

[Note by James W. Bruggeman: This essay is from the June 1961 issue of Destiny magazine and is reprinted by permission of Destiny Publishers, PO Box 177, Merrimac, MA 01860.]

## ***Timing Essential to Understanding***

**BY HOWARD B. RAND**

Did the angel misinform Daniel when he expressed the intention to reveal a Divine timetable of events to this prophet? Was this man of God being deceived when he was told that "the wise shall understand"? Turning to the New Testament, was Paul mistaken when he specifically indicated that certain ones were not in darkness so that the Day of the Lord would overtake them as a thief? Daniel was informed that understanding would be given only to the wise (Dan. 12; 10) and Paul's words (I Thess. 5: 1-5) denote that, apart from the relatively few spirit-filled men and women, the great majority would be surprised by the coming of the Day of the Lord in the same way that a thief comes, unheralded and unannounced, to startle his prey in the night. If no one is to have information regarding a Divine timetable, there could be no such distinction as the Angel and Paul declared there would be between a selected few and the remaining worldly ones, for the timing is the essential factor insofar as knowing and understanding when coming happenings are to take place.

The Scriptures are very clear that there is a Divine timetable and that the wise, those who are alert and watchful, will possess sufficient information so that they will be set apart from the overwhelming majority who will be completely unaware of the timing of events and the approach of that Great Day to which Paul referred.

In his generation Noah knew the Divine timetable, and, 120 years before the Deluge occurred, he was in possession of information that marked the very year of the coming of that great disaster. It was not only advisable for Noah to know; *it was imperative*, for only by knowing specifically when the world would be overwhelmed by catastrophe could he make the kind of preparations which were necessary.

Jeremiah the Prophet knew the Divine timetable that marked the length of the Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom of Judah. The Prophet Daniel, in studying the writings of Jeremiah, informs us:

"I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." (Dan. 9: 2.)

The Divine timetable that had been made plain to Jeremiah was also understood by Daniel. He did not despise the information gained by searching Jeremiah's records but earnestly prayed for further enlightenment. The result was that the Angel Gabriel came to Daniel to give him skill and understanding regarding *the appointed time* when the Messiah would come. This remarkable timing, revealed to Daniel in the 9th chapter of his book, beginning with the 24th verse, was absolutely confirmed by the coming of Jesus Christ, by His ministry, by His death and by His resurrection.

There were those who were looking for the coming of the Messiah because they were familiar with this remarkable revelation given to

Daniel. Luke informs us that Simeon, a just and devout man, knew he would not see death before he saw the Lord's Christ. Anna, a prophetess, serving the Lord with fastings and prayer, was also aware and bore witness to the truth of Simeon's testimony regarding the Son who had been born to Mary.

The last book of the Bible is a Divine revelation of the remarkable timing of events throughout the Christian Dispensation, culminating in the passing of the present order and the ushering in of the new age to follow. This is a vitally important part of the Scriptures which is woefully neglected by church leaders and by multitudes of Christians. If what is given to us in this Revelation of Jesus Christ, as recorded by the Apostle John, were studied as carefully as Daniel examined the writings of Jeremiah, the result would be a thorough understanding of the meaning of the times and seasons in which we live, as well as the timing of coming events.

Nevertheless, there are those who persist in the notion that a knowledge of Biblical chronology is of no value to Christians. The following news report of statements made by Evangelist Billy Graham in the Jacksonville Coliseum, Florida, goes even further and indicates the blindness on the part of Christian leaders today in regard to the progressively unfolding revelation that the Lord is bringing to the attention of the watchers as the zero hour of the age draws near:

" 'Date-setters' for the end of the world are operating without Biblical sanction," says Evangelist Billy Graham.

"Mr. Graham told an audience of 16,500 yesterday that 'the end of the world will come — as the Bible says — without warning and "like a thief in the night."'

"He counselled, "You must be packed and ready to go' without any timetable for guidance."

In the first place, Billy Graham is completely out of step with Scriptural facts when he infers, as this newspaper report states, that the Bible predicts the end of the world. It predicts no such thing, but it does state that the present *cosmos*, that is, "world order" or "age," will end.

Furthermore, nowhere in the Bible is a statement made that "the end of the world is coming like a thief in the night." Careless misquotations from the Scriptures by those who purport to stress "what the Bible says" are inexcusable. The Apostle Paul states:

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." (I Thess. 5: 1-5.)

What Paul said was that the coming of the Day of the Lord will be without prior warning and elsewhere we are informed that the sudden appearing of the Sign of the Son of man in heaven will announce His presence, the unheralded aspect of this being "like a thief." This is not the end of the world, for the Bible declares that the earth endureth forever.

Those who insist that there is no Divine timetable, and that it is impossible to possess knowledge concerning the timing of events, must speak for themselves alone, for to that extent they are publicly announcing they are not numbered among the wise who, the Angel informed Daniel, would understand. Moreover, they are disqualifying themselves from association with the small group whom Paul stated would have the necessary information so that the Day of the Lord would not overtake them "as a thief." Instead,

they declare themselves to be "in darkness" and "of the night."

If, as Billy Graham asserts, "date-setters," as he calls them, are "operating without Biblical sanction," what of the instructions already referred to in the counsel the Angel gave to Daniel regarding events to come? What of the admonition to Daniel, and those who study the writings of Daniel, in regard to the timing of the *Abomination That Maketh Desolate*, to number the days, at the end of one of which those who have waited will be blessed? Let us quote:

"And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." (Dan. 12: 11-12.)

Having located the initial dates from which to count, are we, according to Graham, violating Scriptural injunctions if we point out the terminal dates as instructed by the Angel? Was the Angel at fault in giving us information we could use in this way? If one follows the Angel's instructions, he is definitely dealing with chronological time periods.

The trouble with evangelists and theologians today is that, having for so many years followed the futurist school of prophetic interpretation, which has proved to be so wrong again and again, they are now fearful of any connection with Biblical timing just at the time when they should become alert and watchful as event signs signal the accuracy of the Divine timetable. Because they are not numbered among the wise who will understand, they seem to assume no one else can possibly possess information they do not have, even though the Angel told Daniel there would be those who would most assuredly possess such prior knowledge.

Of one thing we can be certain: those who repudiate all knowledge of a Divine timetable may not include themselves among those of whom Amos was speaking when he said:

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3: 7.)

The greatest of all secrets is involved in the revelation of the "mystery of God" which, we are told, will be finished when the Seventh Angel, that is, the Angel of the Third Woe, is about to sound (Rev. 10: 7).

In every generation God has His watchmen who witness as to timing. Noah was the only one in his time, the prophets stood out in their day as possessing such knowledge and today the Lord is releasing marvelous information to the alert and watchful in regard to the Divine timetable as event signs confirm its accuracy. This is enabling the watchmen, as a complement to the prophets' assertion, "Thus saith the Lord," to proclaim, "This is that spoken of by the prophets."