THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Questions and Answers on Prophecy by Dr. Louis T. Talbot and Dr. Samuel H. Sutherland as given over THE BIBLE INSTITUTE HOUR
Dr. Talbot, we have received so many questions relating to what is going to take place in the future that we are going to confine ourselves to these for a few mornings. And since you are considered an expert on prophecy, I am going to ask you the questions.

... Well, Dr. Sutherland, I have studied these matters for nearly forty years, but I certainly do not regard myself as an expert. One can spend his lifetime on the prophetic Scriptures and still have a great deal to learn.

**QUESTION No. 1** — There seems to be a very great interest in prophecy right now and I suppose that is largely due to the development of the earth-made moons and all the strange and fantastic happenings of our times. However, I am amazed at the little knowledge there is of what the Scriptures teach. For instance, here is this question from a listener:

**Doesn’t Christ’s Coming mean His coming for the Christian at the time of death?**

**ANSWER** — Well, Dr. Sutherland, we are living in a different time from what it was when we were young men in the ministry. Of course, you are younger than I, but when I was just starting in the ministry, the knowledge of the prophetic Scriptures was pretty general. Everybody was interested in the coming of Christ and the signs of the times. By everybody I mean the majority of evangelical Christians. Now in the first and second and third generations there is an appalling ignorance of what seems to us the basic teachings of the Word of God in regard to the future. This question you have read is a good illustration of that.

Nowhere in Scripture is death ever referred to as “coming for us.” In fact, death is called our enemy and it is not a welcome visitor, even when we are the Lord’s and are ready to go to be with Christ. When the Christian dies, he goes to be with Christ. His spirit goes to be with the Lord, and his body is laid in the grave until the resurrection when spirit and body are again reunited.

The coming of Christ is quite another matter. The generation
of believers who are living when Christ comes will never undergo death. Their bodies will be translated in the twinkling of an eye.

Christ's second return will be just as real, just as visible, just as personal, as was His first coming. Only this second time He will not come as a Babe in a manger, in humiliation, in order to take upon Himself a body that He might die on the cross for us. This time He will come in the glory that He had with the Father before the world was, in that resurrection body in which He ascended.

You remember that at His ascension while the disciples "looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel?" (evidently they were angels) "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Now Luke wrote this in Acts and he was one of the eye-witnesses and he makes it plain that His coming back will be just as visible, just as real, just as personal, as His going away was. John 14:3, which is so often read at funerals, has no reference whatever to death; Jesus said to His disciples just before He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." When death comes, it brings sorrow; but when Jesus comes, our mourning will be turned into joy.

QUESTION No. 2 — Thank you, Dr. Talbot. That is certainly plain enough. There are dozens of other Scriptures that could be quoted along that line but we must get to the next question. Someone writes:

"I have been told that the Bible teaches three appearances of Christ. This puzzles me for I thought there were only the first and second comings. Please explain."

ANSWER — Well, I am not surprised that people are sometimes confused about this matter. Generally we do just speak of two appearances and that is all there are — only the second coming is divided into two parts. Of course the first coming refers to Christ's incarnation, His birth, His life on earth, His death, His resurrection and His ascension. But at Christ's second coming there will first be the rapture and then the revelation; the first is Christ's coming FOR His church; the second His coming WITH the church to set up His kingdom.

QUESTION No. 3 — Now this just leads us right into the next question, Dr. Talbot. A listener asks:

"Recently I saw a church letterhead containing this statement of their creed: 'We believe in the blood, the book, and the blessed hope.' Now I suppose the blood refers to the crucifixion, and no doubt the book is the Bible, but what is the blessed hope? Is that the hope of salvation?

ANSWER — Well, we get that expression from Paul's words in Titus 2:13: "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." As the word blessed means "happy," this event should be looked upon as the most joyous thing that can ever occur. It was the great incentive to the early church. Paul in writing to the Thessalonians said, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven." After describing the details of this blessed hope in I Thess. 4:13-18, Paul also states: "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." It was this hope that comforted the early Christians and carried them through the terrible trials and persecutions and martyrdoms they endured. It is of great concern to me that the imminent, personal, visible return of Christ is not such a source of comfort to many Christians today, and that some of the Bible teachers who should know better are confusing this teaching which was so clear to the early church and so clearly taught by Paul and the other writers of the New Testament.

The blessed hope is the incentive to faithful, untrudging labor for Christ. Nothing will so inspire us to get the task finished as the prospect of His near return. Nothing will so spur us on to holy living. John in his first Epistle wrote: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear that we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth Himself even as He is pure." What greater thrill than to know that any moment we may see face to face our blessed Lord "whom having not yet seen, we love"? It is a blessed hope indeed.

QUESTION No. 4 — I have heard it stated, Dr. Talbot, that we should live as if Christ would be here today, and work as if He would not be here for a thousand years. Well, you have explained the meaning of the "blessed hope." Here is a similar question:

"Just what does rapture mean and where does the word come from? I cannot find it in the Bible."

ANSWER — The reason this listener cannot find the word "rapture" in our translations of the Bible is simply because it is not
there. It is taken from the Latin root, *rapto*, which you will find in the Latin Vulgate, the translation St. Jerome made from the Greek, upon which the Catholic Douay-Rheims Version is based. The very same word appears in I Thessalonians 4:17 and is translated in our Authorized Version, “caught up.” Like the word *Trinity*, which does not occur in the Bible either, *rapture* has been adopted by Christians to describe the sudden, visible, second return of Christ to the earth. Originally the word in Middle English had within it the meaning of *transportation*. We still speak of a *rapture* as being carried away with joy. However, it could be just as correctly translated “The carrying away,” “The catching up,” “The snatching away” of the church. Rapture is a convenient and graphic term to designate the blessed hope.

**QUESTION No. 5** — While we are on the subject of theological terms, please give us the word used to describe the second part of the Lord’s Second Coming. Several people have asked about this.

**ANSWER** — That event is called the *revelation*, and it is based upon I Thess. 1:7: “And to you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels” and many other similar Scriptures. It is much easier to locate than the word *rapture*. However, it is not the terms that are important, but the truth and the events.

**QUESTION No. 6** — All right, Dr. Talbot, now that we have the names straight, let us go on to some of the details. Let us begin with this question:

“Is there any way we can know the exact date of Christ’s return?”

**ANSWER** — That question is asked very frequently. I am very glad that we can give a clear and definite answer on this subject which has caused much confusion among God’s people. The Lord foresaw this and stated unequivocally in Matthew 24:36: “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of Heaven but my Father only.” This is one of God’s secrets into which we have no right to pry. Various cults have set dates for the Lord’s return and brought confusion and disappointment and heartbreak to the children of God, and embarrassment and disgrace to themselves. It is this very uncertainty that keeps us watching and waiting and working.

**QUESTION No. 7** — That is very true, Dr. Talbot. I think of the words in Mark 13:35-36: “Watch ye therefore for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, of in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.” It seems after every great world event, such as the late world war, a new crop of date-setters come along to mix up people and bring the true teaching of the Lord’s coming into disrepute.

Here is another question which shows how puzzled people are over these things:

“If we cannot tell when the Lord will return, then what is meant by the signs of His coming?”

**ANSWER** — That is a very good question, Dr. Sutherland, and shows real thinking on the part of the questioner. In the first place, let me say that what are called by many teachers *fig tree signs* relate to the second part of the Lord’s Second Coming, to the revelation, rather than to the rapture. They are called fig tree signs because of the words of Christ in Matthew 24:31-33: “Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When his branch is yet tender, and puttheth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.” Then there are also other signs referred to in Matthew 16:2-3: “Jesus answered and said unto them, When it is evening ye say, It will be fair weather; for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day; for the sky is red and lowering. O, ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?”

That there have been and will be signs of the prophetic events related in the Word of God there can be no doubt. Matthew 24 and the book of Daniel and many other Scriptures make this clear. They are the shadows of the events of the last days. Some of them are the apostasy of the churches, the return of Israel to her land, the development of the national federations, the rise of Russia, etc. But I repeat they are only shadows of the full-fledged political and religious movements which will develop after the Lord comes to take His church unto Himself. I say these things are signs of the revelation not the rapture but since only seven years are to elapse between these two events, what is a sign of one indirectly is a sign of the other. I think that is why our Lord says in Luke 21:28: “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” And the last prayer in the Bible—Rev. 22:20 is “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

**QUESTION 8** — So we are not wrong in believing and hoping with all of our hearts that many of the events that we have seen with our own eyes, such as the return of the Jews to Palestine—
even though still in unbelief—are signs pointing to the near return of Christ? What a thrill that brings to every Christian heart! It makes us want to be busier than ever about the Father's business. Here is a question that fits right in here:

"Should we want the Lord to return when there are so many unsaved people in the world?"

**Answer** — Yes, we should. Remember that His coming will end sin, and Satan's rule, and usher in a reign of righteousness. When we read our headlines and see the terrible sin that is rampant in the world today, we can only pray it may soon end. I was shocked beyond words at the crime report for 1957 which stated among other dreadful things that 50% of all crime was committed by young people under 18 years of age. Our civilization is heading for destruction and only the coming of the Lord is going to save it. We must win as many souls for Christ as possible and keep looking up for His soon return.

**Question No. 9** — Here is a little harder question, Dr. Talbot:

"So often you refer to a period of seven years. Is this what is known as the seventieth week of Daniel?"

**Answer** — Yes, this is the seventieth week of Daniel, the last seven years of the 70 weeks of seven years each, described in Daniel 9:20-27. Please turn to the passage. We will not take the time to read it but you will note 70 weeks are mentioned. These are not weeks of days, but weeks of years—seven years to a week. The word in the original Hebrew in which the Old Testament was written was "seven sevens." Seventy seven makes 490 years—the time of God's dealing with Israel from the close of the Babylonian captivity unto the time when Christ comes to set up His kingdom. The seventieth week is the only week not fulfilled as yet. God's prophetic clock so far as the Jews were concerned stopped when Christ was crucified. Sixty nine sevens of years had been ticked off. But it stopped, like an electric clock from which the cord has been pulled. After the crucifixion of Christ, Daniel's people and city were set aside—not cast off—but set aside that the "times of the Gentiles" might be completed. But the clock will start ticking again at the rapture for then will God begin to deal with Israel as a nation and the time of Jacob's trouble, the great tribulation will begin on the earth.

It will not be hard to understand the interval between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel if you bear in mind that God never reckons time with the Jews when He is not dealing with them as a nation. The pendulum will start swinging again when God takes up Israel as a nation once more.

**Question No. 10** — Then the next question will apply here, Dr. Talbot:

"Is it true that the seventy weeks of Daniel have nothing to do with the Gentiles?"

**Answer** — Quite true. Note the words in Daniel 9:24: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgressions and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most Holy." Daniel's people and city were the Jews and Jerusalem and it is upon them the seventy weeks are determined or have to do.

**Question No. 11** — Here is an old, old question, Dr. Talbot, but one we are constantly receiving:

"Who are the 144,000 of Revelation 7?"

I believe that every cult in the country at one time or another has claimed these to be their followers.

**Answer** — Yes, they have, but only until their membership exceeded that number. However, I note that some of them now call their top-notch, well-paid leaders the 144,000, while the other cult members are designated in some other way. These interpretations indicate how men will resort to fancy and fable when dealing with the Word of God. If people would only accord to the Bible the fair treatment they do to other books, and believe that it means literally what it says (unless it is explained as figurative language) they would stay out of trouble and confusion. There would not be all of these disagreements. The answer to this question can be found in the 7th chapter of Revelation. There you will see at a glance that the 144,000 are Jews. The tribes are definitely named, 12,000 from each tribe. I believe these are the Jews who during the tribulation will be converted and will become missionaries and doubtless martyrs for the faith. They will then proclaim the Gospel which they failed to proclaim from the time of the calling of Abraham to the present time. They will one day acknowledge Christ as their Messiah and Saviour.

**Question No. 12** — It is thrilling to realize that all of God's purposes will be fulfilled in regard to Israel and that they will
finally become a missionary nation. Now here is a very sincere question which deserves a thoughtful answer, Dr. Talbot:

"Recently I heard a denominational youth leader urging us as young people to go out and bring in the kingdom. How can I do that? I want to do my part. He said we could soon convert the world if each one did his part."

**Answer** — To me that is a very moving question and I am sure it is in the minds of many young people who hear inspiring, but unscriptural, messages along this line. Let me say to this young person that God never intended we should go out and "bring in the kingdom." This is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ who will personally bring the kingdom with Him when He comes again. You can't have a kingdom without a King and our King is still in Heaven. However, we can all be witnesses for Christ, and by our life and words try to win others to Him. Then they too will be ready for the Lord when He comes. I would advise this young person to go to a Bible School and get a good training in the Word of God as the best preparation for winning souls. Christ is calling out a people for His name from all nations of the earth. But the world will never be converted.

**Question No. 13** — It is very important to understand what God expects of us as witnesses and not to waste our lives in social reform. Another listener is concerned about what will happen to Christians when Christ comes. She asks:

"Tell me what will happen to believers at the judgment seat of Christ."

**Answer** — This is a question that ought to interest every Christian. First of all, our works, as believers, from the first day on to the moment of our resurrection at Christ's return, will pass before the Lord in review. Here are the solemn words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." To suffer loss does not mean to lose our souls, but to forfeit our rewards. If we stand condemned by our works, then the privilege and joy of serving the Lord in some exalted capacity throughout eternity will be forfeited. This judgment is to determine our place and position in the coming glory. Many a person who has been very obscure in this world will receive a wonderful reward for what he has done for Christ. On the other hand, there will be those who in the day of judgment at the judgment seat of Christ will have the sorrow of seeing what they thought valuable all burned up. All that revolved around self-glory, self-importance, self-aggrandizement will be consumed as wood, hay and stubble. But all that was for God's glory will abide as gold, silver and precious stones.

This fire of judgment is related to our works in a twofold way. First of all, it will try the quality of our service. Ephesians 6:7 reveals what it is that gives quality to our service, "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" and Colossians 3:23: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men." The expression "as to the Lord" is what will produce the gold, the silver and the precious stones at the judgment seat. The quality of our work depends too upon the power by which they were performed. Much of what we call "Christian work" is in the flesh. The power driving us is not of the Holy Spirit. Christ, Paul reminds us, is the power of God. He should be the center and circumference of our service.

Then too the idea of quantity is also associated with our works. You remember the parable of the pounds where the Lord makes it clear that He expects us to use our talents to full advantage. There are too many lazy Christians who never put themselves out for God. They think it does not matter. But it does and this will be very clear when they reach the judgment seat of Christ. The Lord will not be pleased with gifts that were wrapped up in a napkin, and from which he received no benefit. The Lord has invested a great deal in us and it is only just that He should have a fair return. Our lives, our time, are not our own. We are bought with a price and we are to glorify God in our spirit and our body which are God's. Salvation is wholly of grace; reward is not.

One of the most wonderful things about the judgment seat of Christ will be its perfect justice. There the Lord, not man, will be the judge, and He will reward His children as they deserve. He will try the motives of every heart. Let us therefore let the Lord search our hearts NOW that we may be sure that it is love for Christ, and His Glory, that is back of all our service for Him.

**Question No. 15** — That is very searching indeed, Dr. Talbot. And now here is another question that has to do with the details of the last days. This listener asks:

"I have been told that at the end times there will be four great confederacies. Please tell me what these are."
No. 16 — Here is a question, Dr. Talbot, that is asked over and over again:

“What is the battle of Armageddon, and when and where will it be fought?”

I notice that even in novels and magazine articles “Armageddon” is referred to and everybody seems to have a different idea of what it is. I guess the consensus is that it is the last great battle ever to be fought on earth. Is that right?

Answer — The first one will be the confederacy of the West or the revived Roman Empire, headed by the Antichrist; the second, Russia, controlling the confederacy of the North; the third, the confederacy of the East, called the “sun-rising kingdom”; and fourth, the countries south of Palestine which will form the confederacy of the South. As the tribulation period draws to a close, the Antichrist, ruling over the Western confederacy, will subdue the other three. Many Scriptures make reference to these nations and confederacies, especially Ezekiel 38 and 39, Daniel and Revelation.

Question No. 17 — Whenever we have a great war in any part of the world it is called “Armageddon.” But I believe with you, Dr. Talbot, that it is a definite battle to be fought in Palestine in the future. All these other wars will be slight in comparison to that great Armageddon. Now here is a question that is of special interest to us now:

“I have just read Ezekiel 38:1, 2 in the American Standard Version, and I wonder if those names can be identified with any definite places in the world today.”

Answer — We will read these verses from the Revised Version, Ezek. 38:1, 2: “And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him . . . .” Yes, I certainly do believe that we can identify Meshech with Moscow. It was once called “Mosoch” as well. Tubal was once Thobol, then Tobolsk. It is significant that Leningrad, formerly St. Petersburg, is no longer the capital of Russia. Within recent years it was changed to Moscow. This is quite startling for as you know no name has ever been so revered in the U.S.S.R. more than that of Lenin. Gog is to rule over these cities of Russia and so we may be sure that the ruler of Magog or Russia will be a contemporary of the Antichrist. If we go on to the 3rd verse of this chapter we will note that the Lord says He is against Gog. Well, Gog has been against God for centuries. What is taking place in Russia today in its attempt to rule God out of the universe is only a shadow of what will take place later on. Communism has ever been against God. One of the most terrible anti-God pronouncements came out of Russia some years ago in the form of a manifesto which read: “We hate religion and God. If God Himself were to appear before us, we should refuse to worship Him. But we should consider Him equal with us.” It’s a terrible thing, my friend, to be against God; but it is a far more dangerous thing for God to be against you. And when He says He is against Gog, there is not any question about who is going to win in the end, is there? We read of our Lord Jesus Christ in Philippians 2:9-11: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name; That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, or things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Communism may claim that they have ruled God out of the world but they will deal with Him one day, and that will mean the end of Communism.

Question No. 18 — Here is another very sobering question, Dr. Talbot:

“What are we to expect at the close of the Times of the Gentiles? What will the conditions be? How can we know that in general we have arrived at those times?”

Answer — Let us look at Luke 21 again, and read verses 24 to 28: “And thy shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive unto all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for: the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they
see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

These verses need little explanation. They are plain and forceful. Here the Lord definitely states that, at the close of the times of the Gentiles, there will be distress of nations and great perplexity. Men's hearts are to fail them for fear. There are to be signs in the heavens. How terribly significant is this passage in the light of the astounding conditions in the world today! Let me ask you, has there ever been a time in all the world's history when these words of the Lord Jesus so aptly describe as they do present day conditions? Surely the distress of nations and the anguish of humanity are unprecedented. Since the atomic age was ushered in by the splitting of the atom, such fear has gripped the world that scientists who used to scoff at the prophetic Scriptures now admit that the Bible-believer has something in the way of insight into the future that they have never known. Those who do not believe in many cases have given themselves over to the deepest gloom which has actually led to the suicide of some top research men. We dare not turn away from this unmistakable sign—the distress of nations, as well as all of these others.

**Question No. 19** — Here is another question that we receive regularly:

"What is meant by the strange expression in Matt. 24:15—'the abomination of desolation'? Does it mean something definite or does it just refer to idolatry?"

**Answer** — Well, it certainly is a strange expression but it means something very definite to a Jew. Matthew of course is quoting Daniel who made reference to this image to be set up in the temple during the tribulation period. It is described as the image of the beast, which he will set up "in the holy place" during the 70th week of Daniel. It will be an idol, certainly, but an image of himself. It is the common practice of dictators to set up images of themselves. Nebuchadnezzar did it, Mussolini did it; and the last great ruler will do it. He will require the entire world to worship him. You know what that will mean to Jews who hate idolatry. This I believe will be the thing that will make it clear to Israel that the Antichrist is the false Messiah, and that is when they will turn from him, and he in turn will persecute Israel. This will be the beginning of the great tribulation which will be the most terrible time of trouble the world has ever known. As the Word of God so graphically states if this period were not shortened no flesh would be saved on earth. But it will be shortened to three and one-half years. But what a period in the world's history!

**Question No. 20** — Let us turn to a happier picture, Dr. Talbot. A listener asks:

"What will the millennial kingdom be like? Will it be quite different from the earth today?"

I am sure that this will present a much more pleasant picture than that of the tribulation days which precede the return of Christ to set up His kingdom.

**Answer** — Well, Dr. Sutherland, if we wanted to present a picture of the millennial kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we would have to read a large portion of the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Daniel and the Psalms and we haven't the time on this program for that. We will mention but five things that will characterize that 1,000 years of Christ's personal reign. I assure you it will be quite different from the world today. Can you imagine a world in which Christ is Lord and King and every knee must bow to Him and acknowledge Him as Lord and Ruler of the universe? Now men are engaged in denying His name, even blaspheming that holy name, and disobeying His commands and living their lives without regard to Him. Then He will rule with a rod of iron and no disobedience will be permitted. So the first thing we note about the millennium is that Christ will rule.

*The second thing* is that sin will be put down. We read in the Word that nothing that can hurt or destroy will be allowed. *The third thing* is that Jerusalem will be the capital city and that all the nations will bring tribute to it. *A fourth characteristic* is that redeemed Israel under the personal supervision of Christ will be the witnesses they were originally called to be to the Gentile nations. And *five*, it will be a time of joy and happiness with the curse removed from the land and the deserts blossoming as the rose and even the animal kingdom freed from ferocity.

Best of all the glory of God will fill the earth and where sin has abounded His grace will much more abound. It is a period to look forward to. If you are a saved Gentile, you will, as part of the Bride of Christ, be reigning with Him in Heaven; if you are a saved Hebrew, you will be part of His kingdom on earth. But in any case you will be His and associated with Him who will fill not only the earth with His righteousness and wisdom and glory but also your vision.

**Question No. 21** — Some of the details about the millennium are not entirely clear to us but here is an intriguing question:
“Is there any Scripture to indicate that people will be born during the Millennium?”

**Answer** — Well, there is Isaiah 65:20 which certainly refers to the millennial age and this is what it says: “there shall be no more infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” Death and sin will take place during the millennium according to this Scripture, and a great lengthening of life, for the century-old person will only be considered a child. It is generally believed by premillennialists that descendants of those who enter the millennium saved persons will not necessarily be saved. They too must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. We cannot be dogmatic about these particulars but we know that there has always been one way of salvation from eternity to eternity and that is through the Lamb of God, our Saviour, and the true Messiah of the Jewish nation.

**Question No. 22** — And now, Dr. Talbot, we come to another one of those questions which is asked very frequently:

> “Who are the TWO witnesses mentioned in Revelation 11:3-12? They prophesy for three and one-half years; then are killed; and then are resurrected. They seem to be important witnesses in the last days.”

**Answer** — Well, Dr. Sutherland, this is one of those questions about which you cannot be absolutely certain because the Bible does not definitely name them. There are certain reasons why many believe that one of these witnesses is Elijah. For one thing, he was translated and did not see death. Then too the reference to the powers of these two witnesses to control the elements is similar to the powers that were given Elijah. Moses and Elijah appeared on the Mt. of Transfiguration—each representing different dispensations of God’s dealings with men. So some scholars believe that the two were Moses and Elijah. Others think one of the witnesses may have been Enoch because he did not see death for God translated him. As I say, I do not know. I can only guess as you can. Some day we shall know. At least their preaching takes place in the second half of the tribulation period and is used of God in that terrible time. Let us not lose the significance of their witness in speculation about their identity.

**Question No. 23** — Another listener asks:

> “Do you believe that the tribulation gives the unsaved a second chance?”

**Answer** — I certainly do not. Read II Thess. 1:9. Those who are living at the time of Christ’s Second Coming—who are not His—“shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.” Do not live in any such fool’s paradise as that, and do not encourage anyone else to do so.

**Question No. 24** — It seems to me that people are becoming more and more interested in the place that Israel is to have in the last days. Here is a question along that line:

> “Will the throne of David be restored literally upon the earth?”

**Answer** — It certainly will. Nothing is clearer than that the throne of David will be re-established literally. In Isaiah we read of Christ: “Of the increase of this government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” Isaiah 9:7. The throne of David will be just as literal as is the throne of Queen Elizabeth in England or as were the thrones of Julius Caesar, Kaiser Wilhelm, the Czars of Russia or the Pharaohs of Egypt. Read Jer. 23:5-8 and Luke 1:31-33 and many other passages of the Scriptures, which make this clear.

**Question No. 26** — Someone has facetiously omitted the comma from I Thessalonians 4:13, making it read, “But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren,” and sometimes I think that is what Paul meant! We certainly have “ignorant brethren” among so-called teachers of the Word of God. I fear many of them are willfully ignorant of the things that have to do with the end times. If the teachers are ignorant, certainly the great body of believers in the churches and schools are going to be ignorant too. The simple, direct teaching of God’s Word about the Second Coming is getting lost in a maze of speculations and as a result young people are confused, as they have not been in the preceding two decades. At the Bible Institute, under God, we are endeavoring to set them straight on these matters. For instance, there is the matter of the pre-tribulation rapture of the church. We have referred to it in this series but we have by no means covered the subject. Here is a question along that line:

> “Upon what Scripture do you base the teaching of the rapture of the church?”

**Answer** — It is recognized by most Bible scholars that I Thessalonians 4:13-18 is the primary passage of the Word of God on the
subject of the rapture of the Church. Only those who spiritualize
the words into no meaning at all do not take literally such expres­
sions as, "the Lord Himself shall descend"; "the dead in Christ
shall rise first"; "we which are alive, and remain", "in a moment,
in the twinkling of an eye"; "caught up together," etc. If words
mean anything at all, they mean what they say, and that Christ
will come bodily, personally, visibly, to catch up His church to be
with Him forever.

QUESTION No. 27 — Now, Dr. Talbot, we are going to get into a
controversial area, and these questions have to do with the Great
Tribulation, that period of seven years, Daniel's seventieth week,
about which there seems to be so much confusion today. Here is a
thoughtful question:

"I heard someone say from the pulpit that since God did not
spare the church of the second and third centuries from the
terrible persecutions of pagan Rome, and the cruel inquisi­
tion of papal Rome in the Dark Ages, why should He spare
the church in the last days the persecutions mentioned in the
book of Revelation?"

ANSWER — That is a good question indeed, Dr. Sutherland. How­
ever, it is not difficult to answer when one realizes that the Great
Tribulation will be different from any other time of persecution
that ever took place on this earth. In the first place, it will be the
most severe. You may think that the persecutions endured by the
early Christians could not be worse but they can for we read
in Matthew 24:22: "And except those days had been shortened, no
flesh would have been saved: for the elect's sake those days shall
be shortened."

In the second place, the Tribulation is not a time of chastening
for the church. I am not saying that there will not be great times of
trouble for the church before that time. We do not know what the
present generation of Christians are going to have to suffer at
he hands of a godless civilization before those days come. But none
of these things will be the Great Tribulation. We are not appointed
to wrath, God's Word says, and this is to be a day of wrath. But
the wrath is not against the church.

For in the third place, the Tribulation is the time of Jacob's
trouble, God's time of dealing in judgment with the unbelieving
Israel. It is the time of purification of Israel. It is primarily Jewish.
This is brought out plainly not only in the Olivet Discourse of
Matthew 24, but by many other Scriptures such as Deut. 4:30;
Jer. 30:7; Ezek. 20:37; Dan. 12:1; Sech. 13:8, 9 and Rev. 7:4-8;
12:1, 2, 17, etc.
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