

## IT IS LATER THAN YOU THINK

### PART I OF II

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Brethren, are we tired of hearing that it is later than we think? Have you become so accustomed to hearing this that it does not matter any more? I have been a very diligent preacher of how late it is in time and I remember some time ago my children saying, "Dad, we have been hearing that since we can remember!" Well, I suppose if you are only in your twenties and you think that you have been hearing that all your life then you may think that this is just another doctrine. However, I have not been hearing this for all of my life and I do not believe that God has brought this word to us for naught.

We do not realize that the timing of God, the preparation of God, the seasons of God, and the way that God takes time in doing a thing is not the way that we do it. We have a way of thinking of an "event." Take, for instance, an event such as the sealing of the saints of God in their foreheads as is mentioned in the Chapter 7 of Revelation. Well, we think of some old cowboy out west. He has a branding iron in his hand, and the cow comes in, and "Pssst" it is all done in a matter of seconds! However, I am not sure that God does things the way that man does them. Rather than with just some quick little event, I believe that God is in the "process" of bringing us into a place where we can be ready.

You know, we do not get ready very fast. We are not cattle that can be driven in and branded. There is a yielding, and a process of deliverance that we have to go through. Brethren, I think we would be wrong if we continue to think in these old doctrine terms of a "snap of a finger" event ("This is over, and that happens; and then this happens..."), because there is an overlap in what God is doing.

I remember the first time I began to hear Ces preach about the things in Revelation and say, "These things are happening now!" I would hear this and I

would be thinking, "How can this be? How can these things be happening now?" I had this old "event" thinking still in me, you know, which comes from when we believed in the rapture and this type of thing. However, it is by means of a process that God is working.

Something came to me this summer that I want to share with you before we get into the teaching from the Word here. It is a very simple thing that really began to open my eyes.

How many of you are aware that this is the year of the cicada locust? Not very many of you here may be aware of what this cicada locust is, so I may need to give you a little biology lesson here.

I do not know if you are aware of this, but there is a certain locust called the cicada that comes only every seventeen years. Now the way it happens is that this thing apparently lays its eggs in the earth and seventeen seasons go by with these eggs in the earth, and until the seventeenth year they do not hatch. Isn't this amazing? I mean, doesn't that amaze you of itself, that this insect just knows not to come out in the sixteenth year? It never misses! It never goes sixteen. It never goes eighteen. It always comes out in the seventeenth year!

By the way, those of you who know about the cicada, did you also know that there is also a wasp called the cicada killer wasp? Did you know that? This wasp stings the body of the cicada locust and then lays its eggs. These eggs remain in the body of this locust, and they hatch and this thing comes back every seventeen years, in order to sting the locust again! Isn't that amazing?

So I was thinking about this, and how it was about seventeen years ago when I first became aware of this thing. Seventeen years ago was one horrible time! I do not even want to remember that time! It was the worst year of my life.

I happened to mention this then to Brother Phillips. I said, "What is the meaning of this number "seventeen"?" Now, there was an old brother that came out to hear Brother Ces when he came to New York—old Brother Hoyer. He was a teacher at Pine Crest Bible School. He was a man who had learned Hebrew and Greek. He was already an old man then well into his eighties or maybe in his nineties. While Ces was bringing the word (I think he was bringing the word, "It Is Later Than You Think"), this old man's hand began to tremble, and I watched him reach for the bench in front of him. He took hold of that bench and he began to rise to his feet, and because I really did not know this man very well, I thought, "Oh no! Ces is going to get rebuked now!"

However, the man got up and he said, "Brother Ces, I have known the meaning of the Word of God all my life, and I have taught it. This is the first time that I have ever heard a man preach the Word the way it was meant to be understood!" Amen!

So, here was an old man that saw the kingdom of God—like *Anna* and that old man (*Simeon*) in the temple who picked Jesus up when he was a baby (Luke 2:25-38). They saw the kingdom. Amen! Brother Hoyer, however, passed away one or two years ago. He saw the kingdom, but he did not see the coming in of its fullness.

Now, I mention this number "seventeen." Old Brother Hoyer had an understanding of numbers in the Word that apparently was unequaled. I said, "Charley, what would Brother Hoyer say this number seventeen means?" Without hesitation, he said that it meant "fulfillment of promise; fulfillment of prophecy." Hallelujah!

Well, that was good. So, I went into the Word, and I began to look up this number seventeen. It is a very unusual word. It does not appear very often. One thing I found out was that it was the seventeenth day of the second month that it began to rain in the days of Noah. Noah entered into the ark, and they stayed in the ark for seven days before it began to rain. In other words, God waited until the seventeenth day [of the second month] before He allowed it to begin to rain (Genesis 7:11). Also, I found that it was in the seventeenth day of the seventh month that He caused the rain to stop (Genesis 8:1-5) and the ark came to rest at that point? Now, they were not able to go out, but again it was the seventeenth day.

I thought, "Now, why would God be interested here in the account of the flood in telling us what day it was? What do we care what day it was? I mean, it was just something that happened way back there. Why is He interested in that unusual number?"

Why was God interested in telling us that Joseph was seventeen years old in the time when he went out to attend to the flocks of his brethren and was taken captive? (Genesis 37:2) Why did it then mention that when old Jacob went down into Egypt, he lived in Egypt exactly seventeen years? (Genesis 47:28) These are just some unusual things about this number.

Well, I was not satisfied with that. I said, "God, I still do not understand—what is the meaning of this? Why would You create an insect that only comes around once every seventeen years?" I mean, everything else in the world comes around on a different basis; and every year it has its thing, you know? Do you know of anything else in biology that has such a pattern? Do any of you know of anything like that?

So I began to press God about this. Then I began to wonder how many seventeen-year cycles have we had, and then I began to ask, "Well, when was this thing created?" When do you suppose God created this thing called the cicada locust and the cicada wasp? Wouldn't you imagine that He did it at the beginning in Genesis when He created all things? Is there any other event of creation written about in the Word?

I first began to think, "I wonder how many of these cycles I could see in my lifetime?" You know that there are not many of these that a person would see in his lifetime. So, I got my calculator out, and then I wanted to know how many of these cycles in the earth we have had to the time we are now living in. [Note: All of this is of interest when we consider the uncertainty as to the accuracy of our present calendar system, so that we cannot be sure by it as to the exact number of the year that we are presently living in]. Well, I began to look for a whole number, and I found that if you multiply 17 times 353 you get 6001. So to get to the year 6001 you would need 353 of these 17-year cycles. Isn't that interesting. Do you know what that means?

Now, the first year that they were made, of course, would not be included in that. So if you are counting, and if these cicada locusts were created at the beginning, then it is now the year 6002. Are you following me? It is the end of the sixth day, brethren! The sixth day is over! We are already past the year 6000, and the seventh day is upon us!

You can put all your calculators away and all your computer programs and all the things that you are using to try and figure out when the Lord is coming. We are overtime! There is no question. We are overtime. We are in the seventh day. You know the scripture passage in Hosea 6, in the second verse, where it says, "*After two days...*" and "*...in the third day...*"—Well, we are there! We are there!

Brethren, I do not believe there should be any question in our mind. The Lord is not obliged with regards to time to wait anymore. He has given us overtime. He has given us more. Why has He given us more? I do not know, but I know this, that "*The eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the whole earth...*" and the Lord is undoubtedly seeing that the message of the kingdom is still going out. There are some who are in the valley of decision—who are still coming, who are still receiving, who are still coming into salvation, who are still coming into Sonship. Brethren, there are still a few coming in. There are still a few who are yearning to know, "What is this? What is there all about this?"

BRETHREN, DO NOT WEARY OF HEARING THAT IT IS LATER THAN YOU THINK. IT BEHOOVES US, RATHER, THAT IF YOU HAVE UNFINISHED BUSINESS LEFT, YOU HAD BETTER GET IT TAKEN CARE OF! IF YOU HAVE UNFINISHED BUSINESS IN YOUR SOUL, AND IF THERE ARE THINGS THAT ARE STILL HOLDING YOU THAT YOU HAVE BEEN MEANING TO GET ON TO

AND TO GET YOURSELF DELIVERED FROM—YOU HAD BETTER START CRYING OUT TO GOD!

Amen! I just leave that with you. I think that speaks volumes right there.

One thing I might add here is that I do not know the significance of the number 353 here, except that I remember that the ark was 300 cubits long. It was 50 cubits wide, and it was 3 stories high. That seems to be quite complete to me. That is how many cycles of this cicada locust we have been through since the beginning.

