

Coming Events (1962) 9 of 14

The Time of Trouble

#0528

Study given by W.D. Frazee—February 20, 1963

This is the wrath of God that is threatened by the third angel in Revelation 14:9 to 12, and so, when all who have accepted—who *will* accept the third angel's message have accepted it, and those who won't have rejected it, then will come the time for the pouring out of these plagues. They are called the what plagues? The seven *last* plagues. Well, then, they reach until when? The end. And the end, of course, is brought about by what? Coming of Jesus.

“...what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world” Matthew 24:3.

So, just before Jesus comes, we have these seven last plagues poured out. Now, if there were some more after the seven, would these be the last ones? Why, no. So, you see, we have the pinpointing of the time of the pouring out of the plagues. They must come just before the coming of Jesus, but they must come after the third angel's message has done its work, and this is the time of the wrath of God against those who have rejected God's message.

Now, does the expression the time of trouble always refer just to this time? No. We've already had an example of that expression the time of trouble applying where? Before the plagues are poured out. Where do you find that mentioned? *Early Writings*, 85 and 86:

“‘The commencement of that time of trouble,’ here mentioned does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary. At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At that time the ‘latter rain’...will come...” *Early Writings*, page 85-86.

So, the latter rain comes in a time of what? Trouble, yes. It's called a short period just before the plagues. At that time, the latter rain is poured out. So, when you read the expression the time of trouble just standing by itself, you can't tell by that whether it's talking about this time beginning before the close of probation or to the time that begins after the close of probation. The context usually shows it, but we need to have very clear in our minds these two times when the trouble begins.

There's a short period before the close of probation—that's called “at the commencement of the time of trouble”—the latter rain is poured out. But when the latter rain has done its work and the saints are numbered and sealed and mercy no

longer pleads and Jesus lays down his Priestly work and begins his Kingly reign, then begins the great time of trouble of Daniel 12:1.

Now, we have still another time of trouble spoken of in our lesson today. It's the time of what? Time of Jacob's trouble. Where did that expression come from? No, but I say the expression—where did it come from? Thirtieth of Jeremiah. All right. What verse? Seventh verse—Jeremiah 30, verse 7:

“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it” Jeremiah 30:7.

And if you read verses 5 and 6, you'll get a very vivid picture of the awful anguish of it, compared to that of a woman in travail at the time of the delivery of a child—just preceding it. That's a picture that the prophet was given of the awful anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble.

Does the world go through Jacob's trouble? No, they don't go through Jacob's trouble. Who do? Jacob goes through it—Jacob goes through it—the children of Jacob go through it—the saints of God.

[Comment.] How long does it take for the seven last plagues to be poured out? Does somebody know the answer to that? I'll have to be honest. I don't know. Now, there are some that take the 18th chapter of Revelation and the 8th verse, reading:

“Therefore shall her plagues come in one day...”
Revelation 18:8.

They conclude from that that means a prophetic day and, therefore, means a literal year. I cannot prove that that is either correct or incorrect. I think that the expression here in Revelation 18:8 *could* mean simply that her plagues come all at once. You remember in Job's experience in one day one thing after the other happened, and that's what this says:

“Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire...” Revelation 18:8.

In other words, her judgments come suddenly, not stretched out over a thousand years or a hundred years. Eighteenth chapter and the 17th verse:

“For in one hour so great riches is come to nought...”
Revelation 18:17.

And there's another verse with the hour. Where is that? Which? Ten, yes:

“...for in one hour is thy judgment come” Revelation 18:10.

Nineteenth verse:

“...in one hour is she made desolate” Revelation 18:19.

So, you see, there in one verse, it says in one day. Three other verses in the same chapter, it says one hour. To me, that could mean, and probably does mean, merely that it happens suddenly—all at once—but there are those, as I say, who believe that that one day means a literal year, and anyone who believes that—I’m perfectly willing.

Many of our students of prophecy through the years have believed that and have taught that, but I find nothing in the Spirit of Prophecy either to endorse it nor to speak about it at all. All right. We’re glad for these questions as we go along in our study.

And now, we were noting that Jacob's trouble is for the people of God. Now, before we look at Jacob's trouble, and really, I would like to give special thought in our lesson this evening to Jacob's trouble, but before we do, we want to sketch rather quickly the main guidelines of what is taking place around the saints during that time.

The first plague, of course, mentioned there in Revelation 16, is poured out and men have what kind of disease?

“...noisome and grievous sore...” Revelation 16:2.

Some translations say ulcers—terrible ulcers or sores that can't be healed. And the second plague is that of what? The sea turning to blood. And the third plague? Rivers and fountains of water turning to blood. This is all in Revelation 16. You have your Bible open before you there, I trust, following down.

Fourth plague is poured out where? On the sun. And it does what? Scorches men with great heat. And the fifth plague causes—instead of terrible light and heat, it causes what? Darkness. Yes. So, people will be plunged from the extremes—the terrible heat and light, the darkness, and of course, consequent cold, doubtless. [Comment.] Revelation 13:2 will give you that, I think.

Now, the sixth plague is poured out upon what? Euphrates. And what happens to the water?

“...dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared” Revelation 16:12.

That’s a very interesting study. If you want to look into it, look up what’s in the commentary on it, and also in this new book by Elder Cottrell, *Beyond Tomorrow*. You’ll find some interesting things on that.

But under the seventh plague, what happens? What’s the first thing happens under the seventh plague? There’s a great voice. All right. What does the great voice produce? Oh, I say, what does the great voice produce? Great earthquake. That’s right—great earthquake.

What else happens at that time, according to Revelation 16? Just follow there in your text. The great city's divided into three parts. What else? Cities fall. All right. What else. Great hail. You notice that word great again and again? This is the great time of trouble, and it reaches its climax down here at the time of the seventh plague.

From the opening of the seventh plague to the time of the coming of Christ, the whole world is going to be in confusion. You read the chapter in *Great Controversy* on the desolation of the earth, and you get a picture of the awful, turbulent time right there, and this is the climax of the time of trouble.

But the saints during this time are not in any trouble at all, in a sense. They're glorified, they're delivered, and they have gone through Jacob's trouble. Well, those are thrilling scenes and, of course, at the close of this time, we look in the east and see the little cloud which becomes a big cloud, glorious, and Jesus coming with angels to deliver us.

But now, the time of Jacob's trouble. Does this begin with the close of probation? No. Now, there are some expressions that would seem to indicate that, taken by themselves. I just call attention to one here—*Volume 5*, 451.

If you have your *Volume 5* with you, just look at it, and one reason I want you to notice this is to warn you against building any position on just one reference. This reference means just exactly what it says, but to some people it would *seem* to say something which other references make clear it doesn't say.

Now, I'll read it:

“As the approach of the Roman armies was a sign to the disciples of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, so may this apostasy...” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5*, page 451.

This is the image—the National Sunday Law—right back here, as the context shows.

“...so may this apostasy be a sign to us that the limit of God's forbearance is reached, that the measure of our nation's iniquity is full, and that the angel of mercy is about to take her flight, never to return” *Ibid*.

When does the angel of mercy take her flight? Close of probation. But when this National Sunday Law is passed, then:

“...the angel of mercy is *about* to take her flight, never to return” *Ibid*.

Now, notice the next sentence:

“The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress which prophets have described as the time of Jacob's trouble” *Ibid.*

If you'd read that by itself, you'd say, Well, then, when the angel of mercy takes her flight, then the saints are plunged into Jacob's trouble. Well, it's true, but this sentence doesn't say anything about how long from the close of probation to the time of Jacob's trouble. It just says *then*.

But now, how is it that we show that it's a little time after the close of probation before Jacob's trouble begins? Yes. All right. I'm glad you have that so clear. *Early Writings*, 36 and 37.

You know, it's interesting how many little details are in this book *Early Writings*, and some of them are only in one place, and it's worth knowing where the different ones are.

Now, this is the clearest thing on this point, establishing two things—that the thing that starts Jacob's trouble is what? The what? No. No, no. What is it that starts Jacob's trouble? The death decree.

And the thing that causes the death decree is what? Is it the plagues that cause the death decree? [People getting mad.] Yes. It's the reaction of the people *to* the plagues. The plagues don't cause the death decree. Think—think. Train your mind to think.

Now, what is it that causes the death decree? It's the reaction of the people to what? The plagues. Is it a sensible reaction? Is it? I say, is it a sensible reaction to the death decree? What did they say?

“...they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed” *Early Writings*, page 36.

Two premises utterly false, and without any reason whatsoever. Is it not true? Have the righteous brought the plagues upon the wicked? Why, no. It's only because the righteous have been in the world that they were spared as long as they were. Isn't it?

Now, the second proposition. If they could rid the earth of us, would the plagues be stayed? Then, I say, is there thinking logical? Is it sensible? Not at all. It's devil inspired, but it's their reaction to what? To the plagues. Do you see? Yes.

Now, you may say it's natural—if sin is natural, it is—but utterly unreasonable, without any sense at all, but the Devil has deceived the whole world.

Now, do you remember any example of that back in Old Testament times? You remember they hunted for somebody to slay him? Who was it? Elijah. They thought that if they could get rid of him, they'd get what? Rain. The truth of the

matter was their only hope of getting rain was the prayers of Elijah. Wasn't it? You see how utterly without reason sin becomes. All right.

"I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues. These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble" *Early Writings*, page 36.

So, this establishes the beginning of Jacob's trouble as the issuing of the what? Death decree. And that it comes after the beginning of what? Pouring out of the plagues. All right.

Now, notice what closes Jacob's trouble. Next sentence:

"This was the time of Jacob's trouble. Then all the saints cried out with anguish of spirit, and were delivered by the voice of God. The 144,000 triumphed. Their faces were lighted up with the glory of God" *Early Writings*, page 37.

So, Jacob's trouble closes at what? At the voice of God, and the voice of God, as you saw there in Revelation 16, comes at the opening of what? Seventh plague. So, you have the close of Jacob's trouble clearly established.

Now, this page here that I've read—while it shows that it's after the plagues have started to be poured out, it doesn't say where along here. Now, what do we do to find out where in the sequence of plagues that the death decree comes? Do you have that one? [*Great Controversy*, 628 or 38.] Which is it? Where? *Great Controversy*, 628, the boys say. All right. That's where it is.

Here, speaking of the third plague—and what is the third plague? What is it, David? What's the third plague? Fountains and rivers turn to blood.

Now, what in the Bible there in Revelation 16—what does the angel who pours out that plague upon the waters—what does he say? God is what? He's righteous and just in doing it because *they*—the people He poured the plague on—have done what?

"...shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy" *Great Controversy*, page 627.

Now, *Great Controversy*, in commenting upon this, indicates that it's not so much what they've already done, but it's what they're what? Planning to do. They're planning to kill every one of God's people all at once—trying to kill them all.

And so, it says:

“By condemning the people of God to death they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood, as if it had been shed by their hands” *Great Controversy*, page 627.

They’ve indicated their intent. They’ve set the day. You see from this, then, that the death decree must come before the third plague, for the third plague is God’s answer to the death decree, and it must come after the second plague because it says:

“...These plagues enraged the wicked...they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed” *Early Writings*, page 36.

So, some plagues have already fallen, and the lowest number of plagues plural you can get is what? Two. There, you have it—very simple, when you put together these pages from *Early Writings* with *Great Controversy*.

So, between the second and the third plague, apparently, the best that we can understand these references, comes the death decree. But the death decree, as you have studied, is announced at that time—made at that time—but it looks forward to a day in the future when it will be what? Enforced or executed. And that, of course, is the very time when God will deliver His people.

Isn't that interesting, friends. God allows the wicked to set their own execution day. Do you remember a man that made a gallows for one of God’s children? Who was he? Haman. What was the gallows used for? For himself. That's right. That's the way it's going to be down here today.

Now, let’s look at Jacob's trouble a little. Let’s review the experience of the people of God. During this time just before the close of probation, they’ve received the latter rain, they’re giving the loud cry, they’re experiencing the mighty miracles of that wonderful time.

Are they also having persecution? Oh, yes. Are they exposed to the marvelous working of Satan? Yes. There are all sorts of pressures—every wind of doctrine is blowing—but they maintain their allegiance and they receive the mighty power of God.

By the time that probation closes, have they received the fullness of blessing? Yes. Have they been sealed? Yes. When we come up to the close of probation, is every saint sealed? Yes. And the wicked are all marked with the mark of apostasy. Everybody is either sealed or marked. All right.

Now, the plagues start falling, and then the death decree comes, and then God's people, as the result of that, are plunged into this awful trouble called the time of what? Jacob's trouble.

Now, let's look at that for a minute. What are the saints doing during Jacob's trouble? All right. Crying out with anguish of spirit. What other expressions do you find? What? Pleading. All right. What are they pleading for? Deliverance. Deliverance from what? From the wicked. From the death decree. All right.

Now, this is the time of what? Jacob's trouble. Did Jacob do some pleading? What was he pleading for deliverance from? From Esau. Esau had indicated that he was coming to do what? To kill him—to destroy Jacob and his family—and Jacob's only defense was in what? In God, in prayer, and so that he took himself to prayer. He didn't wait until Esau was right up to him. He knew Esau was on the march and he took himself to prayer.

In like manner, the remnant will go into this dark night of Jacob's trouble knowing that, when the appointed day comes, the wicked will be there to slaughter them. Is that reason enough to pray? Yes.

Now, is that all there is to Jacob's trouble? Was that all there was to Jacob's trouble back there by the Jabbok—just that he was concerned because Esau might kill him? Was that all there was on Jacob's heart that night?

What was it, Brother Moxley? Yes, he was searching his own heart, all right. It was on his heart. Well, was that the first time he'd confessed those sins? In fact, we're plainly told that if that had been the first time, he wouldn't have had the experience or gotten the blessing he did at all.

What particular sin was it that he was burdened about that night? The deception that he'd practiced on whom? His father in cheating his brother. It had been many years before that.

You know, there's something about that that we need to ponder, folks. There's something about the natural heart that would like to just pay up and pay off and forget about it. But sin is a terrible thing and its cure—its complete cure—is a tremendous job—may I say it reverently—even for God—a great job for God to cure us of sin.

Now, is it true that those who go into Jacob's trouble have already, way back here before the latter rain is poured out, reached the place where they've obtained the victory over every besetment? Yes. We studied that—*Early Writings*, 71.

And then, under the glorious experience of the latter rain—that's called what kind of latter rain? The perfecting latter rain—the latter rain perfects—they've reached the perfection. In fact, we're told that's when the seal is affixed is when they reach that mark of perfection.

Can you understand how people that have obtained the victory over every besetment, and on top of that, have had the glorious latter rain work in them the perfection of Christ's character, and they're sealed for eternity—that they have something to agonize about and plead about, other than merely deliverance from the sword.

Now, you've read there in *Early Writings* and *Great Controversy*—and I hope you'll go over it again after this lesson tonight—read over those wonderful descriptions of what happens to the saints in the time of Jacob's trouble. They are burdened to know—to know that sin is gone—sin is gone.

I want to read you something that I was so glad to find in one of the published books—it's from an old *Review*—but it's in this little book, *Our High Calling*, the morning watch book for last year, page 321.

Most of you have this book, perhaps, and if you don't, I would suggest that you borrow it from someone who does, and copy in your notes on page 13 of your outline the paragraph that I'm going to read, if you don't have the book.

But in your notes, be sure to put down this reference—*OHC*—*Our High Calling*—321. I don't know of any other place that you can get this particular statement, and it means a great deal to me. It explains something about Jacob's trouble:

“The path to freedom from sin is through crucifixion of self, and conflict with the powers of darkness. Let none be discouraged in view of the severe trials to be met in the time of Jacob's trouble, which is yet before them” *Our High Calling*, page 321.

We're not to be what?

“...discouraged in view of the severe trials... in the time of Jacob's trouble...” *Ibid*.

Now, the paragraph I want you to note, particularly:

“The time of trouble is the crucible that is to bring out Christlike characters” *Ibid*.

It's the what? Crucible. You know what a crucible is, do you? Well, a crucible is a pot or a vessel that they get very hot in order to melt and purify ore, like gold or silver.

“The time of trouble is the crucible that is to bring out Christlike characters. It is designed to lead the people of God to renounce Satan and his temptations” *Ibid*.

Now, you look at that. Why, haven't they already done that? Didn't they do that before probation closed? Sure. Didn't they do it before the latter rain ever came? Yes. Got to do it all over again? Ah, friends, we're going to need it all, to meet Jesus in glory.

I go back to the reading:

“The time of trouble is the crucible that is to bring out Christlike characters. It is designed to lead the people of God to renounce Satan and his temptations. The last conflict will reveal Satan to them in his true character, that of a cruel tyrant, and it will do for them what nothing else could do, uproot him entirely from their affections. For to love and cherish sin, is to love and cherish its author, that deadly foe of Christ. When they excuse sin and cling to perversity of character, they give Satan a place in their affections, and pay him homage” *Ibid.*

I was very much impressed with that. Now, I know there are statements which, if you take them by themselves and don't balance them with others, would lead you to think that by the time probation closes that everybody is so fixed and so settled that there's nothing more needs to be done for them, but don't forget this reference.

And I'm not trying to minimize any of those statements. I believe them just the way they read, but I have tried to illustrate it this way, and I think I gave it to you the last lesson, about the early rain, the latter rain, and Jacob's trouble—elementary school, and high school, and college.

When you get through elementary school, you get what? A diploma. And then, that means you're ready for high school now. And you go to high school, and when you get through with that, they give you what? A diploma. And that means you're ready for college. And you go through college, and you get what? A diploma. Yes. That's it.

And I'll tell you, folks, when we've gone through the elementary school of the early rain and have given up our sins, that'll lead us into the high school of the latter rain—the perfecting latter rain—and it'll perfect us all right, but there's still some work we need to take in the college of Jacob's trouble. And it says that's going to uproot Satan entirely in our affections.

I'll just have to be honest with you, friends. It's hard for me to understand how there would be any affection left for Satan when probation closes, but this says it's going—let me read it again so you won't think I'm twisting this different from its wording. I'm going to read through the paragraph now without any comment:

“The time of trouble is the crucible that is to bring out Christlike characters. It is designed to lead the people of God to renounce Satan and his temptations. The last conflict will reveal Satan to them in his true character, that of a cruel tyrant, and it will do for them what nothing else could do, uproot him entirely from their affections” *Our High Calling*, page 321.

Folks, I want that experience. Don't you? Now, it's going to be a deep and bitter experience, but it'll give us a little understanding the awful struggle that Jesus went through in Gethsemane and on the cross.

Don't misunderstand me. We can never know the fullness of that. He suffered much that we will never suffer, for He suffered the pains of hell. But is it true that, as Jesus suffered on the cross, angels who for 4,000 years had watched the controversy between Christ and Satan—they came out of that with a deeper hatred against sin and Satan than they'd ever known before. Is that true?

And so, the remnant, as they go into that awful period of Jacob's trouble, they're going to experience, as the result, an eternal cutting loose of all the ties between the heart and Satan. And you notice in what I read there that that is the basis of sin is the love for sin and Satan, for when we love sin we love its author.

Now, we have already studied that we can't wait till Jacob's trouble to give up sin. We can't wait till the close of probation to give up sin. We can't wait till the latter rain is poured out fully to give up sin. But my point is, no matter how much we give it up today, we've got to give it up more tomorrow and so on all the way through. Oh, isn't God good to give us this material here—to let us study.

Now, this thought. If this is so, do you think that anywhere along the line between here and Jacob's trouble that the true people of God are ever going to be parading their holiness, their righteousness, their perfection? Why, no. All the way through, our hope will be in whom? In Jesus—in His righteousness.

There will be glorious days under the latter rain and loud cry, but the reason they'll be glorious is because we're looking to Jesus. We won't be thinking of how good we are, how righteous we are, how wonderful we are. We'll be thinking of Jesus, and we'll be lost in thinking about Him—I say lost—I mean lost from ourselves, lost in wonder, looking at Him, and lost in our devotion to help gather in others. The very nature of sin is selfishness—thinking of self, looking to self. The very nature of righteousness is forgetting self in loving service to others.

And so, dear ones, let us not tax ourselves by strain and tension in the endeavor—watch this point—to pull ourselves up to the place where we can look in the mirror and say, Well, I guess I'm about ready for the latter rain, or I guess I'm about ready for the seal. We'll find there nothing to encourage us.

Rather, as little children, let us humbly and trustfully put ourselves in the hands of the teacher and say, Dear Master, you know what the course is—elementary, high school and college. You know what I need at each stage. I've enrolled in your school and I believe you're going to help me pass every grade and get every diploma and graduate at last to the university of heaven. And friends, He's going to get us through.

You remember Hebrews 12:1 and 2:

“Looking unto Jesus...” Hebrews 12:2.

And he's not only the author but the what?

“...finisher of our faith...” Hebrews 12:2.

And it's that simple faith that cheers my soul tonight, friends. I know we have some very stiff work ahead of us in God's schools, but it's not to frighten us. It's to lead us to keep close to our Teacher and follow each day the assignment that He gives us, knowing that He will finish the work that He has begun. Oh, I'm so glad for this.

Well, I wish we could close this study this evening with earnest prayer, because the praying that we'll do in Jacob's trouble will be but the climax of the experiences in prayer we learn now, and I wish that we could have, as we kneel here together, a number of sentence prayers, as the Holy Spirit impresses hearts. Let us seek God.

Brother A: Father in heaven, thank you for these glorious things. We pray that Thou wilt help us to put our complete selves into Thy hands and not try to do anything ourselves, and we thank Thee.

Brother B: We pray that you will give us the strength to do our hour-by-hour assignments, in Jesus' name.

Brother C: We do thank Thee for these marvelous things that Thou hast taught us, and we pray that Thou wouldst help us through Thy Spirit to lay ourselves wholly and unreservedly upon the altar of service that we may not only be ready ourselves but we may be used of Thee to help finish the work and hasten that grand and glorious day when Jesus shall come. We ask it and thank you in His name.

Elder Frazee: Our Father, we unite in thanking Thee that Thou hast revealed the future not to frighten us but to awaken us and alert us and inspire us to press close to Thy dear side, that Thou mayest lead us into the experiences that will prepare us for tomorrow and beyond tomorrow. We thank Thee in Thy dear name, amen.

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