

# As ye see the day approaching

Nigel Bernard

**T**HE WRITER to the Hebrews stated: “. . . not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (10:25). These words had an initial application to the coming events of A.D. 70. Judah’s Commonwealth was about to come to an end. Later on in the epistle the Hebrews are exhorted to “go forth therefore unto him [Jesus] without the camp, bearing his reproach” (13:13). As they saw the day approaching they would need all their faith to turn their back on the Jewish camp of their day. But these words also have an application to ourselves. We see the day of the return of Christ approaching. We too must take heed to the advice not to forsake our assembling together but rather to exhort one another.

There can be no doubt that the world we are living in is entering a new phase. The Lord Jesus told us that it would be a time of “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” (Lk. 21:26). These well-known words are coming true before our eyes. For example, consider the weather. Natural events last year, such as Hurricane Katrina, have caused the world to reflect on the changes which seem to be happening in the earth. In writing of climate change, one meteorologist has stated: “With a rapidly changing climate, the next 20 years will be a white-knuckle ride: droughts, floods, heatwaves and hurricanes will probably occur more frequently (affecting regions that were previously untouched) and be longer-lasting”.<sup>1</sup> Climate change, together with increasing wickedness in the world, is causing an atmosphere of fear to develop. Truly, life is becoming a “white-knuckle ride”.

Yet there is a paradox within the words of Hebrews 10:25. We can see the day approaching. The evidence is there for us all to see. Even the world recognises that *something* is happening. So why the need to exhort more as we see the day approaching? Surely the opposite should be the case. The more we see the day approaching, the more obvious it is that the prophecies of Scripture are coming to pass and the more obvious it is that Christ is about to return. Surely, exhortation be-

comes redundant in the face of such overwhelming evidence.

Exhortation *is* necessary, and for the following reason. Within us the “old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph. 4:22), is constantly seeking to assert itself. When the “old man” of the flesh sees the day approaching, the temptation is to enjoy the things of this life and to live for the present. As the Assyrians threatened Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah, many reacted by going up to their rooftops and feasting:

“The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops? Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city: thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle . . . and behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die” (Isa. 22:1,2,13).

They should have used their rooftops to pray, but instead the prospect of a white-knuckle ride to oblivion caused them to drown their sorrows in the pleasures of this life.

We have to be honest with ourselves. When perhaps the Kingdom does not seem so near, the “old man” of the flesh is sometimes happy to take a back seat. We attend meetings and do things for the Truth, but in the back of our mind we think that we will also have the time to do other things which relate to the pleasures of this life. We, as it were, or perhaps literally, sit at the meeting while the video player at home records the television programme we would otherwise be missing. We are in effect serving two masters. But this is an impossible position: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mt. 6:24). We can really only serve one master.

When the pressure is on, when we see “the day approaching”, the reality of the impossibility of serving two masters becomes apparent. We

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1. Eden, P. (2005), “The weather in 2006”, in *The World in 2006*, London, *Economist*, p. 154.

have to drop the pretence and make the choice. At this point the "old man" will come to the fore. But there is a real danger that we will make the wrong decision, and that is why brethren and sisters continue to leave the Truth even in these last days. What we need to do is to serve only God at all times. Then, when the time of testing comes, we will not have to make a decision

whom to serve, for we will already have made that decision.

As we continue to see the signs in the earth showing that the return of Christ is near, it is increasingly important that we do not forsake the meetings, on Sundays or during the week. Rather, we should be exhorting each other more and more as we "see the day approaching".

## Your Letters



### Was Zacharias deaf as well as dumb?

I was interested in the article by Sister Joan Lewis, looking at the faith of Elisabeth (Nov. 2005, p. 410), in which she makes the reasonable assumption that Zacharias was deaf as well as dumb, based presumably on Luke 1:62, "And they made signs to his father" when asking Zacharias what he should call his son. In 1997 my eyes were opened to an alternative understanding. I found myself under medical orders not to speak, and used a pad of paper to communicate. I was astonished at the number of people who made signs to indicate that they would like to have my pen and paper to respond to what I had written. I was not deaf, and although they knew that, they still made signs that they wanted to write their answer down. Since that time I have been able to identify with Zacharias, as human nature has not changed!

Norman Yuile  
Dundee

### The "him" in Daniel 11:40

Whilst thanking Brother Nigel Bernard for his interesting article on Turkey (Nov. 2005, p. 423), I would like to make brief comment. Brother Bernard refers to the "him" of Daniel 11:40 as being Turkey but does not pause to explain why. I find this difficult to follow when the "him" of verse 40 is obviously the "him" of the context, that is, verses 36-39, which verses are generally accepted as applying to Rome.

In fact we can find nothing in these verses which could possibly apply to the Muslim anti-Catholic Turk. In the outworking purpose of God, the Turks humbled the once mighty Roman Empire in the east, which the Brotherhood's traditional view of Revelation 9:12-21 amply confirms. Whilst the Turks took much of the Roman territory, they never took on Rome's characteristics, descriptions or actions as described in verses 36-39 of Daniel 11. Hence my difficulty in relating the "him" of verse 40 to Turkey.

Raymond Hughes  
Dudley

*I thank Brother Hughes for his letter. I would agree that the "him" in verses 36-39 applies to Rome. However, this prophecy relates more to Rome's military power and territorial gain in the east rather than the religious power which was to develop in the city of Rome in the west. In Daniel 7 there is the "little horn" which represents the Roman Catholic system, but in Daniel 8 there is another "little horn". It is this little horn that corresponds to the "king" in Daniel 11:36.*

*This horn, the little horn of the goat, "waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land" (8:9). The little horn of the goat refers to the development of Roman influence in the east. The Times Atlas of World History describes this as follows: "Meanwhile, Rome had been drawn into the eastern Mediterranean. She defeated the Hellenistic monarchs of Macedon (197 BC) and Syria (190 BC), but refrained for half a century from extending her direct rule. At length in 146 she added Macedonia to her provincial system. In 133 BC Attalus of Pergamum bequeathed his kingdom, which became the province of Asia" (p. 87). This power came between, and superseded, the Seleucid king of the north and the Ptolemaic king of the south.*