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The King Is Coming!

181-A

Series: Miscellaneous Messages



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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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The King is Coming!

Congratulations! You're about to be married. I got the singles' attention. The rest of you will have to come along with us. You are about to become the bride of the King. Don't we marvel at how He could have chosen us? But He has! He's chosen to give us His name. He's promised to grant us all of His inheritance. However, He's cautioned us as well, that when certain things begin to happen, we're supposed to stop and look up. We're supposed to get ready, for He is about to return for the wedding. The message of the hour is this: Get excited! The King is coming soon! So let's look at His coming from four perspectives.

- I- The seriousness of His coming—how important is it to study about the end time?
- II- The signs of His coming—how near are we to the end time?
- III- The scene of His coming—what awaits us, and in what order?
- IV- The significance of His coming. Seeing then, that “these things must come to pass,”¹ Peter said, “what kind of men, what kind of women ought we to be?”²

THE SERIOUSNESS OF HIS COMING.

Let's look first at the seriousness of His coming. How important is it to know God's plan for the future? How significant is it that some of you have been Christians for a long time, but do not have a clear understanding of what takes place from here to eternity. It is important—more important, perhaps, than most of us really realize.

Let's play a game called “Did You Know?” Did you know that 25%, or ¼ of all the Bible, is devoted to prophecy? Did you know that the New Testament alone, deals with The Second Coming of Christ and related incidents three hundred times? That's one out of every twenty-five verses. Did you know that five complete chapters in the New Testament are devoted to the end time: Matthew 24, Matthew 25, Mark 13, Luke 21, and I Corinthians 15? Did you know that three complete books in

¹ Matthew 24:6

² II Peter 3:11

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the Bible, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, and the book of Revelation are in the Bible just to give insight into God's future plans? Did you know there is more in the New Testament about this subject than there is about salvation, faith, assurance or love? Did you know that more Scripture is devoted to the end time than to any other single doctrine and that every writer mentions or refers to this subject in every book in the New Testament? Did you know that it is the key to understanding most of the other key doctrines of the faith? Did you know that it is the hope of the church, it is God's supreme incentive for holiness, it's the doctrine for which God promises us a blessing, both for studying, and for teaching. Serious? Nothing could be more serious than to study, and to look at The Second Coming of Christ.

THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING

But what are the signs of His coming? How can we know if it's about to take place? Well, first we'll look at the general signs, and then, maybe, at two or three more specific signs. You check them off in your own mind.

First of all, the general signs, if you think they've already come to pass.

- ✓ The Jews must return to Israel. Check it off.
- ✓ The rebirth of the Jewish nation must take place. Check it off.
- ✓ There must be an attempt made to unify Europe. Check it off.
- ✓ Wars and rumors of wars. Check that off.
- ✓✓ Food shortages and rising prices. Check it twice.
- ✓ Diseases and plagues, earthquakes and other natural disasters. Check it off.
- ✓✓✓ There must be a rise in power of Soviet Russia. Check it. Check it. Check it.
- ✓ There must be an increase of Satan worship, cults, and false messiahs.
- ✓ There must be moral decadence, increased activity in the spirit world, and the Gospel preached to every nation.

How does your list look?

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- ✓ There must be doctrines of demons, cunningly devised fables. If it were possible, it would fill the very elect of Scriptures [who] predicted the rise of secular humanism in the last days.
- ✓ Men's consciousness would become insensitive to sin, seared, as it were, with a hot iron.
- ✓ Men would become proud, scoffers, disobedient to parents and authorities, ungrateful, unaffectionate, immoral. In other words, a general spirit of rebellion would typify society. Check them off.

These are general signs, and with them being fulfilled, it means that Christ *could* return at any time. But the nearness of His coming is still a mystery. The general signs say the hands of God's clock are past eleven.

The specific signs are the second hand of that clock that tell us just how near we are. One Bible expositor recently shared these three specific signs that point to the nearness of His coming, and I'd like to share them with you.

The first is Russia's movement in the Mid-East. As the Russians moved into Afghanistan, they also, quietly, moved thousands of their troops from their southern borders toward the Mid-East, preparing, first of all, for an eventual attempt to take over the world's energy.

And, secondly, their fatal blunder will be an invasion of Israel. The Iranians, once Israel's staunch allies, have now become their avowed enemies, and one army officer stationed in Lebanon wrote his pastor these words. "Pray. Thousands of Iranians are moving toward Israel." The Bible teaches us that when Russia moves against Israel, the end is close at hand.

The second specific sign is the rebirth of Israel and its relationship to the time of The Second Coming. Jesus said in Mark 13, as He talked about The Second Coming,

"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near—at the doors!

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place."

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(Mark 13:28-30 NKJV)

What does the fig tree represent in Scripture? The fig tree always represents the nation of Israel. And what generation shall not pass away before Christ returns? The nation, the generation that sees the fig tree bloom again. When did the fig tree begin to bloom again? May 14, 1948. How long is a generation, in Scripture? Normally, a generation is forty years. You remember the children of Israel. They wandered in the wilderness for forty years, so that one generation could pass away. So the arithmetic many of you are using is that Christ will return some time before forty years have passed, after 1948. Now, I don't know how good your arithmetic is. Some of you bring your calculators with you, some of you leave them at home—1948, plus forty = 1988. But still others are more specific. They believe that, not only will He come by 1988, but seven years of tribulation on earth, which most of us believe that we, as believers, will view from heaven, must come out of those forty years. (2002—Well, you need to work on your arithmetic.) 1981? No one knows for sure, of course, but He could come that soon, or sooner.

The third specific sign this expositor shared also fits the same pattern. Jesus said that prior to the time of His coming, there would be great signs in the heavens. Scientists tell us that Planet Earth is soon to witness an amazing phenomenon; Haley's Comet will make its approach. The United States Government has launched a study (now, that's not unusual), to see how close it will come to the earth. We are told their fear is not a collision with Haley's Comet. Their fear is that it will come so close and reign down such a meteorite shower that it will damage the Earth's ozone blanket, and, thus, tilt the balance of nature, so that man, no longer protected against its ultra-violet rays, will be scorched by the sun. That's what this government survey is concerned with. The amazing thing is that Scripture teaches that near the end of the tribulation period, if these other numbers were correct, that would be 1985 to 1987, and if these theories were true, Scripture says that near the end of the tribulation God will, somehow, release the power of the sun, to scorch men on the face of the earth. When is Haley's Comet supposed to come? 1986? We can't know for sure, but God's clock is nearing midnight. Maybe it's 11:55 p.m. Maybe it's 11:59 p.m. Maybe it's only 11:15 p.m. But it's near. The Scriptures tell us *the day and the hour knows no man, only the Father*. But, likewise, we are told

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to look for the signs that tell us the season is at hand.

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.

(Luke 21:28 NKJV)

A good analogy, I think, is a woman expecting a child. She does not know the day or the hour, but she has no doubt something's going to happen. As the time draws near, signs make it perfectly clear that it's getting nearer and nearer every day. And she prepares accordingly. She still cannot tell you the day or the hour, but all of her life now anticipates that day, and all she does reflects that anticipation.

THE SCENE OF HIS COMING

That's the way we're supposed to be, and in these days in which we live, the signs are many. Jesus will be coming soon. But what are the signs of His coming? Just what is it that awaits us and in what order will it take place? If you open the outline you've been given in your bulletin, on the two inside pages there is a time-line which outlines chronologically, the events of the future. You can tell at a glance it is not done to scale, but rather done to scale the heights of God's perspective of the end time. As you can see, we're living in the latter stages of what is commonly referred to as the church age, the period of time between Christ's return to heaven and His return for us. Now, some two thousand years have elapsed from Adam to Abraham, and roughly two thousand years elapsed from Abraham to the Ascension. Now, nearly two thousand years later, we stand on the threshold of God's next great act of love.

Christ will return for us—The Rapture of the Church

What's going to happen first? Christ will return for us, and if you're not excited, you simply don't understand what's about to happen. The Scripture plainly teaches there is a generation of believers, a whole church of Elijahs, if you will, who will never have a funeral service for themselves. They will never need to buy a burial plot. They will be watching and working and waiting. They will be going about their daily jobs, when suddenly, there will be a thunderous shout, a mighty trumpet blast, and in an instant, they will be in the arms of Jesus. Or can we say, perhaps, *we* will be in the arms of Jesus? This is a literal promise, from the infallible Word and, as we shared earlier, many, many signs point to the fact that we could well be that generation. It's the

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most exciting time in history to be alive, if you're a Christian.

It's all outlined for us in I Thessalonians 4:15–17, where we were told that the Lord, Himself, will descend from Heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first, and then we, who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The facts are clear that the Lord, Himself, is coming. He's not sending someone else. He said in John 14:3,

"I go to prepare a place for you, but I'm coming back, myself, to get you, so that wherever I am, that's where you'll be."

(Paraphrase)

He will descend from Heaven. God always comes down to where we are. He descended from Heaven to save us. He will descend from Heaven to take us, and He will descend from Heaven again to bring us. He'll come with a shout. You've heard Him shout before, haven't you? In John 11:43 he shouted, "Lazarus, come forth!" Christ's shout as the Word of God, can't bring a sentence of death, but the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God.

When God blows His trumpet people hear it. Do you remember on Sinai when He blew the trumpet it got louder and louder and louder, until the heavens shook and the earth trembled? The trumpet in Scripture always means one of two things: it means a call to battle, or a call of victory. In this case, it will be both. For the angels it will be a call of battle, because, for the next seven years they'll have their hands full. For the Christian it will be the call of victory, for the saints will be called up together to spend eternity with Christ. And God, as always, will be orderly. The sleeping saints will arrive first, and then those who are still alive and in Christ will rise together to meet the Lord in the air, and be with Him forever.³

Don't you get excited when you think about it? That's what will happen. Christ is coming first for us, and we'll be gone. But for the next seven years Satan is going to have a heyday on earth. The restrainer, the Holy Spirit within the body, will be gone. You know, on this earth there will be bloodshed, and deception, and catastrophe such as man has never experienced. The disaster movies you see at the theater will be like Mary Poppins compared

³ I Thessalonians 4:16,17

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to what's going to happen when Satan rules this earth for seven years.

But for now, let's forget about the tribulation. Let's don't talk about that. Let's focus the lens of our spirits further up to Heaven where we'll be, and let's think of the four major events that will take place in Heaven.

The Bema Seat of Christ

The first one we've already dealt with, the Rapture of the church. The second eternal event will take place in Heaven and all of you will be invited. In fact, it's a mandatory invitation from the Lord to attend. It's called the Bema Seat of Christ. It's a time when all the redeemed, great and small, stand before God in all of His holiness and are rewarded according to the freedom we've given Him to live in our lives.

II Corinthians 5:10, I Corinthians 3, and Revelation 4, paraphrased, tell us the story.

"For we will all make an appearance at the awards platform in Heaven, in the presence of Christ, Himself, so that He may reward us for what He has been allowed to do in our bodies, separating that which is acceptable from that which is not acceptable to Him."⁴

"I have by God's direction been used to lay the foundation. You can use two kinds of materials to build on it: things that perish—wood, hay, and stubble, and things that are imperishable—gold, silver, and precious stones. The day is coming when the building will be set on fire by the presence of God, Himself, and what remains unburned will be revealed as of God. There will be rewards for everything not burned in His presence."⁵

"Then the twenty-four elders fell down before the throne and worshiped the Eternal One, casting their crowns at His feet in an act of love and worship, proclaiming, 'only You are worthy to be worshiped, and to You belongs glory and power and honor, for You are the Creator of all things, and it is for only You, that they have been and are created.'"⁶

What is the Bema Seat of Christ, the second great experience

⁴ II Corinthians 5:10

⁵ I Corinthians 3:5-10-15

⁶ Revelation 4:10,11

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that we will have in Glory? The Bema Seat of Christ is an awards presentation. Where will it be? It will be held in Heaven. When will it be held? Just after the church is caught up to be with Christ. Who'll give the awards? Jesus Himself. To whom will they be given? To us, to all believers. For what will they be given? For the things Christ has been allowed to do in our lives. How will our works be tested? By fire. Where will the fire come from? The presence of God. What will happen to what we have done in the flesh? Our works done apart from Christ will be consumed in the presence of God, because it is sin, and He cannot look upon sin. What will happen to what He has done? Like gold and silver and precious stones, they will become jeweled crowns. What will He do with the crowns? Put them on our head and strut around Heaven? No, you'll have something with which to worship Him. The more crowns we have, the more we have to worship Him with.

Maybe this poem captures the picture better than we can say:

THE BEMA SEAT

The Festival's beginning,
The hour is at hand,
And a hush that stills a whisper
Has settled on the land.

'Tis time for rewards,
And the crowd has gathered near.
The Master is approaching,
But there's not a sign of fear.

For 'tis not a time of judgment,
(The judgment time is past.)
And the Master has come this time
To reveal what works will last.

Lo, He comes...what blinding glory.
The glow of His attire
Seems to light up all of Heaven
Like a blazing, searing, fire.

What is happening? we wonder,
For as He passes through,
We can feel a Holy Power,
And our lives are passed in view.

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Lo, the Glory of His Presence,
Like a flaming fire turned loose,
Now consumes the things in our lives
That He did not produce.

And as He passes by us,
Lo, we see the ashes gone;
And the things that still remain
Are those that He Himself has done.

Oh, the Glory of the things He did!
They shine like jewels rare,
And they sparkle in His presence,
And reflect that He is there!

Like crowns of righteous royalty,
They glisten in the light,
And the only thing reflected
Is the Master's face in sight.

Overwhelmed by all His love,
We approach His Bema Seat,
And without a word, we cast our jewels
In worship at His feet.

Oh, what joy; none can describe,
As we worship Him in song,
As we sing "Hosanna...praise Him,"
At His feet where we belong.

Those who let Him rule and reign in life
Find Heaven now complete,
For the things He did have now become
Rare jewels at His feet.

And we can but kneel before Him
For His loving eyes to see,
The rewards He gives...belong to Him...
For all eternity!

The second great event is the Bema Seat of Christ. Don't you want to be there? And aren't you excited that it's coming soon? Well, the best is yet to come.

The Wedding

Then comes the wedding, the celebration to follow. The Hebrew wedding customs of Jesus' day tell perfectly the order of

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events of divine marriage between Christ and the church. In one recent publication we read this:

“First, the perspective Hebrew bridegroom would take the initiative and leave his father’s house to gain for himself a bride, just as Jesus left His Father’s house and came to earth to take for Himself a bride, the church. Then the perspective groom paid the price to purchase the bride, and Jesus paid it all. Once the price had been paid, the covenant was established and, though they had not been physically united, they were considered to be husband and wife, and you and I are considered, today, to be the bride of Christ. Immediately, the bride was set apart exclusively for the groom. They took a cup, drank together, and symbolized that a covenant had been made, just as Jesus did at the Last Supper. Then the groom returned to his father’s house, and there he remained for a year, separated from his bride, even, through this age, as Christ has been separated from us, and is back in His Father’s house.”

During this time two things happened. The bride’s job was to make herself ready. And that’s where we are today. The groom, meanwhile, prepared living accommodations in his father’s house. Jesus said,

“In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

...I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”
(John 14:2,3 NIV)

When I come again I can take you back to be my bride. Then, as the hour of the wedding approached, the groom, accompanied by his best man and other escorts, left the house, usually at night—the exact time was never known—and they conducted a torchlight procession to where the bride was waiting. (And Jesus, with His best man, His archangel, and all the angels, and all the angels about him, the Heavenly Host, are going to come in like manner for us.) The bride was waiting, but she never knew the exact time the groom would come. So guess how he announced himself? He came to the outside of the house where she was staying and announced himself with a glorious shout! And that’s what Jesus will do for us.

The groom received the bride and all her attendants and took

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them, with joy, back to his father's house. There the two became one, and the wedding celebration began. That's what's going to happen to us. It's a perfect picture of the wedding that's just to come and the celebration that will follow.

It's interesting that Hebrew custom states that the length and magnitude of the wedding feast was determined by the wealth of the groom's father. (Oh, how we have got it made!) Jesus' Father has unlimited resources. The cattle on a thousand hills are His, and ours will be a celebration commensurate with His generosity. It will last a thousand years.

In Revelation chapter 19, beginning with verse 6, we read,

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

(Revelations 19:6-9 NKJV)

But the marriage celebration will take on a triumphant note of victory (quite different from most marriage ceremonies). For while we are gathered in Heaven celebrating, the armies of earth, confounded by Satan, will be on Planet Earth poised for a threshold battle against Israel, called "The Battle of Armageddon."

The Second Coming of Christ

So verse 11 takes us from the marriage feast in verse 9 to the most triumphant wedding procession in history, and the fourth major event on God's calendar, "The Second Coming of Christ."

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

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He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

(Revelation 19:11-16 NKJV)

That's how it looks from Heaven, looking down, when Christ comes back. Would you like to know how it looks from Earth, looking up? Matthew 24 gives us the other side of the coin,

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

(Matthew 24:29,30 NKJV)

He will come, and we'll come with Him, along with all the angelic hosts. He will touch down on the Mount of Olives. He will defeat the antichrist and the nations assembled at Armageddon with a display of power that cannot be described in man's vocabulary. Israel will be restored and Satan will be bound for a thousand years. Old Testament saints will be resurrected. Fallen angels will be judged, and for one thousand years Christ will rule and reign on Planet Earth.

Aren't you getting excited? Just wait—if we only had the time, but we don't this morning, to tell the glories of those thousand years and of the eternity that will follow, but at the end of that thousand years Satan will be loosed again, but only for a season. He will reveal again, the nature of man apart from the grace of God, and then the end will come. Satan will be cast forever into the Lake of Fire, and God will judge mankind at the Great White Throne. Now, if you're a Christian, you won't be there. Your sins have been judged. The price has been paid.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,

(Romans 8:1a NKJV)

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Our names will be found in the Lamb's Book of Life.⁷ But all whose names are not recorded, all who have never said, "yes" to Jesus, the Scripture says, must be judged according to their works, because they have refused to be judged according to the grace of God. And when they are judged by their works, God must pronounce this sentence:

There is none righteous, no, not one;
(Romans 3:10b NKJV)

for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God,
(Roman 3:23 NKJV)

And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast
into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:15 NKJV)

And then will come down from heaven a New Jerusalem, a new heaven, a new earth, and life with Jesus forever.⁸

If, at the thought of it all your heart is not beating faster, take your pulse. You may be dead. It seems almost unnecessary at this point to ask Peter's question. He said,

"Seeing, then, that all these things will come to pass, what manner of persons ought we to be?"
(II Peter 3:11 paraphrase)

I'll tell you. We ought to be decidedly different. The immensity and the imminence of Christ's return ought to make a difference in the way we live. It ought to make a difference in our weights, the purity of our lives. It ought to make a difference in our worship, the faithfulness with which we pray. It ought to make a difference in our witness, the faithfulness with which we share the Gospel. And it ought to make a difference in our walk, the very atmosphere of our expectancy.

The Analogy of the Bride

Let's quickly look at those four things in the light of the analogy of the bride waiting for the King. And we're the bride.

First of all, it ought to affect our weights. Now, we're not talking about that kind of weight, although that may be one of your weights. We're talking about Hebrews 12:1b where it says,

let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily
ensnares us, (NKJV)

And in I John we read,

⁷ Revelation 20:12

⁸ Revelation 21:1,2

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Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:2,3 NKJV)

What it says is there isn't time to coddle impurity, bad habits, questionable lifestyle. There ought to be no sin unconfessed, there ought to be no relationship unhealed. The King is coming, and there isn't time to play games. Imagine the peasant bride awaiting the arrival of the king to take her to be his. He tells her to ready, to be clothed in her wedding gown, hair shining, face glowing. He tells her to get rid of the rags of her former life and be dressed and waiting for the hour she knows not he will come. The doorbell rings. There stands before her the king with all of the host of his court. Her hair is in curlers. She's dressed in rags. No makeup. No shoes. "I'll get ready!" she cries. "No, my dear," the king answers, "You must come just as you are." "But I can't meet your father and go down the aisle like this! If only you had told me you were coming!" "I did, my child," the king replied. "I did." It ought to make a difference.

It also ought to make a difference in our worship. The King has sent us a love letter, the Living Word. The main theme in the letter is a wedding is coming, and we're the bride. He's told us how to look for the signs of His coming. He's told us how to get ready for His coming. Can't you imagine His discouragement again? The doorbell rings. The King appears, but we're not ready. "Didn't you get my letter?" The King asked. "Yeah, I got it, and I scanned it, but I just really haven't had time to study it much, but I'm sure glad you're here." Doesn't sound reasonable, does it? But how much time do you spend every day, reading that love letter and appropriating the truth that's in it, and obeying the truth that's in it, because the King is coming soon.

The King has gone one step farther than that. He's given us an open-ended use of a direct line to Heaven. He says, "Call me if you have a question. Call me when you're lonely. Call me when you're hurting. Call me just to say, 'I love you.'" When the operator asks about the charges, just say, "I'm calling in Jesus' name," and he'll reverse the charges. Can you imagine the King's broken heart when we never call? Well, how about when we call and fall asleep on the other end of the line? 1 John 2:28 says,

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears,

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we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at
His coming. (NKJV)

It ought to affect our witness.

The king has authorized the guest list for the wedding. He says, “Whosoever will may come.” But it is the bride who must send out the invitations. That’s right. She is to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in. The king arrives. He’s on his way to the ceremony and he asks the bride, “Who have you invited to the wedding?” “Well,” she says, “I asked someone about a year ago, but he said “No.” The king says, “You mean that you are so thrilled that I, the king, have come to be your bridegroom, and you’ve invited no one to the wedding?”

Matthew 22 says,

“Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.”

So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

(Matthew 22:9,10 NKJV)

And, lastly, it ought to affect our walk. Luke 12,

“Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning;

and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately.

Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching.”

(Luke 12:35-37a NKJV)

Most of you have been in a house that’s getting ready for a wedding, haven’t you? It’s not business as usual. Everything is done in the light of that coming event. Nothing will be the same, once it happens. There isn’t time for the nonessentials. There’s no time for long faces or sadness. The atmosphere is one of excitement, one of expectancy. Everyone is watching. Everyone is waiting. Everyone is working. The hour gets closer. The things left undone must be viewed in the light of what *is* most important. The bride must be ready. The guests must be invited.

The message I’d like to share with you here, my friend, is the King is coming soon, He’s coming personally, He’s coming powerfully, and He’s coming perfectly on time. Tomorrow morning you may be driving to the supermarket, you maybe at work in

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your office, you may be at home on your knees in prayer when, suddenly, a strange glow lights up the eastern sky, and a mighty trumpet blast shakes the very foundations of the earth. It could be that soon! I guess the question I'd like to leave with you starts like this,

THE KING IS COMING

Can those who view our lifestyle
As we travel through life's way,
Tell we're eagerly betrothed
And near our wedding day?

Can others sense excitement
As the church's heart beats faster?
Can they tell from our expectancy
We're looking for the Master?

Can others sense a holy awe
And purity of hearts?
A longing to be ready
As the wedding anthem starts?

Can they feel a sense of urgency
As nearness fills the air?
That we're to be the Master's Bride
And long to have them there?

Are you confident, my Christian friend
About what lies ahead?
That first He'll come to take us
To the heavens as He said.

That we'll enjoy a wedding feast
Such as we've never known,
Because this joyous dinner means
Christ takes us as His own.

That we'll behold His Bema Seat
And bow before His face,
And cast His jewels of Righteousness
And sing "Amazing Grace."

That we'll be coming back with Him
In power and great glory,
To vindicate His Holiness,
To validate His Story.

The King is Coming!

That Satan one bright morning,
Will fall defeated, torn,
Before the Son of Righteousness
On God's Eternal morn.

And, lo, then every knee
Will bow before the Word.
And every tongue in unison
Will echo, "He is Lord!"

That's what awaits us, Christians,
That's our song to sing,
We're not in fear of earth's dread night,
We're waiting for our King!

But unbeliever, listen:
An invitation to
God's eternal wedding feast
Was also sent to you,

And though you've not responded,
Or ne'er said "yes" to Him,
Still He's knocking, longing,
To cleanse your life of sin.

You can, this very moment,
Open your heart in prayer,
And say, "Come in, Lord Jesus,"
(And Jesus will be there!)

You, too, can have that Blessed Hope.
Your soul can shout, "I'm Free!"
And you can cry, "He's coming!"
And He's coming back for me."

So all who name His name. look up!
The curtain soon will rise,
And the light of His Holy Presence
Soon will flood the eastern skies.

And, with a shout of angelic triumph,
And the sound of God's trumpet blast,
We'll cry together, "He is Lord!"
And we'll be home at last.

If you're not sure that the King is coming back for you, I'd like to encourage you, in the silence of this moment, very simply

The King is Coming!

and very quietly, to acknowledge before Him that you're a sinner and have a need for a savior, and ask him, personally, to be the bridegroom of your life. Tell Him by His grace you'll spend the rest of your life preparing to be His bride. You can do that right now, by simply opening the door of your heart and asking Him to come in. And for some of us who are Christians we need to have the flame rekindled, set aside the nonessential things, and get on about the business of preparing for the wedding, because the hour is at hand. Let's pray.

Father,

As we think about the things that are about to unfold, both in time and into eternity, our hearts just melt before a God of such great love, and a God of such great power that You've prepared for us a home in Heaven; that You're personally coming to take us there, to live with You for all eternity; that You've planned a wedding such as we have never experienced; and that You'll reward us even for the things You have done, the more with which to worship You.

Oh, precious Lord, speak to our hearts this morning. Give us grateful and expectant spirits. And, oh, God, may all who received Your Son as their Savior and Lord be lifted up, encouraged, and grounded in the Word. We wait expectantly, Father. We watch expectantly and we work expectantly. Even so, Lord Jesus, come.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

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