

This Generation

#0184

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 12, 1954

The falling of the stars as it has been spoken about from that day to this. We would do well to pause and think about what happened, what it meant to those who witnessed it, and what it means to us today. I would like to study it with you in a calm, unimpassioned way, just heart to heart, dealing with the facts of prophecy, the facts of history, and our relationship to these facts.

For as you will see, to accept the clear statements of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy on this subject means that we have to face a very great question. Some of you are already thinking of what that question is. You already know what the question is. And any of you who don't, you be watching for it as we study.

First, let us go to the Scripture, Matthew 24, and let us review the prophecy of our Lord. In Matthew 23, the Savior pronounced woes on the Pharisees, and left forever the temple at Jerusalem saying, "Your house is left unto you desolate."

When He had left, the disciples came to Him to show Him the buildings of the temple. They called His attention to the great stones. They could not see how anything could happen to that temple that had been dedicated to the worship of Jehovah.

But Jesus repeated His former words of warning and strengthened them with the amazing prediction that there would come a destruction so terrible that there would not be even one stone left upon another.

Later that day—this was the last week of the Savior's life before His crucifixion—as Jesus sat upon the Mount of Olives, four of His disciples, those closest to Him, in fellowship and ministry, came to Him and questioned Him concerning the statement that He'd made. It's a good thing to go to Jesus and ask Him for more light. He likes to hear the questions of His children, and He's just as willing to listen to you and me today.

So as they gathered about their Lord, they said, "Master, tell us, when shall these things be? When will Jerusalem be overthrown, and the temple be destroyed? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

In their minds, it would take something as cataclysmic, as destructive as they pictured the end of the world to be to overthrow the temple at Jerusalem. And so in their minds, the two events were one—the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, and they asked for signs of His coming.

Jesus did not attempt, at this time, to separate the two events in their thinking. He left it for them, as time should go on, to study out some things, just as He doesn't tell you and me everything at once lest we be confused.

In the 24th chapter of Matthew, we have the signs of the coming of Jesus, and we also have clear statements concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. Those who study through this chapter find that while Christ has mingled the description of the two events, nevertheless, He has clearly pictured the great mileposts along the pathway of the Christian church from the time that He sat with His disciples on Mount Olive until He should come again.

Jesus pictured the destruction of Jerusalem in verses 15, 16, 17, and 18. He tells of the flight to the mountains that the Christians would make at that time. This was all fulfilled.

Then He goes into the period of great tribulation, which we know in history as the Dark Ages. He said that those days would have to be shortened. And they were by the discovery of America and the Protestant reformation. There was granted a respite to the church, and thus the prediction of Jesus was fulfilled.

Then speaking directly of those things in which we're most interested in tonight, the Master says in the 29th verse:

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” Matthew 24:29–35.

These are the words of our Lord, and they are given, remember in answer to the question, “What would be the sign of His coming and the end of the world?”

Having carried the minds of His listeners down through the Dark Ages of persecution, and brought them to the end of that persecution, He points them to three great signs in the heavens: The darkening of the sun, the darkening of the moon, and the falling of the stars.

Now, dear friends, I'd like to point out that there are three of these signs. There is a first one, there is a second one, and there's a third one. It's true that there

are many signs of the coming of Jesus. The earth is full of them. But those conditions in the world—the strife among the nations, the wars and rumors of wars, the earthquakes, the pestilences, the social conditions, the religious apostasy, the disobedience to parents, and a hundred other things—all deal with world conditions that Jesus says will be characteristic of the time that He would be soon to return. But the signs in the heavens are of a different nature. I want you to see how different they are, these signs in the heavens.

In the first place, they're not due to the actions of men at all—like wars, and religious apostasy, and disobedience to parents, and the breakdown of the home, and all these things. They are due to the hand of God. The hand of God places those signs in the heavens.

Another difference, these world conditions are true over a period of time. To illustrate what I mean, I will point out that 100 years ago our pioneers were preaching from these same Scriptures and calling the attention of the people to the wars, and the earthquakes, and the pestilences, and the religious apostasy, and the breakdown of the home and disobedience to parents. For 100 years and more, our ministers have been telling the people, "Here's what the Bible says; look around you, and isn't it so?" And people that think say, "Yes, it's so."

But with every passing decade, things get more that way. The wars of the 19th century were greatly outstripped by the great war of 1914–1918. That was the first war called the World War. But now World War II has come, and it has far outstripped World War I, and they're talking about World War III as something worse than World War II.

You can see that all these things are signs of the coming of Jesus in that they show us that the world is in its last days. But there's no particular point that you can stand and say concerning the wars or the earthquakes or the pestilences, or any of these other conditions that this is the last sign. No. They keep getting bigger all the time.

So that a thinking mind may come to this conclusion: It's true we've had wars; it's true we've had pestilences, but they keep getting bigger. Maybe there's a bigger one next year, or five years from now, or ten years from now. And there may be. But Jesus wanted to give His church something more specific, something more definite, something that would mark something more clearly than mere world conditions which could either increase or decrease in intensity. And so I point out that these signs in the heavens are different in that they are specific events which take place once and for all as signs.

The Spirit of Prophecy helps us in coming to a final clear and positive conclusion as to when these signs appear. For example, in *Desire of Ages*, we have this clear statement:

"At the close of the great papal persecution, Christ declared, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon should not give her light. Next, the stars should fall from heaven. And He says, 'Learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet

tender, and puts forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that He is near, even at the doors.' Christ has given signs of His coming. He declares that we may know when He is near, even at the doors. He says of those who see these signs, 'This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.' These signs have appeared. Now we know of a surety that the Lord's coming is at hand. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away,' He says, 'But My words shall not pass away'" *The Desire of Ages*, page 632.

I would like to use the blackboard here and call attention to some very simple things. We will let this line represent the stream of time. Here we have the long Dark Ages period; that tribulation came to an end near the close of the 18th century. Immediately following that, Jesus said the sun would be darkened. We know that took place at what time? May 19, 1780. Next, the moon would refuse to give its light, and that took place when? The same night. Finally, third and last, what would happen? The stars shall fall from Heaven. That took place on the morning of November 13, or the night of November 12, 1833.

[Elder Frazee is writing on a blackboard.] So let's think of these dates: 1780 and 1833. How many years apart are they? Fifty-three years. They're bounded by the first sign and the last sign. Three great signs. After that time, there are no more dates as far as this prophecy is concerned. The next event is the shaking of the powers of Heaven and the appearance of Jesus in the clouds, sending the angels out. But speaking to certain people who would see all these things, notice what He says: "When ye shall see all these things know" what? "That He is near, even at the door."

Now, I want to ask you something, friends. Who was Jesus talking to, just look at your text there? How can you tell from the Bible who Jesus was talking to? Notice the 33rd verse. Yes, ye, but what ye? When ye shall see what? All these things. Could Martin Luther back there, many years before this, could he say that Jesus is talking to me in these verses? Had he seen the sun darkened? Had he seen the moon darkened? Had he seen the falling stars? No. He would have had to say to himself as he read this verse over, "Jesus is not speaking to me in this verse, for I haven't seen *one* of these things yet." Is that correct? Right.

I have read here in *The Desire of Ages*, the clear Spirit of Prophecy endorsement of this explanation. He says of all those who see these signs that this generation shall not pass until all these things shall be fulfilled. So, Christ is speaking when He gives the parable of the fig tree to the people who what? Who see the signs. How many of them? All of them.

Now let us come on down here. Here is a man that on midday on May 19, 1780, looks out there and there the sun has been blotted out. Everything is as dark as midnight. As he reads these verses, will he recognize that prophecy was being fulfilled? Were there people back there that did? Oh yes, they did. And the same night when the moon was blotted out, also they said prophecy is being fulfilled. Those who read their Bibles began then to look for what? The falling of the stars.

Please watch this very carefully. Were the people who saw the sun darkened and the moon refuse to give her light, were they the ones that Jesus was speaking to in Matthew 24:33? No. Why not? They hadn't seen them *all*.

The word "all" is important. When did they see all of them? When they saw the last one. The only time you ever see all of anything is when you see the last of it. Suppose that tonight we say, "You may all be dismissed now and leave the room." When have all left the room? When the last person leaves and not till then. Is that clear?

So notice that 33rd verse:

"So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things..."
Matthew 24:33.

When does that verse apply then? It applies right here on the morning of November 13, 1833, specifically right to the very hour. It must apply there. It couldn't apply before, because not until then had they seen all of them. But just as soon as the stars had fallen, then they could look up and say, "Lord, we've seen them all." We saw the sun darkened 53 years ago. We saw the moon darkened the next night. And this morning we have seen the falling stars. Now, Jesus is talking to us. He says:

"When ye shall see all these things, know that He is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" Matthew 24:33.

Now, in order that there be no question about this, in *Great Controversy*, we have the clear statement that this is the last of the signs. I think the Lord knows which is the last one, don't you? And if He says it's the last one, we ought to believe it and accept it and say what? It's the last one.

"In 1833, two years after Miller began to present in public the evidence of Christ's soon coming, the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Saviour as tokens of His second advent. Said Jesus: 'The stars shall fall from heaven'" *Great Controversy*, page 333.

What does it call this falling of the stars? The last of the signs. On the next page, after spending several paragraphs in a wonderful description of this glorious event, notice again the comment of the Spirit of Prophecy:

"Thus was displayed the last of those signs of His coming, concerning which Jesus bade His disciples: 'When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.'" *Ibid.*, page 334.

Is that clear? Yes.

“After these signs, John beheld as the great event next impending, the heavens departing as a scroll, while the earth quaked, mountains and islands removed out of their places, and the wicked in terror sought to flee from the presence of the Son of man” *Ibid.*

Now another point, very important: I have heard people say that “these signs are signs to those who see them as signs,” and that that is what Jesus is talking about. And the impression is sometimes left that it was not until later that people saw them as signs.

There are two difficulties with that understanding, friends. The first is that if that’s what it means that people merely hear about them and see them as signs, that could go on for another thousand years. Did any of you see the falling of the stars? No. You’ve heard about them. We see them with the eye of faith. We see them as we listen. But there is nothing about that to mark any event—our seeing them—because we saw them and our fathers saw them and our grandfathers saw them, and our children see them and our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren, and so on, could see them for the next thousand years.

But there’s another difficulty with that. That is that it is not so that the people back there did not recognize them; that simply is not true. The people that saw the signs recognized them—I’ll read that in the next sentence.

“Many, who witnessed the falling of the stars, looked upon it as a herald of the coming judgment, ‘an awful type, a sure forerunner, a merciful sign, of that great and dreadful day.’— ‘The Old Countryman,’ in *Portland Evening Advertiser*, November 26, 1833. Thus the attention of the people was directed to the fulfillment of prophecy, and many were led to give heed to the warning of the Second Advent” *Ibid.*, page 334.

Did the people that saw the falling of the stars recognize it as a sign? This says that many of them did. Then why should we question that Jesus hung out the sign to the people He wanted to see it. Jesus gave the sign *when* He wanted to give it, *where* He wanted to give it, to the people He wanted to see it.

That’s why He put it here in North America where the great Advent movement was to awaken the attention of thousands upon thousands. The pouring out of that celestial shower, the falling stars, gave great impetus to the proclamation of the advent of William Miller, and later Josiah Litch and Charles Fitch and Joshua V. Himes and Joseph Bates and James White, and the many other heralds of the advent. Why friends, this was one of the great and mighty evidences that they produced right there before the people that had seen it. Right in their audiences were hundreds and thousands of people that had seen those signs, and they read it right out of the Bible. There they are: the falling stars proceeded by the dark day and the dark moon.

“Now,” Jesus says, “When ye see all these things, know that He is near, even at the doors, and verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Do you see that there was a mighty power; obviously, that must have gone with that?

The only problem you and I must face tonight is that it's 121 years ago tomorrow morning since that sign was hung out. I think that we need to be very careful that we don't try to step in and help God out of His problem. I mean by that, that we need to be careful that we do not be too fast to abandon the simple statements of fact that Jesus makes here in Matthew 24, and the comment that He Himself has given us through His messenger in *The Desire of Ages* and *The Great Controversy*. I must say, as the years have come and gone, that I have heard a great many interpretations of this simple expression, “this generation shall not pass.” In the endeavor to clear up the problem, it seems to me that many people just make the problem greater. Personally, I prefer to leave it just where Jesus left it. His language is so simple it doesn't need any interpretation. He just says it.

Then He said what about the signs; well, I'm going to give you some signs. Let me just paraphrase it and see how simple it is. He said, “I am going to give you some signs. After the great tribulation, immediately there's going to be a dark sun and then a dark moon, and then finally falling stars. Now watch for those signs, and when you see them, when you see all of them—when you see the dark sun and the dark moon and then the falling stars—when you see that last sign, then know that I am near, even at the doors. And this generation, the one I'm talking to, the one that sees all the signs, shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.

May I read once more these clear statements?

“Christ has given signs of His coming. He declares that we may know when He is near, even at the doors. He says of those who see these signs, ‘This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.’ These signs have appeared” *The Desire of Ages*, page 632.

“In 1833, two years after Miller began to present in public the evidence of Christ's soon coming, the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Saviour as tokens of His second advent. Said Jesus: ‘The stars shall fall from heaven.’ Thus was displayed the last of those signs of His coming, concerning which Jesus bade His disciples: ‘When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors’” *Great Controversy*, page 334.

I want to ask you, friends, did God want them to know it then? If they knew it then, was it so then, was it true, or were they getting ahead of things? If they didn't know on the morning of November 13, 1833, pray tell me when would anybody know it? If they knew it then, it was a fact then, and must ever remain a fact that Jesus was speaking to them and saying, “Know that it is near, even at the doors, and this generation shall not pass.”

I want to face you very frankly. I don't want to evade it. I want to face with you the problem. What shall we do with the fact that it's 121 years since that sign was hung out? Is that a good problem to face? It's a very real problem, isn't it? What shall we do with it?

The first question is, shall we revise our theology? Shall we revise our understanding of the prophecy? That's one way to approach it, and that's the way some people approach it. But I'm not sure that that's the way it's going to be helpful to us.

I want to read you something this evening from the man, who under God, carried the burdens of the leadership of this denomination more years as president of the General Conference than any other leader we've ever had, Elder Arthur G. Daniels. This was published in the *Ministry* magazine of November 1930. I was just a young minister at the time this was written. In fact, I had just been ordained.

These words made a mighty appeal to me as I read them at that time. I clipped them and put them in my files. I want to read you some things from this dear man, Elder Daniels, who was, as I say, the leader of our General Conference for more years than any other leader we've ever had:

"Dear fellow workers. For a long time, I have carried in my heart a great desire to discuss, or shall I say confer with you regarding the serious subjects suggested by the questions heading this study. Is Christ's coming being delayed? If so, why? It seriously concerns you and me, for it vitally affects the supreme purpose of our ministry. The subject to which I refer is this: Is that great event, the second coming of Christ, being delayed? If not, what explanation can we give for the passing of this generation of Matthew 24:34? If it is being delayed, what is causing the delay, and further, what can be done to remove the cause and hasten His coming?

"We are well aware of the strong faith and positive teaching of the pioneers of this message regarding the signs of His coming as given by our Lord and recorded in Matthew 24. That's true. James White, Ellen White, J. N. Loughborough, Uriah Smith, and the other great pioneers were strong in their teaching. But those signs were just what Jesus said they were, the tokens of His near approach. And the generation that saw them would not pass until He should return. They sincerely, wholeheartedly believed that the signs recorded in that chapter were sure heralds of His coming. They believed and taught with great assurance that this generation which shall not pass away until all these things shall be accomplished was the generation in which they were living, and that the Savior would come in that generation.

“More than fourscore years have come and gone since those earnest God-fearing leaders reached these conclusions. The Savior has not yet come. Those pioneers are now in their graves, but the conclusions they reached and the deep convictions that moved them did not go to their graves with them. The faith of those fathers and mothers in Israel has laid hold of tens of thousands of intelligent men and women in all parts of the world, and inspired them in joining in giving the great proclamation. In this, all true believers rejoice. But the passing of so large a part of the generation without the coming of the glorious event for which we look for so hopefully is causing anxiety, uncertainty, and questioning in the minds of many.

“Were the pioneers right in their interpretation of the teaching of the Scriptures regarding the second coming of our Lord? Were they right in their interpretation of Christ’s statement about this generation? Are we still to believe and teach what they believed and taught? Are we to look for the Lord to come before the remnant of the generation upon which they had entered passes? Is it possible that something has delayed His coming? If so, what can it be? Can this hindrance be removed and His coming be hastened?

“These are some of the thoughts that are running through the minds of our people. Personally, I confess at times to feelings of great concern and sadness of heart. It has fallen to me to take part in the last tender farewells to some of our noble leaders. J. N. Loughborough, Uriah Smith, George I. Butler, S. N. Haskell, and our dear Sister White. It has seemed terrible to look into the lifeless faces of those saints who had to go down into the dark valley instead of living until translation day. To see my saintly mother, who for sixty years cherished the fond hope of seeing the Savior come, go down disappointed has been one of the most heart-piercing trials of all in this matter. We can all see what is ahead of us unless the Savior comes very soon.

“Now I raise a burning question. Can anything be done to change the situation? And with great confidence in what God has revealed to us I make bold to answer, Yes. Something can be done that will hasten that long looked for event.”

Then he puts a concise summary of his conclusions. I want you to notice them:

“One—The signs of His coming and of the end of the world as recorded in Matthew 24 occurred at God’s appointed time

to warn the world of coming doom and the church of the glorious consummation and realization of its hope.

“Two—That it was God’s purpose that the Savior should come to the generation that recognized these signs as heralds of the day of God.

“Three—That generation began not later than 1844 when the hour of His judgment came.

“Four—That from that day there was laid upon God’s people the solemn but glorious responsibility of hastening the coming of the day of God.

“Five—That there was also left with the church the awful responsibility of delaying the coming of that day.

“Six—That because of their failure to cooperate fully with the Lord, His people have hindered the progress of His work and the speedy consummation of His purpose.

“Seven—That we ministers and people should now speedily and deeply repent of our great wrong, and by the grace and power of God make such a complete change of life and service and such a full surrender to God’s purpose that He can use us in quickly finishing His work so that the Savior can come for His people.

“I am aware that some who may read these statements regarding the subject under discussion will not agree with me. However, I believe that my statements have a sound basis in the Word of God” *Ibid*.

I’d like to study that with you a little while, what Elder Daniels presents. First I raise the question, “What did Jesus say in Matthew 24?” Will you go with me now to the words of the Savior?

“So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near...

Where?

“...even at the doors” Matthew 24:33–34.

When are we to know that? When the last sign appears. So, 121 years ago, they were to know that He was where? Near. How near? Even at the door.

Did they know it? Yes, they knew it. Did they know something that was so, or did they know something that wasn’t so? Was He near? Was He even at the doors? Now, do you get the figure? Jesus could have said, Know that He’s near, and He

could have stopped there. But as soon as He puts in that expression, "even at the doors," what picture at once leaps into your mind? What picture do you see? You see a picture of a door, and you see somebody where? On the outside.

Why did Jesus put that in? There are several reasons, doubtless, He put it in. In the first place, it's a very apt and wonderful figure of somebody that's really close. Not down the road somewhere, but where? At the door! Think of it in 1833, Jesus was so near that He's pictured as where? At the door—121 years ago.

Well friends, why hasn't He come? Where has He been all the while? Ten years after that, was it still true that He was near, even at the doors? Twenty years after? Fifty years after? Could you put it any differently? A hundred years after? Could you say it any different? It's just as true. He's near, even at the door. And so we sing,

"At the door, at the door,
At the door, yes, even at the door;
He is coming, He is coming,
He is even at the door."

There's only one way that a person can get any nearer than "at the door," and that's what? To cross the threshold and be inside. And that's His coming. Oh, I hope that for a few minutes now we can forget everything else about this subject and study this one verse, for it's the key. It's the thing we need to fix our minds on.

Now, I want to tell you this: If 121 years isn't long enough for Jesus to get from being at the door to inside, I wouldn't know how many years it would take. I can't measure it in years. God never intended for us to measure it in years. I think that's where some people miss the great blessing of this. They're thinking in terms of the passing of time.

God intended that our thought of events to mark the passing of time should stop back there in 1833 and 1844, because this is the last sign that gives an event to mark anything by. In Daniel 8:14, we have the 2,300 days coming to an end when? In 1844, near the same time. In Revelation 10, you go there and you see the angel standing and lifting his hand in a solemn oath and saying that there shall be time no longer. What kind of time? Prophetic time. Prophetic time ended in 1844. God was through measuring time in 1844.

I wonder friends, if we're fully impressed with that fact. God was through measuring time in 1844. That's why again and again He has warned us against anybody who would set a time for the coming of the Lord or the close of probation, or any other promise that God has made to His people. That's clearly given to us by the Spirit of Prophecy. Just beware of anything like that.

Time no longer. God was through with the measuring of time in 1844. The last generation had come. The signs had been given. God intended that the people who saw those signs should be thinking not in terms of how long are we going to have to sit here until time runs out. Oh friends, time had already run out, and Jesus

was where? At the door. And obviously, what's the thing to do when somebody's at the door? Open the door.

The minds of many of you will go at once to Revelation 3:20. Have you noticed to what church that is addressed? To the church of Laodicea. Which church is that? The last church. Now it's no mere coincidence that this message to the last church is given in language connected with the last signs.

I want you to put these two texts together tonight in your thinking:

"...when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near,

Where?

"...even at the doors" Matthew 24:33.

"Behold, I stand at the door..." Revelation 3:20.

In each case, the One that is speaking is who? Jesus. "I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will do what? I will come in. I'll come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me. If we let Him in, in personal fellowship, He will soon come in glory and reveal Himself to this world.

Now, I want you to get a picture, and I want you to think of it. You've all seen those pictures of Jesus knocking at the door, haven't you? Suppose that He's standing right out there in the hall, standing at that door. Suppose you and I are sitting here. We're in our comfortable chairs, and we're rocking back and forth. Now and then, we come around to discussing the question, "Well, I wonder when Jesus is coming in? I wonder why He doesn't come? I thought He'd come a long time ago." And someday, somebody looks out there, and they say, "Why, He's right there." "Where?" "He's right there at the door." "He is?" "Yes, right there." "How long has He been there?" One hundred and twenty-one years. Is that so? Yes, for 121 years. What had we better do? Somebody had better go and do what? Open the door.

And if you'd study it for 100 years, you can never get beyond that view of the thing. That's it. And may I tell you this: If He had been willing to come on any other basis than the basis of what is represented by that picture, He could have come and would have come long ago. Long ago.

It is to charge God with foolishness to say that He would give all these prophetic predictions that we've studied and have them come out over 100 ago, and then time go on and on and on and on, and nobody who hears these things ever see the coming of Jesus. That's to charge God with foolishness.

The people that heard Noah's announcements saw the rain and saw the Ark ride away on those billows, didn't they? True, not all of them; many of them had died. But some of the very ones that heard Noah's message saw that ark ride away on those billows.

The people that heard Lot's message saw the fire fall. The people that heard the message of Moses to come out of Egypt, some of them entered the promised land, didn't they? The people that heard the announcement of John the Baptist that the Messiah is coming and the kingdom of God is at hand; they saw our blessed Lord appear.

God intended that exactly the same thing should happen down here today. Why hasn't it happened? Ah, my friends, because there is something different about this thing today from all the preceding times. That's the thing I want you to see tonight. And when you see it, it will give you a tender sympathy for God.

If it were the mere passing of time and the bringing of an event, God could do that. But do you know what Jesus is coming for? He's coming to get a people—a prepared people, a perfected people.

Notice right here in this text we've been studying in Matthew 24 that after the darkening of the sun, it says Jesus shall appear, and He shall send His angels with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect. Elect. Well, the election had better take place before the angels appear then, hadn't it?

Wouldn't it be too bad for them to come and somebody to say, "Well, I'm just sorry, the election hasn't taken place yet, and there's nobody elected. They'd have to go back home and say, "We're sorry, we couldn't find anybody that's elected.

But they won't do that, because Jesus is never coming with those angels until the elect are elected.

Jesus says many are called but few chosen. Do you see what Jesus has been waiting for all this time since the morning of November 13, 1833? He's waiting for some people to open that door so that He can come in and take possession of them spiritually that He may so perfect them that He may come and take possession of them bodily, and carry them home to glory. It would be very foolish for us to think that mere passing *time* is going to bring that. Mere passing time will never do it. For what is taking place? Please watch.

The people who heard that message what happened to them? They lived and then what happened? They died. Their children grew up thinking that Jesus was going to come at any time. They heard that message, and they lived and they died. And their children are in process of it, and their children's children.

You say, "Brother Frazee, how long is that going to go on?"

Let me give you the answer, friends, the real answer, the true answer. It's going to go on until God has a people that are fully ready to meet Him. That's how long it's going to go on. And if you want to measure that in terms of years, I tell you, that you can no more measure it with years than you can measure minutes with a yardstick.

We have various measuring lines for various things. You talk about gallons of milk, but suppose I'd ask you for an hour of milk. We talk about \$10 worth of this or

that, but suppose I'd ask you to give me a year of lumber or a week of apples. How would you go about it?

Days and weeks and months and years are measures of what? Time. But time is not what we're dealing with here. Prophetic time stopped in 1844, and since then, the thing that has stood between us and the coming of Jesus is *not* time. It's just that door. That door.

For over 100 years, He's been on the other side of that door waiting to come in. Wouldn't it be a terrible thing—Oh, please watch this!—wouldn't it be a terrible thing if the people on the inside of that door should simply sit there and rock back and forth in front of the fire and speculate on how long it's going to be before He comes in the door?

And wouldn't it be twice terrible if they should finally say, one after the other, "Well I don't know. I doubt if He's coming right away. We've waited here now for years, and He hasn't come. It may be years. I think I'm going off here; I want to make some money. I want to settle down and establish a home, and accomplish this, that, and the other thing. If you hear any special evidence that He's really coming very soon, please let me know so I can be back here and be here when He comes." Wouldn't that be terrible? When all the while He's at the door waiting, waiting, waiting.

It was my privilege at the time that just 100 years had rolled around since the falling of the stars to be with Elder Luther Warren, one of our great evangelist and young people's worker; in fact, the one who first led out in the young people's work. He was an old man with gray and white hair at that time.

My wife and I had just recently been married, and we were spending a few days down in southern California there at the Paradise Valley Sanitarium where the old veteran was living. He is sleeping now, of course. We, with a few other of his friends were gathered in his humble little cottage, and he went over these signs of Christ's coming with us—just 100 years since the falling of the stars.

Then he gave us this little story or illustration; it's helped me, maybe it'll help some of you. He said, "Suppose that word should come to us that Jesus was coming to Los Angeles. Of course, that isn't the way He's going to come, but we'll just suppose. And suppose that the word should come that there's going to be a special train leave here from San Diego at the Union depot at a certain time—7 o'clock on a certain morning. Everybody that wants to go and meet Jesus at His coming, you come, have your suitcase packed and come, and we'll go on that special train. We're all down there at the station, and the angel is there.

About ready for the whistle to blow and the train to start away when somebody comes running and says to the angel, "Could you hold this train for just a few minutes? I've got a brother at home that I've been working with, trying to get him to come. I think that if you would hold the train for just a little bit, I could run and help him to make a final decision, and he'll come and go with us."

The angel says, "All right, but hurry."

So this man runs to go get his brother, and that gives somebody else an idea. They say, "You know, I have a neighbor. I think if I could go back and make one more appeal to him I could get that neighbor." So he says to the angel, "Could you hold till I get back with that neighbor?"

"Yes, but hurry."

So this one goes, and presently various ones are going out to gather in those last few. But finally, somebody that's sitting there in the seat says, "Well, I thought we were going. I don't know now if we're ever going. I think I'll just go home and unpack my suitcase and go to living again."

What about that? That's something else, isn't it? That's one of the great problems that God is facing with His people. Read about it in *Early Writings*. The servant of God says:

"Time has continued a few years longer than they expected. Therefore they reason it may continue a few years more. In these things I saw great danger" *Early Writings*, page 59.

The thing I want you and me to come face to face tonight with is this: It isn't the passing of time that's going to bring the coming of Jesus. It's the opening of that door. If you say to me, "Well Brother Frazee, how long is it going to be?" I shall say to you it's going to be just that long and just that short.

When God has a people here on earth that fully open that door, then He's going to enter that door. No question about it. And He'll never do it before if it would take a thousand, thousand years. He'll do it just the minute it happens, for He's been waiting for a hundred years and more to do it.

Why then should you and I sit and wonder and speculate about just how the prophecies are going to come out on this, when the real lesson of the prophecy is as clear as the noonday sun, that Jesus is where? At the door. And how much nearer can He get? He can't get any nearer until what happens to the door? The door is opened.

Now let me read you something from *Christ Object Lessons*:

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 69.

How can we hasten it? By developing that character and helping others too.

How can we delay it? By being satisfied with an easier way, a lowered standard, a compromising experience, we delay the coming of Jesus.

As surely as we can hasten it, so surely we can delay it. Isn't it a tragedy that we've delayed it instead of hastened it?

What do you propose we do this anniversary day? Shall we determine with all our hearts as we enter upon another year of grace that we're going to be one of those dear people, Seventh-day Adventists who look for His coming and who hasten it?

Let me read these wonderful words again:

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own" *Ibid.*

When will He come? When His character is perfectly reproduced. Ah, that's the test, that's the issue. Is it possible for God to get a people ready in this sinful world that reflect the image of Jesus fully, and that are more than a match for the temptations of Satan?

Yes, and God is going to have them. He's going to vindicate His character before the universe. He's going to fulfill His Word, and He's going to have a group of people that are like Jesus.

That's why He died upon the cross. That's why He's ministering in the Heavenly Sanctuary. That's why He is sending this advent message to all the world.

It isn't just to send out an announcement that He's coming someday. It isn't just to get people to keep the Sabbath and confess their sins. It's to develop characters that perfectly reproduce the character of Christ.

No generation has ever seen groups of people like that. God has had individuals. He got Enoch who fully walked with Him, and God translated him. He got Elijah after all his discouragements and defeats to reach the place where God could take him in the chariot and say, "Come home Elijah."

He's going to have a group of people down here today that when He comes will already be found already to have reached the place that they're like Jesus.

Oh friend, that's why this message. Tonight I want to rededicate my life to that blessed goal. Don't you?

[Testimony service]

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