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Bible Study No. 2: "The Day of the LORD, Which Will Burn Like an Oven!"

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May God bless all who have come to hear his Word. Someone told me that yesterday evening's teaching was truly powerful, and I believe that if we listen properly and go along with it inwardly, we will simply realize that God has given us things which millions do not see, do not know, are unaware of, and simply bypass. And as we have often said, if God truly has a plan for a person, he lets them know his purpose. Then a fellowship is established, just as the Lord said to Abraham in Genesis 18: ***"Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?"*** [Gen 18:17] And so, in fact, God's will has been revealed anew, time and again, to the entire seed of Abraham, the spiritual seed, the true children of God, who believe his promises.

As announced yesterday, we shall continue today with our Bible study. It is simply of the utmost importance that we do not merely tell stories, but teach God's Word, so that all may be firmly grounded in the truth. Let us expect today, too, that he not only speaks to us, but that he works in us what we need and what we expect from him. He is, after all, the same.

When the sick are brought to him today, he heals them, just as he healed them back then, when they were brought to him. Is that so or not? It must be so. It cannot be otherwise. People change, and so do their opinions. But God does not change his Word. It remains the same. We can rely on God and God's Word.

Often, however, and the Lord has probably arranged it this way, we cannot always have faith for ourselves personally, but rather we have more faith for others. God has arranged it, so that not everyone can manage everything so well on their own with God, but that we are dependent on one another. As the scripture says: ***"Pray for one another, that you may be healed."*** [Jam 5:16] That is simply the way it has been arranged.

Sometimes believers lose heart and think to themselves: "Well, I was able to have such strong faith for others, but now it's somehow my turn, and lo and behold, my faith doesn't seem to be holding up so well anymore." That is not true. God has made it this way. It is his will that we should serve one another as members of his body, using the gift he has given us. Such are God's providential arrangements. Let us be grateful for this too.

Today, we would most like to pray for everyone, even if it is to be a teaching, an introduction to the Word of the Lord. Nevertheless, we believe that in every proclamation of the Word, the Spirit of God is at work in people, that in every sermon, whether it is doctrinal, whether it is prophetic in character, whatever it may be, that God can save and speak to people in every sermon and can convict them through his Spirit, that he can work, can heal, can set free, so that no one need leave a sermon empty-handed. That is also how God has ordained it.

As you will see when you read it, the Lord also addressed various topics when he spoke, but he always healed and saved, amen? No matter what topic he spoke about, he always saved, delivered, and healed. He is still the same today. No matter what topic, what words or scriptures are read, the Lord is the same. He is here to do good to everyone.

In the Gospel of John, chapter 14, our Lord says in John 14, verse 12:

[12] ***Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do…***

This Word too is as true as any other statement in Holy Scripture. Let us take hold of faith, be gripped by faith, and trust God with everything. Our Lord said: ***"It is not I who do these works, but the Father who is in me."*** [Joh 14:10] Every man of God and every child of God will say the same. Even if the dead are raised and the blind receive their sight, no one will take credit for such a deed; all will say: "God has done this."

In the Gospel of John, chapter 15, the Lord says in verse 5, John 15:5:

[5] ***I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit:***

Up to here this Word. May God use his Word to bring home to us our true divine status. We are not guests or strangers. We are citizens of God, members of his household. [Eph 2:19] We belong to the Lord. Even whilst we are still on this earth, still in this mortal body, which God willing we shall soon lay aside, we are already children of God, even though it has not yet been revealed what we shall be like one day. Yet we know when he shall appear, we shall be like him. [1Jon 3:2]

It moves me deeply, and I say this very freely and openly, indeed, throughout the entire church history, as far as I am aware, there has been no ministry that has been similar to or even equaled the ministry of Jesus Christ, our Lord. There have been great men of God throughout the various ages, and particularly after the Reformation, renowned men of God, John Wesley and many others whom God used. There has never been a ministry on earth like that carried out by Brother Branham. I am in a position to judge this, and this judgment will also stand before God. It was not this simple man from the mountains of Kentucky, whose grammar was not good, whose education had not reached a high level, yet he was a man sent by God

with a message of the Word, to bring the church of the Lord back to its origin, to the beginning.

I would like, as I very rarely do, to read just a few passages, very briefly, from the sermon "Look Away to Jesus". Here on page 5, paragraph 3, Brother Branham says:

Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches. And the first branch, the first church that the vine put out, they wrote a book of Acts. And that first branch baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. And they had the living God among them, that did the same things among them, that he did when he was on earth. Therefore the people take a notice to them, though ignorant and unlearned, that they had been with Jesus, because his life was through them.

What a statement, what a declaration, and thank God it is true. The early church had the life of Christ, the very nature of the Lord within it, the power of God was at work in the early church. Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, dear friends, we bear witness on the basis of Holy Scripture that the church must ultimately stand as it stood at the beginning, equipped with the full armor of God, as one heart and one soul, where miracles are not merely preached about or spoken of, but where they happen, where they take place, where people may be living testimonies of what God has done. [Act 4:32; Eph 6:11] Just as the blind man in the Gospel of John was asked: ***"Who did this to you?"*** [Joh 9:15, 26] And they reviled Jesus and made various accusations against him, and he said: ***"I do not know who he is or what he is, but one thing I do know, I was blind and now I can see."*** [Joh 9:24-25]

I would like to read briefly here, I did so some time ago, from the fourth paragraph:

If I had the spirit of Beethoven in me, I would write songs. If Beethoven lived in me, I would be Beethoven. If Shakespeare lived in me, I would be Shakespeare. I would write poems and plays if Shakespeare lived in me. And if Christ lives in you, the works of Christ you will do.

It makes sense, may it come to pass. It should be a cause of distress to us, that God cannot yet be with us, where he actually wishes to be, a cause of distress, that what he has promised in his Word may come to pass.

Here Brother Branham then speaks briefly further about his three phases of ministry, the first pull, the second, and the third. He then speaks of the squeeze that will be brought on those who do not belong to this great union of all denominations within the World Council of Churches. He says here:

You will have to be in this Council of Churches, or you won't be able to have fellowship.

Well, it's practically that way now. You can't go to a church—I didn't say where I'm reading, Brother Kupfer and the other brothers, it's at the bottom of page 6,

last line, and now at the top right of page 7. Well, it's practically that way now. You can't go to a church and preach unless you have a fellowship card or some identification.

And now, on persons like ourselves, we are going to be cut out of all that, all together, that's exactly, cause they won't be able to do it, it's tightening, and then when that time comes and the press comes to a place to where you are pressed out, then watch what I'm fixing to tell you in a few minutes.

Watch the third pull then, it will be absolutely to the total lost, but it will be for the bride and the church.

On this point, just a very brief remark from Revelation, the time is coming, as it is written: ***"He that is holy, let him be holy still, he which is filthy, let him be filthy still."*** [Rev 22:11] At the very last moment of the time of grace, there really will be a phase where everyone remains spiritually where they stand. Those who have rejected, will continue to reject, those who have believed, will continue to believe.

Then Brother Branham says something quite remarkable here, I'll read the third paragraph on page 7:

Now we are closer than it seems to be, I don't know when, but it's real, real close.

I may be building a platform for somebody else to step on.

I may be taken before that time.

I don't know... [midway through the paragraph] **I don't know when he will come.**

He doesn't tell us that, but I do believe that we are so close that I would never die with old age, yet at 54 years old, I'll never die with old age, until he's here.

Unless I'm shot, killed, or something other, some way killed, just old age wouldn't kill me until he's come.

I believe that, and I want to say this, I've never said it before, but according to Scripture, according to what he said 30 years ago, 33 years ago, on the river down there, in 1933, what he said, everything has happened, just exactly.

I may not do it, but this message will introduce Jesus Christ to the world, for as John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming, so is the message to forerun his second coming.

I believe it is very clear, then just one more passage from page 8, the second longer paragraph, starting almost in the middle:

But when this was said, that interpretation was exactly what the Angel of the Lord said, down on the river, 11 years before that: 'As John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming of Christ, you are sent to forerun the second.'

There it was, when that Angel, that Light, that's been thoroughly identified, both by the church, by the Word, by science and everything, has identified.

That Light, for its first time to appear in public, standing right over where I was, at about two o'clock in the afternoon, at the foot of the bridge, right there, right down here at the foot of Spring Street, in the water, that's been many years ago, and exactly what it said has come to pass, to the dot.

It would be appropriate to go into some or many of these things, but most of us have of course read the sermons and are also familiar with the supernatural workings of God, which were simply a part of Brother Branham's life. It is easy to believe, when one reads that the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush, it is easy to believe that the Lord led Israel for 40 years with a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud. One can believe all these supernatural things, they are recorded in the Bible, and indeed no one who believes in God doubts them. Things become somewhat more critical and difficult when accounts are given of supernatural things that God has done in our generation. But let me draw your attention to this one point.

A person, even a preacher, can make many claims and there would be nothing wrong with that, unless these claims were legitimized and justified by God. When the Lord called Moses, he told him that he would then come down upon the mountain where the people would be gathered and speak to him and to the people. [Exo 19:9-11]

When Brother Branham spoke back then in Houston, Texas, in the great Colosseum, it actually happened that the supernatural light above Brother Branham's head was captured by those critical press photographers. If any believing brother, perhaps even a fanatic, had taken that photograph of Brother Branham, well, the light was there anyway, but one could have fiddled with it a bit. But this negative was sent in and has been examined in every possible way. There was no retouching and it was not a double exposure. Dr. George J. Lacy writes in his report: "it hung above this man." So these were not merely claims that the light came down and that the Lord thus made his presence known in the meetings. He truly came down in a supernatural way.

And as Brother Branham once put it, through tears, he said: "The Lord has honoured me by allowing me to be photographed with him." You know, Brother Branham was truly a very simple man, but he was a man of God, sent with a revealed

Word, which we love and cherish very much.

And you will see, one need not be a prophet to make this announcement. The whole Christian world is in a sorry state. And you will see that everyone, whether they be an evangelist, a Bible teacher, or think of themselves as a prophet, they will go along with the masses, they will slip into it and believe this is what God intended. And it will be the greatest intermingling of all time, just as there was intermingling in the days of Noah, so it is now happening spiritually. Who will have clarity regarding the events of our day? Only those, to whom God, through the revelation of the prophetic Word and the entire plan of salvation of our God, has been able to shed light on what is happening now, so that we do not judge the events currently unfolding on the basis of newspaper reports, but take up the Holy Scriptures and judge what is happening now in accordance with Scripture.

Look, with God's help, we shall now briefly address the topic to which Brother Russ already gave us the key last Wednesday evening with the words from 1 Thessalonians 5: "***We are not destined for the judgment of wrath, but to inherit salvation.***" [1The 5:9] Look, when the day of grace draws to a close and has come to an end, then the day of the Lord will dawn. And just before this day of the Lord dawns, God has indeed said that he would send a prophet in the mold of Elijah who would appear with divine authority to bring about a decision amongst God's people to serve the Lord anew, to turn to him and to walk in his ways. [Mal 3:23-24] And the divine confirmation was of course the seal of the commission which the Lord had given.

I would like to read a few scriptures and I promise you that we shall not linger over them for too long. I have just one request. Please look out for one another during the services. There are people who get tired even during the day. And if you notice that the person next to you is feeling that way, then look after them. For the Word that is preached is after all important. And Scripture says: ***"Those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who are drunk, are drunk at night. We are in the light of day.***" [1Th 5:5-8] But there are people who fall asleep during the day.

Well, let us read from Isaiah chapter 13. Isaiah chapter 13. And I would like us to bear in mind and commit to memory the following key terms. It speaks of the judgment of wrath. It speaks of wrath. It speaks of bowls of wrath. We shall notice that different emphases are given in each instance, but they always point to the same period and always mean the same thing. From Isaiah 13 verse 3:

[3] ***I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness.***

Now verse 5:

[5] ***They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.***

Verse 6:

[6] ***Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.***

[7] ***Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt.***

Beginning of verse 9:

[9] ***Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.***

Verse 13:

[13] ***Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.***

God is a good God whilst the time of grace lasts. But God will then be an angry God when the time of grace is over.

Let us continue reading from Isaiah 26. Isaiah chapter 26, here we read… Isaiah 26, verse 20:

[20] ***Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.***

We shall return later to the New Testament passages which tell us that we are not destined for the judgment of wrath but to inherit salvation, that is, we shall be taken away before the judgment of wrath takes place. [1The 5:9] Here it says:

[20] ***Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.***

We could go into a number of things here, for then the Lord will call the host of heaven to account in the heavens. [Isa 24:21] Much will still happen then.

In Isaiah 63, Isaiah 63, verse 3, perhaps verse 2 should also be read for the sake of context, Isaiah 63, verses 2 and 3:

[2] ***Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?***

We shall also come across the term "winepress" a few more times.

[3] ***I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.***

[4] ***For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.***

We note that all these Scriptures speak of the day, that period of time, when the Lord God will truly unleash all his wrath upon the whole of humanity, those who have mocked, denied, and blasphemed him, those who have done with him whatever they pleased. And tell me, although we did not live in those times and cannot pass precise judgment on the matter, but tell me, has there ever been a time when God was so mocked, when people did whatever they pleased with him, whoever wishes to deny him denies him, whoever wishes to mock him mocks him, everyone does whatever they like with God, don't they? There is no longer any fear of God amongst people. They have turned their backs on him, are incensed against him, and there are those who deny him altogether.

What is to become of them? God will then settle the score.

I would like to read on briefly from the prophet Daniel, to show here too the way in which these men of God, whether in the Old or New Testament, wrote and spoke in unison. I must say it again and again, it overwhelms me to see the harmony with which the whole Bible was written. It can only have been the Spirit of God, who at different times was able to inspire men of God who lived in different centuries and millennia, and reveal the same truth to them.

In Daniel 8, we read in verse 19, Daniel 8, verse 19:

[19] ***And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.***

So the end times are appointed, and so too are the events that will take place within them. And we as the church, who are now experiencing the final phase of the time of grace, must come to terms with the fact that these things have been decreed and will unfold as God planned from the very beginning. We cannot do as we please during this time, devising programs and organizing a great deal of religious activity. Our task is to allow God to incorporate us into his work and activity now, thereby giving God the opportunity to do what he has set out to do.

In Daniel chapter 11, Daniel chapter 11, we read in verse 36, Daniel 11, verse 36, perhaps including verse 35 as well, it says here:

[35] ***And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.***

Have I read the right verse? Probably. Here too there is talk of the end times, and I would like to carry on straight away and read further in Zephaniah chapter 1, Zephaniah chapter 1, verse 14, and then perhaps verse 18 as well. Let's see how far we get here, Zephaniah 1, verse 14:

[14] ***The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.***

[15] ***That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.***

You know, when it is written in Revelation 1 that John was caught up in the Spirit to the day of the Lord, there are some who then write in their interpretation that was on a Sunday, for them that is the day of the Lord. And others write that was the Sabbath, for them that is the day of the Lord. Let me say this humbly, without setting myself above others, it was neither the Sabbath nor Sunday, it was the day of the Lord. John had been taken in the Spirit to the day of the Lord, to that period of time. He saw all the things written in Revelation, which will now take place at the end, on the day of the Lord.

God has also granted us clarity on this matter. We would not have known this on our own. In any case, the day of the Lord is described to us in such detail that our own interpretations are actually quite unnecessary.

In Zephaniah chapter 2, Zephaniah chapter 2, here we read from verse 2, it's only one line from verse 1:

[1] ***Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired;***

[2] ***Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you.***

[3] ***Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.***

All these Scriptures are very clear, as is what they convey. So God will have a day of reckoning. It is also mentioned several times in the New Testament.

In the Gospel of Matthew, verse 7, Matthew 3, verse 7:

[7] ***But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?***

The men of the New Testament too, whether John the Baptist or whoever it was, they knew the Word, not merely to the letter, but through the revelation of the Spirit. John said to those who outwardly pretended to be ready to walk the path, yet were inwardly full of rebellion: ***"Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"***

Only those who come to Jesus Christ can escape this judgment of wrath. All the wrath has come upon him and it can only be taken away in him. There is a Scripture

which states that the wrath remains upon those who do not accept the Lord. It is found in the Gospel of John, chapter 3, the last verse, John 3, verse 36:

[36] ***He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.***

So whoever does not wish to experience this wrath should allow themselves to be overwhelmed by the grace of God. They should experience the grace and love of God.

We continue reading in Romans chapter 2, Romans chapter 2, where Paul issues a very forceful warning, Romans chapter 2, we read verses 4 and 5:

[4] ***Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?***

[5] ***But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;***

[6] ***Who will render to every man according to his deeds.***

We see that whether in the Old or New Testament the same thing is described, the day on which the Lord will have to pour out his wrath.

In 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 we read, 1 Thessalonians chapter 1, here it is written in verse 10, 1 Thessalonians 1, verse 10:

[10] ***And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.***

And then in 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 9:

[9] ***For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.***

When Brother Branham taught that the church would be raptured beforehand, how right he was, praise be to the name of the Lord. For most teach that the church must go through the entire period of tribulation before being purified. The church, the bride of the Lamb, is washed in the blood of the Lamb. She hears the Word of God, receives it by faith, and is sanctified in the Word of truth. And from everything that does not agree with Scripture, she is washed by the washing of water by the Word, so that nothing remains but the pure Word of God. [Eph 5:26]

Let us just take a brief look at the book of Revelation, for there too are some scriptures that bear witness to this time, to what will then take place. Revelation chapter 6, verses 16 and 17, Revelation 6, verses 16 and 17:

[16] ***And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the***

Lamb:

[17] ***For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?***

Here we have the sixth seal before us, and everything that takes place during the great tribulation occurs here. The seven trumpet judgments, the seven bowls of wrath, all fall within the period of the sixth seal which we now have before us. The first four run parallel to the New Testament church. We have probably all gone through this thoroughly already. On God's side there were four living creatures, and on the Antichrist's side there were four horsemen. There were neither five nor six living creatures, nor five nor six horsemen, four living creatures before the throne on God's side, four horsemen who set out on the Antichrist's side, just as described here in the first, second, third and fourth seal. That was precisely the contrast to the Lord's church, the false, anti-Christian development right up until it became the Church of Rome, and then the Universal Church.

The fifth seal concerns only the Jews, the Jews who have already been murdered, and it moved me deeply. I have written about it in the book, and I hope that our two brothers from Poland are not angry with us, nor those from other countries. But when one hears on the news that 50,000 Jews were shot by the German SS near Kiev, it was officially reported on the radio just the day before yesterday. Then I ask, I do not ask where the bullets came from, I do not ask who was holding the pistol, I ask: who knew where these Jews lived, and who was it that handed them over, who brought them to the Warsaw ghetto?

You know that I am deeply distressed by this, because the whole world believes it was a German war, it was not a German war, it was a war for which the Roman Catholic Church will have to answer on Judgment Day. The entire leadership was Catholic, Hindenburg, Wilhelm II, and whoever else there were would never have waged such a war. Hitler, who had already distinguished himself as a 12-year-old altar boy in Braunau. And you all know of course how hatred of the Jews was fueled at that time, and Goebbels from the city of Rheydt, not far from here, a die-hard Jesuit. And anyone familiar with the subject knows full well that the entire SS was structured exactly along the lines of the Jesuit order, everything was organized just as in the Jesuit order in the strictest form, books have been written about it.

But here we see the Jews who were murdered simply because they were Jews. What did these children have to do with the war, their fathers, their mothers? What did the Jews have to do with the Second World War? They were exterminated because the Roman Catholic Church had been cursing them ever since the 3rd century. And in the end, it was the faithful men, devoted to the church, who had to sort it out, and they did it very well indeed. Six million Jews were after all a very large number who were murdered, and we grieve over this.

I am only bringing this up now because we see the fifth seal before us here. And these murdered Jews cry out here in Revelation 6 in the fifth seal: ***"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them***

that dwell on the earth?" [Rev 6:10] And somewhere else it says: ***"All the blood of those who have been slaughtered on the earth was found in the great city that reigns over the kings of the earth."*** [Rev 18:24] And that, too, is very clear, but let us return to this scripture here from Revelation 6, we have already read it.

Today the Lamb of God is here for our salvation. Then, when grace can no longer be found, wrath will break out against all those who have trampled God's grace underfoot. And we can only plead: "Be ye reconciled to God, whilst the time of grace still lasts." [2Cor 5:20] When the time of grace has come to an end, ***"Woe betide the inhabitants of the earth,"*** and so on. [Rev 8:13; Rev 12:12]

In Revelation 14 we read verse 10, Revelation 14, verse 10:

[10] ***The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.***

Yes, right up to the end of the millennium, but here we see three things in Revelation 14, three messages: The first, the everlasting gospel must be preached to all nations and tongues. [Rev 14:6] And then comes the announcement of the second angel in verse 8:

[8] ***And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.***

We know, of course, where great Babylon is, not the Babylon of Nimrod and Nebuchadnezzar, but the Babylon of our own time. And we see all nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication. [Rev 14:8; Rev 18:3] In Jeremiah 51 it is written, "***therefore the nations are mad.***" [Jer 51:7] And we can see today, whether Protestants, whether Muslims, whoever they may be, whether Catholics, all are spiritually befuddled. There is no clear vision, no clear thinking or decision-making, how are decisions made? Everything that is now being decided throughout Europe and subsequently worldwide is being decided in accordance with the will of the Church of Rome. And just as Communism previously set its sights on conquering the world, yet failed and came to nothing, so that, as it is written, Rome may conquer the world.

And I saw for myself during my visit to the bishop in Lusaka, Zambia, that Protestants no longer protest today. A Protestant from England took me in, and it is truly astonishing. There was a Protestant who said: "But God has used the Catholic Church to preserve the gospel for us." Then I said: "They have never preached the gospel." But you see, everything is clouded, there is no clear view, everyone is as if drunk. I have a letter on my desk, also from Zambia, and that is a country that is over 90% Protestant, and on the latest stamp is the founder of the Jesuit order.

Yes. Ignatius of Loyola, 500 years anniversary. A magnificent stamp in a Protestant country, this Catholic who has more people on his conscience since the Counter-Reformation than anyone else since that time, he is being celebrated in Protestant countries.

The whole world is lost, and they do not know or realize it.

How grateful we can be, without boasting, that God sent his servant and prophet to show us the scriptures, so that we might not fall into this error. For it is written that "***the hour of temptation will come upon the whole world***", and that is certain, so it is written in the Church Age message to Philadelphia. [Rev 3:10] And then it says in Revelation 13:8 that all will worship or pay homage to this outstanding man, "***all those whose names have not been written in the Lamb's Book of Life slain before the foundation of the world.***" We who believe that our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life give glory to one alone, our Lord and God, to whom alone it is due.

Now just from Revelation 14, verse 19. Revelation 14, verse 19:

[19] ***And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.***

[20] ***And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.***

The man has done the math, what is it, 296 kilometers. A great army will certainly gather, and many things will happen in the process.

Now from Revelation 15, here just verse 1 and then verse 7:

[1] ***And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.***

Do you see? This concerns the seven last plagues. And then in verse 7:

[7] ***And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.***

[8] ***And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.***

Perhaps just a brief look at chapter 16 as well, it simply forms part of this. Here we read verse 1 and verse 19:

[1] ***And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.***

And anyone who reads on will realize who will then be affected, namely all those who are bearing the mark at that time. [Rev 16:2] Now let us read verse 19 in Revelation

16:

[19] ***And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell.***

[19] ***And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.***

[20] ***And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.***

And so forth.

We have read these scriptures to make it abundantly clear to us all what the day of the Lord is. It is the day that will burn like an oven, the day of wrath, the divine reckoning with the unbelieving world that has blasphemed and mocked Him. [Mal 4:1] Judgments of wrath will then come upon this earth in a manner never before seen. Just before the dawn, before the beginning of this day, and I say it again, this day can only begin or come after the great apostasy has taken place.

I shall quickly read to you the passage from the New Testament, 1 Thessalonians. Here it is stated very clearly. Some people think that the day of the Lord has already come. 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 1:

[1] ***Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,***

[2] ***That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.***

Do you see? The apostles addressed this issue as that the day of the Lord is at hand.

[3] ***Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;***

[4] ***Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.***

You can see that those were difficult times for the popes too. There were once three popes, one fled, the others were exiled. The history of the papacy is a story in its own right, always in alliance with the devil. But be that as it may, everything has now changed. The most highly esteemed person on the whole earth, regardless of people's background, race, skin color, or religion.

I arrive at the airport in Zaire, huge pictures of Wojtyła, and everywhere across the whole world, no matter where you go, the whole world is looking that way. And the son of perdition, the adversary of God, who is showing himself that he is God, Holy

Father, described as infallible in what he proclaims and so on. And this man must step out into the open.

Up until now, everything has been somewhat hidden behind the purple curtain within the walls of the Vatican. Not any longer. Now everything is out in the open and coming to light. So the day of the Lord cannot come until the great apostasy takes place and the man of sin and lawlessness is revealed. [2The 2:3] And beloved, we can see that all this is already well advanced. The time is truly near. The Lord's return is just around the corner.

And what Brother Branham said in March 1962 applies so beautifully: **When East Berlin is returned and reunification takes place, then the Roman Empire will arise, just as it existed before.**

And that is precisely what is coming to pass, as is what he said in 1933, that Fascism, National Socialism and Communism would rise, and that the first two would be destroyed and lead to Communism. And then there is a brief pause, he falls silent for a moment and says: "**In the very end, everything will lead back to Rome**," and so forth.

We have said it here before, Fascism is long gone, as for National Socialism, the little that remains of it is nothing to worry about. As for Communism too, I can tell you what will remain, a small core will nevertheless remain, although it is being dismantled worldwide. And I tell you why, because Rome, specifically the Vatican, will be burned down by fire in a single hour, as stated three times in Revelation 18, burned in a single hour. [Rev 18:10, 17, 19] And Brother Branham saw in a vision that this would happen from Russia and that this bomb would be set there. And I tell you why, even today, at the moment all the leaders have the impression that things will be better for them, that they will have a seat at a negotiating table and that everything will be all right.

And this happens in accordance with Revelation 17, "***they give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled.***" [Rev 17:17]

I shall read it to you from Revelation 17, for it is written here, Revelation 17 from verse 15, a revealed Word, a glorious Word. Revelation 17 from verse 15, please listen carefully to every sentence:

[15] ***And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.***

Not just one nation, but peoples, tongues, and multitudes.

[16] ***And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore...***

Not yet, this is in the future, they shall hate the whore. When? When the time comes, for first they must work together in unison. I'll read it to you, here it is:

[16] ***They shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked.***

So the destruction will not come from heaven, but from those who must place their power at the disposal of this power. And they will then stir up hatred, because they have realized that they have been deceived. And then they will become angry, as it is written here:

[16] ***…and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.***

And listen to verse 17:

[17] ***For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast…***

Which beast? The beast from Revelation 13, the first one with the seven heads and ten horns, not the second, which appeared as a lamb, and only later spoke like the dragon. But this beast, which emerges from the sea of nations, "***they will give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.***"

[18] ***And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.***

There is really nothing more to be said on this. I must simply emphasize once more, we are living at the end of the day of salvation, at the end of the time of grace. The final call, the final message is being sounded. And as we have said here yesterday evening, the prophet Elijah had the task of freeing God's people from straying on both sides, of leading them back to God, so that they might serve the living God. [1Kin 18:21] That was the decision on Mount Carmel. Now when God says through the prophet Malachi, ***"I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes"*** [Mal 4:5], then we know full well that John the Baptist was here 2,000 years ago, not 20 years ago, 2,000 years ago.

And the wrath has not yet come. The day of the Lord has not yet arrived. The earth has not yet burned like an oven. You see, here too we need the Spirit of God and revelation. And anyone who reads Matthew 17 sincerely without interpreting it will leave verses 11 and 12 just as they stand. Verse 11 is in the future tense: ***"Elijah truly shall first come and restore all things."*** That is, thus saith the Lord Himself in His Word, ***"he shall first come."***

And with regard to John the Baptist, whose ministry was indeed already done and completed, the Lord said: ***"If you are willing to accept it, he has already come."*** [Mat 11:14; Mat 17:12] Both statements are 100% correct. One ministry was completed. The other ministry was still in the future at that time, and now falls at the end of the day of salvation, before the day of the Lord, that dreadful, terrible day, the day of wrath and judgment dawns.

So, at that time, God sent a prophet of Elijah's stature. He confirmed the Word and brought about a turning of hearts amongst the people. [Mal 4:6; Luk 1:17] All

who now belong to the people of God will pay attention to what God has done in this time and will ensure that they share in it.

I have also said this on several occasions. It would have been easy at any time to say: "Huh, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the prophets, we are also here after all." One could have said: "Oh John, you preach, we stay here." When men sent by God appear with a ministry connected to the plan of salvation, then we must take heed, then we must listen to them, for then it is not the work of a human being, then it is God who is at work through His instruments. God who appoints apostles, prophets, shepherds, teachers and evangelists in the church to equip the saints for the work of ministry. [1Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11-12] We are grateful to the Lord for the clarity of His Word. Has it been a blessing to you?

You see, these reflections on the Word are necessary to recognize the day in which we live, and also to understand what God has planned and how He is bringing His eternal counsel to fulfillment in our day. There will be two groups, one under the Antichrist and the other under Christ, the head of the church. And this decision truly applies everywhere. This is the hour when everyone must make their decision and take their stand where they wish to be forever. The decision we make now is one we must be able to live with and die by. We must be able to rest in this decision. May it be the divine decision, the decision for Jesus Christ, the decision for God and for God's Word, which we hold as the absolute truth, as the only guideline for our lives, for our faith and for our proclamation.

And so may God bless us and be with us, and we will thank him that he has fulfilled Scripture by sending us a man before that dreadful day dawns so that we might benefit from it all, indeed have a share in it. As I said yesterday evening, God uses prophets to reveal mysteries and then he has someone, it can be anyone, who can pass on these truths, revelations and disclosures bestowed by God. Just as we have received it, so we pass it on in the name of the Lord. And so let us all take it to heart and give thanks to the Lord who has looked upon us with favor and helped us on the day of salvation so that we may be prepared to escape all that is to come and to stand before him. [Luk 21:36]

Amen.

Let us bow our heads, close our eyes, but open our hearts. The hour in which we live is very grave. The time is short. No one knows how long the Lord will continue to call or how long the door will remain open. But Scripture also speaks of those who will come and knock when it is too late. [Mat 25:11-12; Lk 13:25] That is how it was with Noah. [Gen 7:16] The door was shut. Then it was too late. The door will be shut once more. Whoever is inside then will be inside. Whoever has remained outside will remain outside forever.

Today, if you hear his voice, his gospel, his call, his offer of grace, today God is speaking to your hearts. Today the Lord calls out to all: "***Come unto me, all ye***

that labor and are heavy laden. I will give you rest for your souls." [Mat 11:28]

He is calling today. He wants to save, deliver, heal, and bless. He is present here today.

In this place, we do not interpret parables. In this place, we preach the whole counsel of God, the Old and New Testament in divine harmony to show what God has planned, what he has promised and proclaimed, and what is happening now. In every respect, politically, religiously, in every sphere, we realize that these are the end times and that the Lord's return is imminent.

Whilst we keep our heads bowed and our eyes closed, and as we remain in silent prayer before God, I would like to ask whether there are any here who have not yet had an experience with God, who do not yet have the assurance that their sins have been forgiven, their guilt covered, and that they have become children of God. Whilst your heads are bowed and your eyes are closed, would you have the courage to raise your hand? We would like to pray for you. Is there anyone here? Is there anyone else? God bless you. Is there anyone else who feels that God is calling, that he wants to save, deliver, help, heal, and bless? God sees that hand. The Lord is present. He is the same.

Let us now pray in faith.

Lord our God, you have seen all these hands. You know whether the distress is in the soul, in the spirit, or in the body. You know each and every one of us. You know where we live. You know us by name, O Lord. Our whole life lies open before you like an open book. Beloved Lord, now, at the end of the time of grace, at the end of the day of salvation, we may pass on your final call, proclaiming to the whole world: ***"Be ye reconciled to God."*** [2Cor 5:20] Beloved Lord, we pray for all those who today consecrate their lives to God, who today come to you, who today put an end to their old life and receive a new one from you. Beloved Lord, come to meet them.

May they hear your gentle voice: ***"I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine."*** [Isa 43:1] May they hear and take it to heart: ***"Thy sins are forgiven."*** [Mat 9:2; Mar 2:5; Luk 7:48]

O faithful God, speak to us all. Grant us a new revival, a new devotion, a new zeal, a new consecration, O Lord. Take from us all that is sluggish, all that is weary. Take from us, Lord, everything that may hold us back. Lord, that we may press on after you, O God, to reach the goal, for only the end will be crowned. O God, lift up thy countenance upon us all. Give to each one what they need. We believe that you are present. We believe that you bestow and that even today we may receive grace upon grace from your fullness.

We also thank you, faithful Lord, for having revealed the prophetic word to us in such a marvelous way through the ministry of Brother Branham and through the Holy Spirit. Faithful God, I lack the words to express and set out everything as

it exists and unfolds before my spiritual eye. Lord, you have led us into the Holy of Holies, spoken to us, opened the Ark of the Covenant, proclaimed your Word, revealed what was hidden, and entrusted what was kept secret to your people.

Beloved Lord, bless us, bless all who have come to you today. Save, forgive, and heal. We believe it, that you have done it. And we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for it. In Jesus' holy name. Hallelujah. Amen.