, that: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

The word 'incontinent' refers to 'a moral lack of strength to resist the passion of the flesh, a readiness to yield to it.'

1. We see displays of such moral degeneracy all around us today. The lives of the rich and famous, as portrayed upon the pages of newspapers and magazines, are open displays of the unbridled immorality of today's society worldwide!

The 'celebrities' openly flaunt their shameless indecencies unblushingly! Marriage has become a financial encumbrance, due to the litigation that follows divorce. It has therefore been abandoned as an inconvenience in order that the wanton may live out their immoral, shameless lifestyle without fear of monetary loss!

Ah, but there is a loss that cannot be calculated in monetary terms!!

2. But not only is degeneracy reported upon, it is admired! The newsprint articles and television reports do not portray the accounts of the life style and sensual exploits of these degenerates in order to condemn and deplore their wickednesses. No, the accounts of the activities are framed in such a way as to indicate that the newspaper, magazine and television reporters obviously approve of and admire their amorous exploits!

3. These embodiments of adultery and infidelity are the 'trend-setters' of today! They are set before the gaze of the public, young as well as mature, as the way of life to emulate. They are the role-models of today's generation! The streets are filled with the poor foolish dupes who are obviously seeking to 'teeter' along in their footsteps!

4. Public nakedness is brazenly common today! It is not that long ago that an 'anti-Brexit' female academic paraded around naked in protest against the nation's decision to leave the EU! The woman, Dr. Victoria Bateman even appeared naked on television news programmes to promote her cause and her own shame!



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Nakedness is contrary to God's will for the human being in our present fallen and sinful state. Adam and Eve were created without sin and were naked. Such nakedness only became inappropriate and unacceptable when sin entered their hearts and minds and would give rise to improper thoughts and actions.

"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. . . . And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself," Genesis 2:25, 3:6-10.

There was no shame in their nakedness in the days of their innocence! However, sin brought with it a sense of shame. The word 'ashamed', Genesis 2:25, means 'to be ashamed, be disconcerted.' It was perfectly normal state for sinless man and woman but not for them now that they had fallen from their innocent state!

The entrance of sin was immediately marked by a sense of shame. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

That sense of shame remains with humanity still. It has often been acknowledged by psychologists that the human mind when stressed will often produce distressing dreams of the individual being found without clothing in a public place.

Adam and Eve instantly felt the need for clothing as verse 7 of Genesis 3 indicates. "They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." Furthermore, the actions of the Lord indicates that from that moment on, it would be His will that humanity be clothed. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them," Genesis 3:21.

The poor efforts of Adam and Eve to clothe themselves were very inadequate so the Lord provided them with proper clothing.

Perhaps I could add here that this clothing of Adam and Eve by the Lord contains a wonderful gospel message.

1. Their efforts at covering their shame and nakedness were most ineffective. Fig leaves sewn together were anything but adequate.
2. The Lord stepped in and provided them with proper and appropriate clothing.
3. There was the shedding of blood and the sacrifice of a life in order to provide them both with a covering for their nakedness.

Therein you have a picture of the glorious gospel message!

Mankind cannot provide that which will hide his moral nakedness from God or man. The Lord must provide such clothing and in order for that to be done a sacrifice must be made.

The scene symbolises the whole story of the cross. Listen to these words.

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are



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past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," Romans 3:21-26.

Man is delivered from the guilt and shame of his sin by the covering that the death of the Lord Jesus provided. The word 'propitiation' refers to the placating of God's wrath against sin and the expiating of sin by the blood of Christ. It is thus that man's sin is forgiven, remitted and he is clothed in salvation. What he could not do, God in His love and mercy has done. There is in Christ clothing for the nakedness of sinful men and women.

The 'white robes' by which the redeemed are clothed (Revelation 7:13-14) are the product of the loom of Christ's sufferings at Calvary, if I might put it so. The garments of salvation come from no other source.

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else," Isaiah 45:22.

The New Testament sets forth the same glorious truth.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit," 1 Peter 3:18.

Happy is the man, the woman who can say: "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels," Isaiah 61:10.

That robing takes place when the soul surrenders to the Lord, obeys the gospel call to repentance and receives Christ as Saviour by faith. Of such a soul may be recorded that which was recorded of the poor demoniac of Gadara who wonderfully was delivered from his sin by the Lord Jesus. "Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind," Luke 8:35.

What a transformation! What a deliverance! It can be yours if you submit to Christ and are clothed in the garments of salvation He so lovingly provided by His sufferings at the cross.

The blatant displaying of the human form which has become the mark of high fashion, the outright nakedness in which some are so ready to indulge in, is but evidence of the heightening defiance of God and rebellion against His will.

Young people, especially young ladies, do not adopt to the least degree the 'fashion' of putting on display your flesh. Remember what is said by Paul and Peter teaches you. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works," 1 Timothy 2:9-10. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price," 1 Peter 3:3-4.

Young ladies, God notes the 'fashion' you adopt. Heed these words of stern rebuke to a generation of young women who adopted their own 'fashion' standards, to the vexation of the Lord.

"Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the



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earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground," Isaiah 3:16-26.

Ludicrous adornments and silly styles are no new thing. Only the foolish think that they are! Young people, "be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God," Romans 12:2.

5. It is very obvious that the campaign thus mounted has had its impact upon society. A recent headline in a national newspaper read: "Marriages between men and women hit lowest rate on record." That is the harvest of the promotion of promiscuity and immorality carried on by the world of newspapers, magazines, television and the so-called 'entertainment' industry! The morality of Hollywood, akin to the morality of the farm yard (with every apology to the hens and geese and ducks resident in the farm yard) has become the norm in the homes and dwellings of the general public!

Of course, this immorality is not going to stay within the boundaries of 'normal' male/female relationships. No, as with all earthly appetites, there is a wearying of the normal and a hunger for the abnormal and the perverse.

As the drug-addict moves onward (or is it downward?) from those which are considered lesser or 'soft' drugs to the more powerful 'hard' drugs, as the 'kick' once obtained from 'soft' drugs diminishes. Even so is it with the so-called pleasures of immorality. As the drug-addict, seeking to obtain the same level of 'kick' as previously experienced must seek out the harder drug, the perverse slave of moral depravity must explore darker practices to obtain and maintain their obscene pleasures!

Evidence of society delving down in to such dissolute depths may be seen in the fact that the perversities of the "Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgendered" or LBGT community (they do keep adding initials to this acronym - I noted the letters QI recently added) is that such wickedness is now considered normal. The debased devotee of debauchery is today embraced, sheltered, protected and honoured and woe betide anyone who dares to call their lifestyle a perversion. Criminal charges and court appearances await such a person!

The Education minister for England, Gavin Williamson, has recently said that: "Firstly, we shouldn't be seeing protests outside any schools. We want to make sure all pupils, parents and teachers are able to go to those schools freely without any form of intimidation. We will be there supporting and backing every single school - that's what we have been doing. The purpose of it is we wanted to make sure every single school is able to teach about Britain as it is today." (Evening Express, 30-8-19.)

He is obviously referring to protests outside some English primary schools where parents demanded that their children not be subjected to teaching about what most of us consider deviant relationships.

Note the words Williamson employs about the community of perverts whose voice is heard throughout the land. "The purpose of it is we wanted to make sure every single school is able to teach about Britain as it is today." "Britain as it is today" is a place where moral perversity is as 'normal' as maths, geography, history etc. The rising generation is being taught to accept that which God calls an 'abomination', as standard, conventional, common and universally accepted!

This is where the promiscuity of the 'stars of the silver screen' have brought society!

The medical world can teach us about the moral world! Untreated disease can only get worse, especially when the disease is 'fed' with that which initiated its beginnings!

Our country has become a giant 'hospital ward' where the cancers of every form of wickedness are feted,



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encouraged and given every opportunity to advance toward their calamitous and tragic end. We are a nation dying at the hands of blinded, morally unhinged leaders within church and state!

The end is inevitable. As the Saviour put it: "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," Matthew 15:14.

It is not new. Nations have degenerated so before.

"For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed," Isaiah 9:16.

"For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jeremiah 5:26-31.

"They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD," Jeremiah 6:14-15.

"Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations. For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself: and I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the LORD. And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh unto him," Ezekiel 14:6-10.

These verses, and many more like them, register the consequences of abandoning God's moral law and following instead the evil and depraved desires of fallen nature!

Scripture tells us most plainly that such a flood of iniquity will sweep over the nations as the 'day of Christ' approaches.

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound (multiply), the love of many shall wax cold," Matthew 24:11-12.

Here we have the 'cultivators' of iniquity and the harvest these 'false prophets' will cause to grow and flourish at the end of this age. It is the 'growing cold' of the spirit of the believer, overwhelmed by the 'iniquitous tares' the false prophets have sown and nurtured as the church slept! The Saviour is showing us that at the end of this age, the Church will lose its zeal for the service of the Lord and the opposing of the devil. Its lamps burn low and the light of its witness dims in the face of increasing darkness and wickedness.

Has not that awful time dawned? Are we not truly in this dreadful state? It is a state that must surely 'sicken' the Lord.

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because



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thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth," Revelation 3:15-16.

The verse at the end of this passage in Revelation is very well known. It is the call that must be heeded today.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," Revelation 3:20-22.

This is a call to renewed fellowship with Christ. A fellowship that entails supping with Him and He with us. He supplies us with nourishment and He in turn partakes of our problems and woes.

The result is we become 'overcomers' who will sit with Him on His throne. This is our native position. It is where we ought always to have been but sin and backsliding robbed us of it. However, I believe that Christ is seeking to awaken us that we may be recovered and enter again into the victory of Calvary.

Dear Christian, prophecy presents a most gloomy picture for the world in the last days but NOT for us.

I am of a mind to believe that Christ will come to a revived Church, stirred, awakened, lamps trimmed and ready to go in "with him to the marriage," Matthew 25:10.

May it be so for His glory and honour's sake!

Ivan Foster

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