

It Is Written

*A weekly publication of the
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.*

Vol. 6

March 3, 2024

No. 9

On What Does Your Faith Stand?

By Roger Shouse

"Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour" (Matthew 25:13).

It happened 180 years ago. It was proclaimed as the Second Advent. The nation was caught up in a religious fever about the teachings of a rural New York farmer, a lay Baptist preacher by the name of William Miller. Building a doctrine upon Daniel 8:14, where the prophet stated, "...two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," Miller claimed that the prophecy pointed to the return of Jesus. Miller was so specific in his timetable that he said October 22, 1844, would be the very day in which Jesus would appear.

Followers of Miller's teachings were called Millerites. Many believed Miller's prophecy. Some sold or gave away their property, believing they wouldn't need it because the Lord was coming.

One such follower, Henry Emmons, wrote: "I waited all Tuesday (October 22, 1844) and dear Jesus did not come – I waited all the forenoon of Wednesday and was well in body as I ever was, but after 12 o'clock I began to feel faint, and before dark I needed someone to help me up to my chamber, as my natural strength was leaving me very fast, and I lay prostrate for two days without any pain — sick with disappointment."

The Second Advent become known as the "Great Disappointment." Discredited and disillusioned, most of the followers of Millers scattered to other religious movements, such as the Shakers and the early forms of the Seventh-day Adventists. Miller and other leaders in his movement readjusted their timetable to 1845, which became yet another year of disappointment.

Restoration leader Alexander Campbell wrote a series of articles about Millerism in his *Millennial Harbinger*.

Now, a hundred and eighty years later, this major event will pass, with very few knowing anything about it, and worse, most not caring at all about it. There are some important lessons for us in this:

First, it is easy to be swayed when one doesn't stand solid upon the word of God. The naïve can believe about anything. Miller's theory can seem logical, but its beginning point is an assumption, and his idea is based upon the literalness of prophecies that are figurative. This is yet another reason why we must continue to teach, study, and preach the word of God. All of us need to know what God has said.

Second, underlining Miller's plans is the idea that God has placed secret codes, dates, and timetables that only a few can discover. Any discussion of the book of Revelation brings all kinds of speculations, current wars, and political figures that some see straight from those pages. Wildman Charles Manson believed Revelation 9 was a description of the British rock group, the Beatles. Long hair, iron breastplates that represent guitars, tails that were the guitar plugs — it's all there if one wants to see it. And, as one develops such ideas, staring us right in the face is the fact that Revelation was written to seven churches in the first century. Electric guitars, amps, and rock'n roll meant absolutely nothing to them. Ignoring the immediate context allows a person to find whatever they are looking for. It's like looking at clouds. One person sees a dog, and another person, looking at the same cloud, sees a tree. Without a foundation in the Scriptures and a baseline to begin with, anything and everything is possible.

The Bible is not written that way. It's not a mystery that we need some outside decoder ring to

figure out.

Third, the Lord's concluding words at the end of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins are, "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour." In that parable, the groom, Jesus, is gone. He returns with a shout. The wedding takes place. The plea is to be ready because "no one knows" when that day will be. If God said, we don't know the day, how is it that William Miller told the world that Jesus was coming on October 22, 1844? Was the Lord wrong? Did someone like Miller actually know the day?

Whenever moderns say things that fly in the face of what God has said, we must stand with God.

- When some say, "You don't have to be baptized." That's not what God said. Who are you going to believe?
- When someone says, "The Holy Spirit speaks to me directly," that's not what God says. Who are you going to believe?
- When someone says, "All you have to do is love God, and all this other stuff really doesn't matter," that's not what God says. Who are you going to believe?
- When someone says, "Global warming is going to destroy the planet and kill every person," that's not what God says. Who are you going to believe?
- When someone says, "It's obvious that evolution is true," that's not what God says. Who are you going to believe?

One hundred and eighty years ago, a whole bunch of people believed someone who said the Lord was coming that year. The year came and went. Their hopes were shattered. It was shattered because it wasn't founded upon the Scriptures.

What's your faith resting on? Your family? Your congregation? Your thinking? Or the word of God?

A lot has changed in one hundred and eighty years, yet some things have never changed.

The Meaning Of Calling On The Name Of The Lord

By Zeke Flores

Calling on the name of the Lord may not mean what you think it means.

In chapter 2 of his prophetic book, Joel foretells of the events during Pentecost related in Acts 2. His concluding statement from that prophecy was that "it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered" (Joel 2:32). To "call on the name of the Lord" sounds like calling out to someone in prayer and that's the way most people consider that phrase. But in reality, the meaning is closer to putting one's trust and confidence in God and all that pertains to Him.

For instance, who was saved on Pentecost? Those who obeyed Peter's preaching. That is, they repented of sin and submitted to baptism for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38, 41). What did they do? Did they "call on the Lord" in prayer? No. In fact, Peter never mentioned prayer when they asked what they should do. They responded to the Lord's will in repentance and baptism believing if they did so, their sins would be forgiven.

When they responded in obedience, they were saved. They "called on the Lord" by putting their trust in Him and manifesting that trust through their direct obedience. In short, they simply did what He said to do.

Is it any different today? No, although people will maintain that "calling on the name of the Lord" is a simple utterance of prayer asking Him into their hearts and begging for His salvation. Instead, Scripture tells us we are to "call on His name" as we hear what He says and do it. What saved the people on Pentecost saves people today.

"Peter said to them, 'Repent and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:38).