Thought For The Day ~
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Prayer

Lord, I thank You that the Holy Spirit joins me in the challenges I am facing in my life today. You sent Him to be my Helper, my Guide, my Teacher, and my Intercessor—the One who meets my problems head-on and helps me to overcome them. Rather than try to work out those problems by myself, I open my heart today for the Holy Spirit to join me as my divine Partner so I can be more than a conqueror in every situation, in Jesus’ name. Amen......

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

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Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

“ God’s Answer For The Empty Life”

Charles Stanley

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Greg Laurie
Virtue for Women-
Cathe Laurie
1 NOW THE Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before them and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2 And the Philistines followed close after Saul and his sons and overtook them, and the Philistines slew Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. 3 And the battle raged about Saul, and the archers found and wounded him. 4 Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and abuse and make sport of me. But his armor-bearer would not, for he was terrified. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it. 5 When his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died. 6 So Saul died; he and his three sons and all his house died together. 7 And when all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that the army had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. 8 The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9 They stripped [Saul] and took his head and his armor, and sent [them] round about in Philistia to carry the news to their idols and to the people. 10 And they put [Saul’s] armor in the house of their gods and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon. 11 When all Jabesh-gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 All the brave men arose, took away the bodies of Saul and his sons, brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh; then they fasted seven days. 13 So Saul died for his trespass against the Lord [in sparing Amalek], for his unfaithfulness in not keeping God’s word, and also for consulting [a medium with] a spirit of the dead to inquire pleadingly of it, 14 And inquired not so of the Lord [in earnest penitence]. Therefore the Lord slew him and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

Chapter 10

And in chapter ten, we have the story, once more, of Saul’s death. How in fighting against the Philistines up near mount Gilboa that Saul fell before the Philistines. He was hit with one of the arrows. An archer shot him. He realized that he wasn’t going to come out of it, but he was still alive. He... Saul you remember was a big guy. Hard to kill him. And he knew that ultimately the wound from this arrow would get him, and so he pleaded with his armor bearer to thrust him through, to finish him off. But his armor bearer was fearful to do it. And so Saul fell upon his own spear. He set it out in front of him and fell upon it and died. And of course, when his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his spear.

Jonathan and his other brothers, the sons of Saul, were slain by the Philistines clear up in the area of Mount Gilboa. The next day, as the Philistines were coming around stripping the bodies, they found the body of Saul, and they cut off his head and set it through the land of the Philistines in order that they might rejoice over the fact that they had killed Saul, the king of Israel. And they put his body in the temple of Dagon there in Bethshemesh, which is at the northern end of the mount Gilboa range where Gilboa comes down to a little stream. And the men across the valley, across the Jordan River about ten miles away I guess, over in Jabeshgilead, when they heard that Saul’s body was pinned up there in the temple of the god with Jonathan, they came and they took the bodies and they took them back over on the other side of Jordan, and there they cremated them.

So in verse thirteen we are told,

Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it; and inquired not of the LORD: therefore the Lord slew him, and he turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse (1Ch 10:13-14).

So Saul died for his transgression. And a fellow who had tremendous potential. I think that when God chose Saul there was demonstrated in Saul fabulous potential as a king. He was humble. He came from a good family. He seemed to be a natural leader. He was courageous. But before long, after a few victories, the women started coming out when Saul would walk down the street, and they would come out and they’d begin to dance with their tambourines. And they would sing, “Saul has killed his thousands.” And Saul began to accept this praise and adulation of the people. He began to expect it. And pride began to get hold of the guy’s life. And this is the thing that destroyed him. That humility was gone. And now his arrogancy and pride, which led to the tremendous jealousy of David, trying to drive David out. And then his disobedience to the commandments of God. And finally, when God would not answer him, he went to the witch at Endor to inquire of her, and therefore God allowed him to be killed there on the mount Gilboa.

(Through The Bible; C-2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Commentaries; 1979-1986)
Our world is in a death-dive. We have peaked, and now we’re plunging rapidly to the end. Moral rot and decay have so corrupted the planks of our society that they will soon crumble and fall. The only hope for escape is for Jesus Christ to snatch His followers out of this mad fatal plunge.

The rest of the world will have seven years before the end. The first three and a half years will be a period of unprecedented peace and prosperity. But during the second three and a half years, we will see God’s wrath poured out upon this earth. Jesus describes this judgment to come as a time of tribulation such as the world has never seen or will ever see again (Matthew 24:21). So, how do you become a follower of Jesus Christ and escape the impending destruction?

God’s Main Message

God’s main message to us can be summed up in the word “repent.” If we repent, then God will forgive us our sins. But what does it mean to repent? It doesn't mean just to be sorry, because you can be sorry for the things you’ve done and yet go right on doing them. To repent means to have a total change of heart and mind toward God. It means humbly turning away from the shallow and empty things in which we have tried to find fulfillment and to turning toward the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. This change of heart towards God will give you the power to turn from your wrong and sinful lifestyle. When you experience the goodness of God, you will also experience a genuine desire to change from your sins of the past. You will experience a brand-new quality of life the Bible calls godliness.

In Revelation 9 we are given this frightful scenario; a terrible horde of two hundred million satanic creatures will be loosed from the area of the river Euphrates in Iraq to bring mass destruction upon the earth. By this insidious force, one-third of the world’s population will be destroyed. The idea of a spiritually inspired invasion force becomes more significant in light of the fact that Islamic religious leaders, who can boast of 750 million followers worldwide, are constantly threatening a Jihad (holy war) against their enemies, which they identify as the non-Islamic world in general and Israel in particular. Whatever its source, an incredible portrait of destruction is clearly predicted to come upon mankind.

Why?

Why will there be such awful judgment upon the earth? Why such horrible tribulation? Because people have been guilty of forsaking the laws of God. Sin has its own inevitable consequence: death.

God has revealed to us the way to a meaningful life. He says, “If you’ll follow My rules, you’ll be happy and prosperous” (Deuteronomy 30:15-16). But man has hardened his heart, rejected God, and gone after his own way. God describes for us the conditions in the world that this rejection brings, conditions that will bring judgment.

The Bible says that the people left on the earth in the last days “repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols... neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts” (Revelation 9:21). This picture of the character of mankind is sobering to say the least. What will people be like at the time of the end? First of all, people will be worshiping devils. God wants us to seek His guidance and His wisdom. He wants to bring direction to our lives. But today people are not seeking the counsel of God. Instead they are turning to mediums and New Age channelers for guidance. They seek the advice of psychics, fortune tellers, Ouija boards, and horoscopes. They are worshiping devils rather than God. The New Age Movement with its growing popularity has brought the phenomenon of channeling, where supposed wise people of the past give their secrets and wisdom to present-day seekers. This is similar to the practices of the oracles of ancient times. In essence it is no more than demons promulgating their doctrines through mediums, dressed up and made acceptable to modern consumers. In some of the public school systems in the United States, children are taught how to contact their spirit guides and receive help from the wise little man who lives in a house in their mind.

Many of the popular rock groups are encouraging children to find fulfillment through satanism. Clearly the prediction of widespread worship of demonic spirits is coming to pass. Not only will they worship devils, but the people of the last days will also worship idols. Everyone bows his knee to some object of worship, some idol, some principle, some goal, some ambition, or some thing. Every man must worship; this is an innate need. If he doesn’t worship God, then he must and will find a substitute. In Deuteronomy 4:19, the Bible speaks of man literally being driven to worship. It is an inescapable part of our nature. Many Christian college students are ridiculed by their secular professors because of their belief in Jesus Christ. Professors make Christians one of their favorite targets, mocking and laughing at those who believe in God. Students are told that man is self-sufficient, with no need for an outdated crutch like faith in God. But then the professor goes home and worships an idol in his backyard! Maybe it’s a boat, a sports car, or a garden he’s cultivating. Many of these same professors are using drugs or are involved in the New Age Movement. They flock to Sai Baba or other gurus who claim to have made the transition into the godhood. Every man has his idol.

Men in the last days will not repent of their murders and sorceries. In the abortion clinics of the United States today, condoned and in many cases financed by the government and defended by the courts, millions of babies are being murdered each year. God cannot ignore this wanton disregard for life and will surely bring the United States into judgment for it. Perhaps this judgment is already beginning. Once disorganized street gangs have now become well-financed and well-equipped purveyors of drugs and violence. We now find addiction and wanton, senseless murder becoming commonplace in every major city in America.
Scripture also tells us that the people of the last days will refuse to repent of their sorceries. "Sorceries" in the original Greek is pharmakia, which means "the use of narcotics for thrill or enchantment." Look at the increasingly widespread use of drugs throughout the world today. Marijuana and cocaine are as easily obtained by the youth as candy. These are both personality-changing drugs. The insidious thing about their use is the effect on the brain of the user. These drugs seem to attack the centers of rational judgment so that the user is deceived into believing he is not addicted. An objective observer can see the alteration of personality and loss of good judgment quite easily. The person who is under the influence cannot assess that he is making poor decisions. He hasn't the capability to realize that his ability to make rational choices has been impaired, and is thus trapped. New research reveals that these drugs destroy a chemical in the brain that inhibits the ability to ever resist the drug again.

"Neither did they repent of their fornication." As we look around the world today, we see the lowering and ultimate eradication of any decent standard of morality. It seems that almost every mass medium of communication is being used to destroy the moral principles that our society and its people once possessed. Immorality has become so pervasive and accepted that people talk freely of their live-in partners as if the practice was beyond question.

One young lady who was about to get married went to a minister for counseling. The minister asked her, "Have you been living with your fiancé"

She said, "Of course not!"

He replied, "How do you know whether or not you want to marry him? You should live with him for a few months." He then had the audacity to charge her twenty-five dollars for his advice! This minister wears a robe and collar that distinguishes him as a clergyman. He's a minister all right, but not of Jesus Christ.

The Lord said that final judgment is coming for a variety of reasons. One is the condition of open fornication. It is difficult in this day and age, with all the pressure to the contrary from society, to keep pure. But the Word of God says that we must flee the fleshly lusts that war against men's souls (I Peter 2:11). God's laws have not changed. God's rules have not been altered. They're still the same today, and with good reason. God clearly sees the destruction, disease, and human misery that result from a life dedicated to hedonistic pleasure. People are precious to God. It breaks His heart to see the tremendous amount of suffering caused by fornication.

"Nor of their thefts." A young man was working on his doctorate in the science department of a famous university. He said that practically every bit of equipment in the science lab was stolen property. When he refused to do his project on stolen equipment, his fellow students laughed at him. They said he'd never complete his doctorate unless he was willing to steal some kind of equipment to perform his experiments.

We've come to a place where we easily justify thievery. Today it's very common to steal from the job. So-called "white collar" crime is reaching epidemic proportions. The rationale is often, "They're not paying me enough. I deserve more, so I'll supplement my income." We may see it as a small indiscretion, but God sees it as open sin. For these things comes the wrath of God upon the earth.

Perhaps the most shocking aspect of this prophecy is the reaction of the people who must endure this terror. In spite of the invasion of the demonic horde and the fact that one-third of all people on earth are massacred, the two-thirds that remain do not repent of their sins. It makes one wonder just what it takes to bring a man to repentance, to turn him from his sins and back to God. Rarely do judgments bring a person to repentance. As a general rule, judgment only hardens an individual's heart against God, as with the case of Pharaoh in the story of Moses.

It is the goodness of God that brings a man to repentance (Romans 2:4). Though so many of us have been guilty of worshipping devils, guilty of having idols, guilty of murder, drugs, fornication, or thievery, God still loves us. He loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to take the responsibility of the guilt of every wrong thing that we have ever done. Jesus Christ died on the cross in our place so that he could wash us clean from guilt forever.

But so many say, "I'll wait until I see God's judgments come upon this earth; then I'll turn to God for mercy." Allow me to speak to you personally. If you don't repent now as the result of the goodness and mercy of God, why would you repent during the time of God's judgments? If the goodness of God doesn't bring you into His family, His judgments are not likely to do it.

Repentance must be the work of God within your life. No person can bring you to repentance. Someone might bring you to sorrow. I might make you feel very sorry, but I can't make you repent. You must allow God to speak to you and touch your heart. Only godly sorrow leads to repentance.

Stop and reflect. Whatever you may be getting out of your experiences of worshipping devils or idols, committing fornication, or taking drugs, is it worth the sacrifice of your soul? Why not turn your life over to Jesus Christ? He has a much better plan for your life today and a glorious eternal future in His Kingdom tomorrow! What true profit is it if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?

Take a moment in the quiet of your heart to give your life to Jesus. Acknowledge the fact that Jesus, God in human flesh, died on the cross for your sins. Humbly ask Him for the forgiveness and eternal life He so freely offers. I encourage you to do this now, lest you wake up some morning and find the church gone and yourself still here only to face the wrath of God as He opens the final curtain.
Abomination of Desolation;  In the middle of what is called the Great Tribulation, the Antichrist will erect an image of himself in the Holy of Holies of the Jewish Temple that will be rebuilt in Jerusalem. The Antichrist will claim that he is God and call the people to worship him. This is called the Abomination of Desolation spoken of in II Thessalonians 2:1-10.

The Antichrist;  The term Antichrist is referred to as the “Beast” (Revelation 19:20), "Son of Perdition,” "Man of Sin,” or "Lawless One" (II Thessalonians 2:1-9). More than any man in history he will be in league with the Devil and do his bidding during the days just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom on earth. He will be defeated by our Lord when He returns.

Babylonian Empire;  The Babylonian Empire is the first of four prophetically significant world empires that are focused on in a prophetic dream and vision covered in the Book of Daniel.

Church or the Bride of Christ;  These two terms can be used synonymously to describe all who have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior (Revelation 21:9).

Common Market (European Union or EU);  The Common Market or the European Union is an association of certain European nations that many believe will eventually become the final world empire, or the revived and reconstituted Roman Empire.

The Day of the Lord;  The Day of the Lord is a phrase often used in reference to a period beginning with Great Tribulation and ending after the Millennial reign of Christ on the earth (I Thessalonians 5:1-4, II Peter 3:1-10).

Disciples;  Jesus said a disciple is one who follows Him and is identified by the fruit of the Spirit which is love.

Eastern Bloc;  The Eastern Bloc countries are the countries that at one time lined up politically and militarily with the former Soviet Union.

Euphrates River;  The Euphrates is a Middle Eastern river that is first mentioned as one of the four rivers running through the Garden of Eden. It is referred to many times throughout the Old Testament and then finally in the Book of Revelation where it is also referred to as the great river Euphrates."

European Economic Community;  At present there is a relationship between the various countries of Western Europe that is mostly economic in nature. It has already been determined that member nations will share a common currency. Hence it is called the European Economic Community.

Gabriel;  Gabriel is one of two archangels mentioned in the Scriptures. He was the angel that appeared to both Mary and Joseph to announce the birth of Jesus, the Jewish Messiah and Savior of the world.

Iniquity;  Iniquity is a synonym for sin.

The Medo-Persian Empire;  The Medo-Persian Empire (i.e., the empire of the Medes and Persians) is the second of four prophetically significant world empires covered in the Book of Daniel.

Messiah;  The word Messiah, means “anointed one,” “Savior,” or "Deliverer."

The Most Holy Place;  The Jewish Temple had both the holy place where only the priests were allowed to enter and the Most Holy place (or Holy of Holies) where the high priest would go once a year to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the nation Israel. During the Great Tribulation the Antichrist will desecrate the temple.

The Rapture;  The Rapture refers to the event when the church is "caught up to meet the Lord in the air” (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). It is also referred to in John 14:3 when our Lord says to His disciples "I will come again to receive you to myself."

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ;  Jesus often promised that He would someday return. The second coming of Christ will occur at the end of the seven years of the Great Tribulation.

Seventieth "week" of Daniel;  The word week as used in Daniel 9:27 literally just means seven. This particular seven refers to a seven year period which will culminate at the end of this present age.

Solomon’s Temple;  Solomon’s Temple is the temple that the Lord authorized Solomon to build "for Him" to carry out the requirements of worship and service to God and sacrifices for the sins of the people. It will one day be rebuilt and will be the location where the Antichrist will commit the Abomination of Desolation.

Son of Perdition (see Antichrist)

Transgression;  Transgression is a term used in Scripture as a synonym for sin or breaking God's law.

Tribulation/Great Tribulation;  The Tribulation (sometimes called the Great Tribulation) refers to a seven year period after the rapture of the church and just prior to the return of Christ to set up His kingdom (Matthew 24:14-30).
How to Become a Christian

First of all you must recognize that you are a sinner. Realize that you have missed the mark. This is true of each of us. We have deliberately crossed the line not once, but many times. The Bible says, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). This is a hard admission for many to make, but if we are not willing to hear the bad news, we cannot appreciate and respond to the good news.

Second, we must realize that Jesus Christ died on the cross for us. Because of sin, God had to take drastic measures to reach us. So He came to this earth and walked here as a man. But Jesus was more than just a good man. He was the God-man - God incarnate - and that is why His death on the cross is so significant.

At the cross, God Himself - in the person of Jesus Christ - took our place and bore our sins. He paid for them and purchased our redemption.

Third, we must repent of our sin. God has commanded men everywhere to repent. Acts 3:19 states, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." What does this word repent mean? It means to change direction - to hang a U-turn on the road of life. It means to stop living the kind of life we led previously and start living the kind of life outlined in the pages of the Bible. Now we must change and be willing to make a break with the past.

Fourth, we must receive Jesus Christ into our hearts and lives. Being a Christian is having God Himself take residence in our lives. John 1:12 tells us, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God." We must receive Him. Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in..." (Revelation 3:20). Each one of us must individually decide to open the door. How do we open it? Through prayer.

If you have never asked Jesus Christ to come into your life, you can do it right now. Here is a suggested prayer you might even pray.

Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and I am sorry for my sin. I turn and repent of my sins right now. Thank You for dying on the cross for me and paying the price for my sin. Please come into my heart and life right now. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and help me to be Your disciple. Thank You for forgiving me and coming into my life. Thank You that I am now a child of Yours and that I am going to heaven. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

When you pray that prayer God will respond. You have made the right decision - the decision that will impact how you spend eternity. Now you will go to heaven, and in the meantime, find peace and the answers to your spiritual questions.

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Endnotes

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