

Why Christ must come



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Four distinct predicaments threaten to end the human race. Without divine intervention mankind can have little hope of survival.

BY THOMAS A. DAVIS

TIME AND AGAIN, in various words, Jesus made the unequivocal claim "I will come again!" The Gospel of Matthew alone records more than two dozen direct or indirect references which He made to the event. And in order that believers in Him might not be left in doubt or uncertainty regarding His return, He revealed to them conditions that would prevail prior to His coming. Later, after His ascension, He disclosed to some of His disciples—Peter, John, Paul, and others—further signs which give a clear picture of final events as they are to transpire.

Thus He told His followers of world turmoil and trouble, of destructive wars, of family and political perfidy, of floods and famine, storms and earthquakes. He foretold widespread moral decadence such as has not been known since before the Flood. He predicted a general religious apostasy with a form of godliness without the fact, and a great religious unity which would result in oppression for those who could not concur. He prophesied of persuasive deceptions by demons which would captivate multitudes. And He stated that the good news of His redeeming grace and His return would be preached to all mankind everywhere, "and then shall the end come."

Each of these predictions has been abundantly fulfilled or is on the point of being fulfilled before our eyes. They underscore as with a thick pencil Christ's claim, "I will come again!"

But just as emphatic as Christ's prophetic, positive "I will come" is the present imperative "He must come." Conditions in our world not only clearly indicate that the signs of Christ's coming are almost all fulfilled, but they also grimly declare that if He does not come soon, mankind can have little hope of survival.

In this article we shall discuss four

distinct predicaments, each of which is, we are warned, virtually an impasse, and each of which threatens to end the human race.

The Nuclear Bomb

Nuclear fission has been with us so long that we have become accustomed to it. But it is as though Damocles had become used to the sword suspended by a hair above his head. His unconcern would not have made the danger any less real.

We remember reading accounts of the detonating of the first atomic bomb at Los Alamos and of the reactions of the scientists and others who witnessed it. All present were transfixed with fear and a sudden great awe as a terrible light like a thousand suns disintegrated the dawn, as the frightening roar surged across the seared desert, and as the fiery pillar boiled up and up to the sky to form that first monstrous mushroom cloud, that awful exclamation mark of doom.

"The explosion . . . made us feel that we puny things were blasphemous to dare tamper with the forces hitherto reserved to Almighty," observed one who was there.

That blast was equivalent to the detonating of twenty thousand tons of TNT. But it was only a Fourth of July firecracker compared with the twenty-megaton bombs (twenty million tons of TNT), and even greater, which the U.S. and Russia now possess.

The destructive potential of one of these bombs is beyond human imagining. The little bomb used on Hiroshima, which had the same potential as the one exploded at Los Alamos, wiped out 70,000 human beings. The vastly multiplied deadliness of the immediate explosion of one of those larger bombs, plus the lethality of fallout, radiation, and other effects, cannot be computed. Then to think of such bombs falling on New York, Washington, Los Angeles, London, Moscow, Tokyo, or Peking! The mind refuses to picture the carnage and desolation.

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But such havoc is inevitable, according to many authorities. The British scientist Sir Charles Snow observed in a speech some time ago: "We know with the certainty of statistical truth, that if enough of these weapons are made—by enough states—some of them are going to blow up. Through accident, folly, or madness."—Philip S. Chen, *A New Look at God*, p. 231.

Dr. Harold C. Urey, one of the developers of the first atomic bomb, asserted in an interview recently that "a flaming end is inevitable, for someday there will be someone at the head of a government crazy enough to turn loose atomic destruction."

Thus humanity has come to a nuclear dead end. We have men around the world with their fingers on the atomic trigger, and each of them is afraid to remove it. One of these days, as tensions continue and become greater, one of them is going to pull the trigger. This is the grim, inescapable point to which we have come.

"Modern weapons," declared President Johnson recently, "are not like any other. In the first nuclear exchange 100 million Americans and more than 100 million Russians would be dead. And when it was over, our great cities would be ashes, our fields barren, our industry destroyed, our dreams vanished."

Secretary of State Dean Rusk is reported to have commented, "There will be no [diplomatic] gathering together after World War III. There won't be enough left."

We are reminded of the answer given by Dr. Albert Einstein to a reporter who asked him if he knew what weapons would be used in World War III. "No, but I know what will be used in World War IV—rocks."

History's Greatest Problem

Some who read this subheading may think we have already discussed history's greatest problem—the nuclear bomb. But according to one scientist,

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"the greatest problem in the history of the world" is the global population explosion.

In dealing with a subject so vast as world population it is obviously impossible to arrive at any exact figures. But we are told that it took five thousand years for the world's population to reach one billion in the early 1800's. It doubled to two billion in another hundred years, which brings us to forty years ago. Today there are about three and a half billion people on the globe, an increase of one and a half billion in forty years.

It is estimated that at present there is a swelling torrent of from sixty-five to seventy million births each year, which will bring the population total to four billion in 1980. Thereafter it will double every thirty-five or forty years, unless something drastic happens, to eight billion in 2020, sixteen billion in 2060, and so on.

What are the implications of the population explosion?

Calamity for the human race is the prediction of United Nations demographers, unless the trend "is altered by famine, nuclear war [which would be calamitous of themselves], or some new and 'miraculous' form of fertility control."—Editorial in *The Christian Century*, November 17, 1965.

"Unless the world's soaring birthrate is drastically reduced, civilization as we know it is doomed," is the evaluation of Professor Dennis Gabor, of Imperial College, London. "Governments will collapse, law and order will vanish, mass rioting, plagues, and disease will sweep the earth."

One of the major implications of the population upsurge seems to be that we are going to run out of living space in a few decades. "Today's mushrooming population has one acre of land which it calls its own per person," claims Professor Dada E. Harlow, of the University of Massachusetts. "Scientists predict that by the year 2000 there will be one square foot of land for each human being throughout the world. By land I mean all land from grazing meadows and plowed fields to lofty mountains and dry deserts."

One square foot—a tiny bit of land twelve inches by twelve inches—for every man, woman, and child living upon the earth forty years or so from now. One square foot to supply all his needs. It is an impossible picture, of course. But how do we escape it?

This unprecedented situation is rushing us toward what Dr. Raymond Ewall, of the State University of New York, calls the greatest disaster of history.

History's Greatest Disaster

"GREAT WORLD FAMINE 'MAY KILL BILLIONS,' " shouted the newspaper headlines reporting Dr. Ewall's statement. "It will be the most colossal catastrophe in history," the doctor was reported to have said.

"Such a famine in Asia, Africa, and South America by the 1970's and later seems almost inevitable as expanding population outstrips food production," he went on.

"This is the greatest and most nearly insoluble problem in the history of the world," another newspaper quoted Dr. Ewall as saying. And, the paper went on to comment, "he finds few who disagree with him."

The United States has put forward mighty efforts to help the world's hungry and starving, but even her vast resources are not going to be adequate in a very few short years. The Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal predicted recently that within ten years or less the world will need every shred of food and fiber the United States can grow. "If I am right," he said, "and I'm afraid I am, very much more food will be urgently needed within a short time to avert world calamity."—*Time*, September 3, 1965.

President Johnson was quoted in *Time* magazine of February 18, 1966, as saying, "Candor requires that I warn you the time is not far off when all the combined production of all the acres of all of the agriculturally productive nations will not meet the food needs of the developing nations unless present trends are changed."

We are tempted to believe that they cannot meet them even now. Prime Minister Harold Wilson, of Great Britain, stated recently that about two thirds of the world's population are desperately hungry. And it has been estimated that at the present time about forty million people starve to death each year.

The Bombay *Sunday Standard*, August 8, 1965, quoted Professor Dennis Gabor as saying that "world food production cannot hope to keep pace with our rocketing population—any

more than a running man could catch up with an express train."

The World's Water Crisis

Before me as I write is a map of the world which I clipped from a newspaper some months ago, on which certain areas are shaded. These variously shaded parts represent regions of the world where fresh water is practically nonexistent, very scarce, or in short supply. Something like one half of the land areas on the map is shaded, and some of the most densely populated countries are included. As we examine the map further, we notice that not only the traditionally "dry" countries suffer a need of water, but that many of the so-called "wet" countries are having their problems.

"Few problems are as truly international in scope as the world's shortage of water," wrote Walter Fowler in *The Times of India*, June 27, 1965. "Almost every nation has water-short areas, or is facing the prospect of water shortages in the near future."

Water "problems have increased enormously, particularly in the course of the last two decades, all over the world, and have become a question of the day," says a water report from Hungary.

Water has been called "the life blood of the earth," and while there is as much of it now as there has ever been, there is far less fresh water. At the same time there is a much greater demand for fresh water because of the needs of the ever-growing population and of industry. For example, America's industrial need of water has increased 1,000 percent since 1900. It requires 70,000 gallons of water to make one ton of steel, and over 500,000 gallons to make one ton of synthetic rubber.

Glancing at random at the water situation around the world, we note that in Latin America as many as thirty-three million city dwellers have been without water from community supplies for years.

Italy and Spain are greatly concerned over their water supplies and are making a survey of their water resources.

Israel is using about 90 percent of its available fresh water. By 1970 it will have developed all its water resources, but the need will keep on growing beyond that.

From one African country comes the

report that "in some parts of the country [children] are not allowed to play in the sun lest they perspire and drink more water."

Even Holland, which we might consider one of the most water-rich countries in the world, is faced with grave fresh-water problems.

And mainland China is having a serious water crisis. For example, in parts of Shansi Province water is being carried *thirty miles* by shoulder loads to some communities.

A recent book by two hydrologic scientists contains the following straightforward statement regarding the fresh-water emergency: "After 5,000 years of solving mistakes by fleeing from them, that solution is no longer possible because there is no place to which to go. *It seems evident that man is approaching a crisis which, unless prepared for, could bring disaster within the lifetime of people already born.*"

It is true that efforts are being made to meet this mounting crisis. The most promising approach so far is desalination of sea water. This will doubtless solve the fresh-water problem in certain places, "where large populations live near an ocean," to quote one engineer.

But what of the countless millions of India, Africa, Asia, and North and South America who live thousands of miles from any ocean? A moment's thought as to the astronomical cost of thousands of pumping stations and of great webs of hundreds of thousands of miles of pipelines to bring the water to them will show how impossible the idea is.

Checkmate

As we consider the situation in which our twentieth-century world finds itself, we visualize a gigantic chessboard on which humanity is playing a desperate game for life against forces which it does not comprehend and cannot control—forces that are using the very elements of nature itself to defeat us. And among the many frightening aspects of the whole situation is this: Often man seems to be a pawn used by these malignant powers to defeat and destroy himself.

We are reminded of an editorial in *The Christian Century* of July 7, 1965: "As the bid for inhabitable space and arable land increases, the probability of

nuclear war increases, with the ultimate forms of destruction destroying the highest forms of life. It is enough to make man believe that he is gripped by a demiurge which wants his death and which one way or the other will bring his brief career to an end."

When in a game of chess a player finds his king piece in a position where it is trapped and cannot be defended or rescued, he knows that he has been checkmated and that nothing further can be done. He has lost.



Late Dandelion

**It could have sparked
New hope, and merry
On some drab lawn
Of February.**

**Or wafted hours
Of childhood by
In idle pastures
Of July.**

**But how compete,
Belated, bold,
With goldenrod
And marigold?**

**I smile at it
And ask no reason
For joy existing
Out of season.**

—Jane Merchant.



As we consider the four great and unique crises we have just outlined, we begin to realize that we have been checkmated, that we seem to have lost the game. For never before has the human race been in a situation such as it faces at present. Never before have the very foundations of our existence on this planet been threatened as now. Never before have the very elementals of our earth and of life itself been affected: the atom (the building blocks of matter), living space, food, and water. In these we have the basics of

life, especially in the last three. Take away any of these, and life cannot be sustained.

Thus humanity seems to have come to the place where, in the words of H. G. Wells, there is "no way out," where all our leaders with their plans and proposals, sincere though they may be, are but "little men with little minds throwing little words at gigantic problems."

But is this really the end? Is this the place to which all the struggles and tears, all the hardships and sacrifices, have brought us? Is the long, sad history of humanity to end by atomic holocaust, or by being virtually squeezed to death on a crowded planet, or by famine, or by thirst, or by a combination of these?

Christ Must Come

We can see only one solution for the crises. Christ *must* come. We believe that this is the *only* real and final solution. We believe that Christ, the Creator of the atom, must come and take control and "destroy them which destroy the earth." (Revelation 11:18.) Only then will the vision of Pope Paul VI, "war no more, war never again," be realized.

We believe that only Christ can finally and fully solve the ever-growing population explosion, when He comes to set up His own kingdom from which will be excluded all vile and shameless people, "and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolators, and every one who loves and practices falsehood." (Revelation 22:15, R.S.V.) The citizens of that kingdom "shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." (Isaiah 32:18.)

We believe that only Christ can save the world from famine and that only He can solve the global water crisis. The citizens of His kingdom "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. . . . For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Revelation 7:16, 17.) "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.

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