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The Day Christ Came (Again)

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**THE DAY CHRIST
CAME (AGAIN)**

THE DAY CHRIST CAME (AGAIN)

It wasn't just an *ordinary* ordinary day. It was the *most* ordinary day. That day the Lord came again.

It would seem that George Jones should have had at least some kind of premonition as he arose that morning . . . but had he done so, then God's promise would not have been sure:

BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR KNOWETH NO MAN, NO, NOT THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN, BUT MY FATHER ONLY (Matt. 24:36).

So George arose as usual — still feeling a little tired and still not used to these early hours, even after two years. George was a milkman.

He decided this morning he would try not awaken his wife, Marge. "She needs the rest," he thought, "what with running around after our active little daughter all day!" As he got up quietly he looked down at his still sleeping wife and smiled. Marge was a Christian — and she so badly wanted him to become one! In fact they had had a long discussion about it just a few days ago. And then, following that, it seemed like last Sunday the preacher had preached right at him!

"Of course that wasn't actually true," he admitted with a smile as he started breakfast. "After all, I wasn't the only one there. But I guess the shoe *did* fit . . . What *was* that he preached on? Oh yes, he preached on Christ coming again."

George had enjoyed most of the sermon. He had especially enjoyed the stories of those who had tried to set the date of Christ's coming — how some had donned white robes on the day set and had climbed to the top of houses, trees, and mountains to be ready to meet the Lord. He had also been impressed with the Biblical proof that Christ *was* coming again and that, according to the "signs" mentioned in the Bible, Christ *could* come "most" anytime.

"I do think, though," thought George as he chewed on his bacon and eggs, "that the preacher was being a little dramatic when he said Christ could come again in the next five minutes." And he smiled as he thought again, "But He didn't."

"Of course Marge and the preacher are probably right," he admitted as he stacked his dishes in the sink. "I don't really know what I'm waiting on. But someday I *will* take the step and become a Christian."

When he was ready he peeked in to see their sleeping daughter, Julie. His heart welled with love as he looked on her angelic little face. Then he went in to kiss Marge goodby. As she returned his kiss sleepily,

he smiled to think how happy she would be when he went down the aisle to be baptized. "What are you smiling about?" she asked. "Oh, nothing," he said. And he went out the door.

Little did he know that he would never see them again.

For the next hour or so, George was too busy to think of much more than his job. There were instructions to check, bottles to load, arrangements to make. Finally, however, he started his deliveries.

It was a beautiful day. This was one of the things George liked about his job. He liked to see the world wake up each morning. He liked to see it bright and fresh after a night's rest — and before it had a chance to become tired and soiled again. He also enjoyed the quietness — he got a chance to think between deliveries.

As he drove along, he smiled as he saw signs of the neighborhoods beginning to stir. From the homes came the sounds of electric razors and the smell of bacon frying. And behind him he could see housewives in their housecoats and their hair still up in curlers as they opened their doors, looked about furtively, and then grabbed their bottles of milk, and ducked back inside.

George continued on his way, enjoying the beautiful day.

But for some reason, the preacher's sermon from last Sunday kept coming back to him.

As he smelled breakfast cooking, a passage quoted by the preacher suddenly forced itself into his mind:

... THEY WERE EATING AND DRINKING . . . (Matt. 24:38).

He passed a church building and noticed rice scattered around — evidence of a wedding the night before — and he thought again:

... MARRYING AND GIVING IN MARRIAGE . . . (Matt. 24:38).

He passed a home with a sign on the front door: "Night workers. Please Do Not Disturb. And he thought of this verse:

... THERE SHALL BE TWO . . . IN ONE BED; THE ONE SHALL BE TAKEN, AND THE OTHER SHALL BE LEFT (Luke 17:34).*

He passed a bakery — and thought:

TWO . . . SHALL BE GRINDING TOGETHER; THE ONE SHALL BE TAKEN, AND THE OTHER LEFT (Luke 17:35).*

And as his route took him near the edge of town, he saw a group of farm-workers on their way into the field. And this passage came to mind:

TWO . . . SHALL BE IN THE FIELD; THE ONE SHALL BE TAKEN, AND THE OTHER LEFT (Luke 17:36).*

*It will be noted that the terms *men* and *women* are in italics in the King James Version, which simply means that these words were added by the translators. We have removed them in our quotations.

In spite of himself, George gave a little shudder and then pushed these thoughts to the back of his mind. "Why am I getting so morbid? If Christ hasn't come in over 1900 years, why should He suddenly choose *now*? And after all I'm strong and healthy and good for a long time yet. I should be thinking about *living*, not the end of everything!"

It really was a beautiful day. All the people he saw smiled at him and waved. "On a wonderful day like this," George thought, "it is hard to realize that there are so many troubles in the world — famine and war and sickness and death. On a morning like this, it's just good to be *alive!*"

And this, too, should have sounded a warning:

FOR WHEN THEY SHALL SAY, PEACE AND SAFETY; THEN SUDDEN DESTRUCTION COMETH UPON THEM . . .
(I Thess. 5:3).

But it did not.

George continued on his way. He carried full bottles to houses. He carried empty bottles to his truck. Down the street. Back and forth. The same as every morning.

But not quite the same.

There really was no advance warning at all when it happened. Generally there is a feeling in the air when something is about to happen — but there was nothing. Generally animals, with some sort of special "sixth-

sense" are nervous when tragedy is about to strike — but there was nothing.

As usual, men were growling and snarling, some still not quite awake.

As usual, women were screaming at their children — and others.

As usual, boys and girls were turning up their nose at the food before them.

In China, a sleeping child was whimpering in its sleep because it *had* no food.

In Russia, an official working late, was checking the quotas set for the week.

In Australia a bushman was stalking his game — as he and his ancestors had done for centuries.

In America, a man was worrying himself sick over how he was ever going to make his payments. He needn't have bothered.

A woman was berating her husband over the new furniture she wanted to have. She needn't have bothered.

A preacher was looking through his sermon outline books worrying about what to preach next. He needed have bothered.

There was no warning. Life — with all its good and its evil — was going on as usual.

And then it happened.

... THE DAY OF THE LORD SO
COMETH AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT.
FOR WHEN THEY SHALL SAY, PEACE
AND SAFETY; THEN SUDDEN DE-
STRUCTION COMETH UPON THEM . . .
(I Thess. 5:2,3).

. . . AS THE LIGHTNING COMETH OUT OF THE EAST, AND SHINETH EVEN UNTO THE WEST; SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE (Matt. 24:27).

FOR THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT, WITH THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL AND WITH THE TRUMP OF GOD . . . (I Thess. 4:16).

George was near a cemetery when it happened. The shout traveled through the atmosphere faster than the speed of sound *or* light. It was a shout that penetrated to the core of the earth . . . to the depths of the ocean . . . to the center of a man's soul!

George wrecked his truck. But it did not matter.

George had never before heard the voice of God, but there was no question in his mind as to what this was. Neither had he before seen Jesus, but again somehow he knew exactly Who this was and what was happening. "No, no, no!" his thoughts began . . .

BEHOLD, HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS; AND EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM . . . AND ALL KINDREDS OF THE EARTH SHALL WAIL BECAUSE OF HIM . . . (Rev. 1:7).

. . . THE LORD JESUS SHALL BE REVEALED FROM HEAVEN WITH HIS MIGHTY ANGELS, IN FLAMING FIRE

TAKING VENGEANCE ON THEM THAT KNOW NOT GOD, AND THAT OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (II Thess. 1:7, 8).

The sky was filled with color — the blue of the atmosphere was blotted out by the whiteness of the cloud, the glory of the angels, the appearance of fire — and *all* of this was almost blotted out by the magnificence of Jesus Himself.

Now the earth began to tremble — and its surface began to be filled with fissures. In the cemetery nearby the graves began to open. The dead started to come forth from here, there, and everywhere. Their bodies were unlike anything George had ever seen. They were flesh, but not flesh. Solid, but not solid. For some reason the word “incorruptible” came to his mind. It was no surprise to him that some looked happy . . . and some did not. George could also feel that something was happening to *himself*.

. . . THE HOUR IS COMING, IN THE WHICH ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES SHALL HEAR HIS VOICE, AND SHALL COME FORTH; THEY THAT HAVE DONE GOOD, UNTO THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE; AND THEY THAT HAVE DONE EVIL, UNTO THE RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION (John 5:28, 29).

. . . WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED, IN A MOMENT, IN THE TWINKLING OF

AN EYE, AT THE LAST TRUMP: FOR THE TRUMPET SHALL SOUND, AND THE DEAD SHALL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE, AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED (I Cor. 15:51, 52).

George was now running. He was not far from home, and his only thoughts were to reach that haven. He was in a daze. Faintly he could hear the sound of a trumpet — a sound that chilled him to the very marrow. Out of the corner of his vision, he was aware of many glorious bodies rising into the air to meet the Lord.

It was hard now to keep his feet for the tremors were increasing. In his head, he was aware of the most terrible cry he had ever heard in his life — a tearing, searing cry of a soul in agony. It was some time before he realized that this cry was coming from himself.

He passed several standing dazed whose funerals he had attended. But this did not surprise him. Nothing surprised him now.

He passed a funeral procession that had stopped in the middle of the road. The back door of the hearse was open. The lid of the casket was thrown back. It was empty.

He sped on. Around him the cries and wails and shrieks increased. And from above him came the sound of singing — a glorious refrain of rejoicing and triumph. But it brought no comfort to George's soul. He

glanced up just once. Just a few were still rising to meet the Lord in the air. Evidently most all were there now.

He ran and ran. He forced one foot after the other. He passed block after block. And suddenly — he was at home.

He burst in the front door and begin running from room to room. He shouted, "Marge! . . . Julie! . . . Marge! . . . Julie!" There was Julie's favorite rag doll on the floor. Marge's housecoat was still lying on the chair beside the bed. There were evidences of Marge's housework everywhere. He burst into the kitchen. There were the dishes half done. He felt of the dish water. It was still warm. It was almost as if . . . almost as if . . .

And suddenly he knew.

They were prepared.

He raced back into the front yard and looked up, but now all was darkness. He was alone . . . alone . . . alone. Alone in his sin.

Suddenly the earth shuddered — and he realized that it was an old machine that had served its purpose — and old machine running down. He looked up again. The sun was running down, too. Now he could stare at it without blinking. It became dimmer and dimmer. There was a chill in the air. The stars and the planets became visible at mid-day. But nothing was motionless. They were darting here and there. Everything was go-

ing crazy. The universe was literally flying to pieces.

. . . AND, LO, THERE WAS A GREAT EARTHQUAKE; AND THE SUN BECAME BLACK AS SACKCLOTH OF HAIR, AND THE MOON BECAME AS BLOOD; AND THE STARS OF HEAVEN FELL UNTO THE EARTH, EVEN AS A FIG TREE CASTETH HER UNTIMELY FIGS, WHEN SHE IS SHAKEN OF A MIGHTY WIND. AND THE HEAVEN DEPARTED AS A SCROLL WHEN IT IS ROLLED TOGETHER; AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND ISLAND WERE MOVED OUT OF THEIR PLACES. AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH, AND THE GREAT MEN, AND THE RICH MEN, AND THE CHIEF CAPTAINS, AND THE MIGHTY MEN, AND EVERY BONDMAN, AND EVERY FREE MAN, HID THEMSELVES IN THE DENS AND IN THE ROCKS OF THE MOUNTAINS; 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: FOR THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH IS COME: AND WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND (Rev. 6:12-17).

The thought had finally struck George that he must now *face God*. His soul was filled with terror. "No, no, no . . . I'm not ready,"

he shrieked, "I must hide, I must hide, I must hide." Stumbling blindly he made his way back into the house and down the steps into the cellar. Huddling himself in the darkest corner, he continued to mutter almost insanely, "I must hide, I must hide."

But there was no hiding. George was at that moment riding on a huge ball streaking through the heavens. It was a ball almost 8,000 miles thick, but with a cool outer crust of only a few miles. Inside were tremendous pressures — fires and gases and molten rock. Just one slight touch by the finger of God — just one small command from His voice — and this world was no more . . .

THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT; IN THE WHICH THE HEAVENS SHALL PASS AWAY WITH A GREAT NOISE, AND THE ELEMENTS SHALL MELT WITH FERVENT HEAT, THE EARTH ALSO AND THE WORKS THAT ARE THEREIN SHALL BE BURNED UP (II Peter 3:10).

A moment of intense light. A moment of intense heat. Then darkness. Then silence.

When George raised his head again, he knew exactly where he was and why he was there.

FOR WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST; THAT EVERY ONE MAY RECEIVE THE THINGS DONE IN HIS BODY, ACCORDING TO THAT HE HATH DONE,

WHETHER IT BE GOOD OR BAD (II Cor. 5:10).

George knew that he was with all the people who had ever lived upon the face of the earth — and that all would be judged.

He knew, too, that he had also acquired a new body — one “incorruptible,” one that would “never fade away,” one that could never be destroyed. But there was no consolation in that for he knew where that body would spend eternity.

Yes, he knew many things now — too late.

He knew that he *had* had time for religion — that those other things that he had put first were really not important at all.

He knew, too, that those hypocrites in the church, whom he had thrown up to his wife time and time again, would spend eternity where *he* was going to spend it — and there was little comfort now in the fact that he was “as good as they.”

And he even knew that somehow his wife and his little girl would be happy without him — for an almighty God that can do everything would see to that. But he also knew that he would have to spend an eternity without them with the full knowledge of that fact — and that it would be an eternity spent without God and without Christ.

And somehow, somehow, he even knew now what *eternity* was like. He had heard eternity talked about. He had even heard

eternity joked about. But why, oh why, had not someone conveyed the feeling of *bigness* . . . the *emptiness* . . . the *vastness* of it all! "Without end, without end, without end."

So very much had happened. There had been the shout, the sound of the trump, the dead rising, those who met Jesus in the air, the destruction of all things. And yet he really knew that no time at all had been involved. It was as if time had stood still — and now eternity had begun.

Then in his heart of hearts, he heard a name being called. It was his own. It was *his* turn to receive sentence. He stepped forward. And even as he did so, he knew what the sentence would be . . .

WHEN THE SON OF MAN SHALL COME IN HIS GLORY, AND ALL THE HOLY ANGELS WITH HIM, THEN SHALL HE SIT UPON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY: AND BEFORE HIM SHALL BE GATHERED ALL NATIONS: AND HE SHALL SEPARATE THEM ONE FROM ANOTHER, AS A SHEPHERD DIVIDETH HIS SHEEP FROM THE GOATS: AND HE SHALL SET THE SHEEP ON HIS RIGHT HAND, BUT THE GOATS ON THE LEFT. THEN SHALL THE KING SAY UNTO THEM ON HIS RIGHT HAND, COME, YE BLESSED OF MY FATHER, INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE

WORLD . . . THEN SHALL HE SAY ALSO UNTO THEM ON THE LEFT HAND, DEPART FROM ME, YE CURSED, INTO EVERLASTING FIRE, PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS . . . AND THESE SHALL GO AWAY INTO EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT . . . (Matt. 25:31-34, 41, 46).

★ ★ ★

This story is not true. It cannot be, of course, since Christ has not yet come. It is, however, based upon Scriptural teaching and a knowledge of natural reaction. It has been told for one reason – to make you think and thus to make you turn to God in love.

KNOWING THEREFORE THE TERROR OF THE LORD, WE PERSUADE MEN . . . (II Cor. 5:11).

. . . GOD COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERY WHERE TO REPENT: BECAUSE HE HATH APPOINTED A DAY, IN THE WHICH HE WILL JUDGE THE WORLD IN RIGHTEOUSNESS . . . (Acts 17:30, 31).

Although some things I have guessed at in this lesson, these things we *know*:

- (1) Christ *is* coming.
- (2) Christ *could* come before the day is done.
- (3) When Christ comes, *everyone* will know it.
- (4) When Christ comes, everyone will also know where they stand.

Are *you* ready for the day the Lord comes?

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