

The Harvest Is Almost In

John O. Reid (1930-2016)

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A man I worked with named Bill Jamison, was a fine man and a good salesman and I think he was even a pilot too. He seemed to like to sell and he seemed to live in this society pretty well. But when his memories would drift back to when he was a boy there would be a fondness that would come over his face and he wished he could go back in time.

Bill was raised on a farm, and with a smile he would tell us how the harvest season would come and he, his father, grandfather, and a few hired people would go out at about 3:00 in the morning to the fields to harvest the crop. The entire crew would come back around 8:00 for breakfast. The women would have about 6-8 eggs, homemade bread, and steak fixed for breakfast. Then they would head back out to the fields and work till noon then come back in eat again and work till dark and bring in the harvest.

After the harvest was in there would be a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment. It was a time when the pressure was off and the fight to endure the discipline required to finish the job was over. Bill did this every year till he left the farm and his feelings of accomplishment were all in his memories. He had to endure the hard work to reap the rewards of the harvest. Brethren, I hope you and I realize that we are going to be working and we are going to reap a harvest as well, a wonderful harvest.

I would imagine this year has not been easy for anybody. Nationwide there are great financial problems, nationally we have a debt of \$16 trillion or better now, and in the cities like California they cannot pay some of the police departments, and in one city they said the only employee they have is a drug dog! They could not afford anyone else.

Many are pushing for the same-sex marriage, even our president, which is hard to believe. And as for us as individuals, many have trouble making house payments or tithe payments. Health problems seem to be increasing tremendously and we find that the food we eat can seriously harm us and our families. So many people are sick and have so many problems. And if we reported all the lies told to us by our government and our leaders, we would hang our head in disbelief. We really would.

Recently, at the Democratic Convention, they were voting to put God in the platform. Villaraigosa, the mayor of Los Angeles, was asking, "How many want God back on the platform?" By the third time it sounded like the ones that did not want it got the vote, but

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a lady came up and said, "We are putting God back in." I could not believe it! That stunned me. I do not think I ever comprehended that America could ever say that publicly. I did not expect them to believe in God, but to say "we do not want him" shocked me.

Now have we ever seen the nakedness or the openness of what is happening to our nation as we have these last four years? It is unbelievable. I trust that we, for the first time, see the fallibility of man's government. This is really important. Even with a righteous leader, the country still fails when that leader is taken away. Turn to II Kings 23. This is Josiah here; he was awesome when it came to being righteous.

II Kings 23:3 Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord and keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took their stand for the covenant.

He went on to say, he destroyed this and he destroyed that which was pagan. You would think this would help but it did not.

II Kings 23:25 Now before him there was no king like him, [none] who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him.

Nevertheless the Lord was not pleased with Judah. What happened was the people were never changed. Josiah was awesome. I remember we had people say that if Mr. Armstrong were president of this country, we would be fine. Of course now we know that is just ridiculous.

As we face the world around us, I think that we can all see that without Jesus Christ ruling this entire world, there would never be peace, the peace that must take place. In short, without Jesus ruling in us, in our kings, and in every nation around the world, carrying out His commands will never be accomplished. This is why we pray, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." It is going to be a spectacular time when this harvest comes in.

Does this seem at all possible? As compared to today, can you imagine what it would be like to have everything you hear from your leadership to be absolutely the truth and

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to be absolutely profitable? Not in this society. What is it going to be like? Let us turn to Isaiah 11. The harvest will be this harvest and it will be a wonderful harvest. Good times are coming even though the world does not look like it.

Isaiah 11:1-5 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight is in the fear of the Lord, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.

This is of course Jesus Christ. One of the first things He is going to do (you can read it in Revelation 20:1-3), is to bind Satan with chains for a thousand years. So his influence that has so permeated the world and ruined everything will be taken away, and you will have a thousand years to work with the people.

Zephaniah 3:9 “For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve him with one accord.

Remember the Tower of Babel; it was all taken away in one day, instantly. From what I read here there will be a new language. When I was in Africa, they have 2800 dialects! How could you ever communicate with anyone that way, but they do somehow. In an instant there will be one language and everyone will be speaking the same language. To me that is just mind boggling.

Just to paraphrase, we are told here that this special leader—Jesus Christ—will rise from the trunk or roots of Jesse in contrast to what we have today. The Spirit of God shall rest on Him and this will be Jesus Christ. He will have true wisdom, understanding, the ability to give true counsel and the strength of heart and purpose to meet all difficulties, and He will be one who is fearless and is in charge of His duties. Not like it is in the government today. Judgment will be awesome, honest, and totally fair, and the wicked are going to be slain.

Now please turn to Revelation 2 because this involves us.

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Revelation 2:26-27 “And to he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron [there will be no political correctness, it will be a rod of iron]; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—

This will be Jesus Christ primarily, but we will follow His lead as His people. We will rule with a rod of iron without political correctness, but with love and in true understanding in what is best for every situation. This is how this will begin to be formed into a wonderful harvest. This is the harvest that we all look to with this government.

Isaiah 11:6 “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

We also see that by His reign there will be incredible peace, not like it is with what Richard described this morning. Even among animals vicious natures shall be changed to peaceful ones and children will be safe around them. What a time that will be! I was thinking about this little girl at a park in the Laguna Beach area. This little girl was walking between her father and mother and this mountain lion came and grabbed her by the head. Her parents had to fight the mountain lion to get her back, he would not let go. The girl lost her eye, but they got their baby back. This type of thing will be gone. It will not happen anymore.

Isaiah 11:7-12 The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.” [At that time of great love and mercy He will set his hand to recover his people.] It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah for the four corners of the earth.

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Now let us turn to David Maas' favorite scripture, but keep your finger in Isaiah. Reading Jeremiah 30-31 are good chapters for the Feast, they really are.

Jeremiah 31:34 “No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

What a time that is going to be when you feel clean and not looked at incorrectly.

Isaiah 12:1-6 And in that day you will say: “O Lord, I will praise you; though you were angry with me, your anger is turned away and you comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for YAH, the Lord, is my strength and my song; He also has become my salvation.” Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And in that day you will say: “Praise the Lord, call upon His name; declare His deeds among the peoples, make mention that His name is exalted. Sing to the Lord, for He has done excellent things; this is known in all the earth. [I want to stress that, it is done in *all* the earth, not just Israel.] Cry out and shout, O inhabitants of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!”

Isaiah 35:1-2 The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God.

I am not sure what that means to us. Are we reproducing the Garden of Eden? I do not know. Change will begin, beauty will begin to appear. No doubt we will have a job in this too, to help perfect it. The deserts will bloom abundantly, but more than that is now seeing the glory of Lebanon which reflects the forests and cedars and the excellence of Carmel. It reflects the excellence of God. It is beauty like we have never seen, and this is going to come. Now verse 3-4—those who have come through captivity.

Isaiah 35:3-4 Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, “Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your

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God will come with vengeance, with recompense of God; He will come and save you.

When you have been in captivity for a long time and have been treated brutally, then all of a sudden you hear that God is going to bring you back, you come out timidly. This is part of the harvest that we are going to make here. I was thinking of a concentration camp I knew someone was in. Anyway the trials are fearful and we strengthen their hands. Now they are strengthened and encouraged.

Isaiah 35:5-6 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

I would like a second eye. I only have one that works. I bet you would be surprised how many people in this congregation only have one eye. We have several here who would like to see—period, and they can picture what it would be like for those people that come out that need the help. I remember when I first lost the eye, my wife asked for a cup of tea. I put the tea bag in and poured the water in, but I poured the honey [on the counter]. It takes a while to get it all together.

I think it is all of us who are antique would like to be made a little stronger. Now please turn over to Zechariah 8 but we will come back to Isaiah 35. This is an interesting verse, one that gives us older folks hope. It talks about the people being made strong.

Zechariah 8:1-5 again the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying, “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervor I am zealous for her.’ “Thus says the Lord: ‘I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the Lord of Hosts, the Holy Mountain.’ “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age. [They will not be dying at a young age.] The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets.’

So hopefully we will not have to have any old folks homes and hopefully we will not have to answer the saying, “the mind makes decisions the body can't keep.” Many of us

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older folks appreciate this passage and what is happening here.

Now in back in Isaiah 35:

Isaiah 35:7-10 The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of jackals, where each lay, there shall be grass with reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it; it shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

They finally come to realize after all this time. I do not think we have any idea of what is coming. It is going to be gigantic. Revelation 9 talks about a 200 million man army that kills two billion people. You think that is not going to affect us? It will, do not ever think it will not.

You know I had two men that were in charge of our company in basic training that had been on the Bataan death march. You want to hear about a horrible march. The graduating class came and Sargent Mendoza said, "My only announcement for you is I hope you are killed the first day. It will save you a lot of wear and tear." He saw a lot of things and so did the Captain. They were thin and gaunt.

Now although the people started out timidly and afraid, hope has not entered their heart yet. It is really exciting to watch the hope start to build. Now the thing about this that we have to realize is that this is worldwide, not just Israel

Isaiah 2:1-4 The word of Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us his ways, and we shall walk in His paths." [Exciting things are starting to happen.] For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, [there will be no more war, he is judging between the

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nations] and they shall rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears in to pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

In verse 2 we see the Lord's house will be established and this of course will be after the devastating conclusion of what Satan has done to us, his hateful resistance to God the Father and to Jesus Christ. The Lord's house and the wonderful teaching that emanates from it will be taught to the people all over the world to those who would have never come in the past, but now they wish to learn the way of Jesus Christ and the Father.

They are being told about a future that they never knew and it is really wonderful for them. Now we that have had it for a long time take it for granted, but these people will not. They are going to see it first hand and they can see the fruit being produced. Their past history has been closed and the most wonderful future is set before them. This is the harvest we are looking for.

The people have heard of this new way of living and the future it will bring, they flow to it like a broad stream. They want to see it, they want to understand. Many that held to their petty gods now throw them away and their mind at last sees the one true God and they long to see Him and to be taught by Him; be taught the truth. Jesus and the church are now the center of religious living for the entire world. It is going to be really something!

In verse 4, He will judge and settle controversies, so that the men will no longer learn war. I do not think we can even begin to appreciate what that means. In the hustle of our daily lives, I do not think we contemplate the incredible cost of war, in lives and being wounded, that type of thing. In our nation's history, the Civil War took around 600,000 lives and that was peanuts to what comes later.

Most of society has never had to face things like WWII. John Ritenbaugh mentioned what it was like to be a boy during that time, how they had rationing and such. When I was a boy, during the same time period, our factories were filled with wives that had to work for the war effort. Blackouts, block wardens. I remember saving bacon fat and got 6 cents a pound at the butcher shop. This went into making ammunition.

I remember Port Chicago That is where they loaded ammunition on the ships. They would not let the blacks go to war so they kept them loading. Their leaders had them race to see who could load the ship faster and they dropped one of the big artillery rounds. We were 50 miles away and we could feel the ground shake and the windows

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rattle. I forgot how many were killed, but it was a huge number.

There were scrap metal drives. Something that struck me once, I saw a double barrel shotgun sitting on top of this scrap metal drive and I picked it up and looked at it. It worked fine but nobody would touch it. Why? Because it had to save the country; it was going into scrap metal.

Airplane identification training in schools, victory gardens, not to mention war films, patriotic songs, the draft, and of course rationing as John mentioned. 72 million were killed in WWII according to one source. We read the number like it was nothing. 72 million people killed and yet we can look forward to 2 billion probably in the near future! They were killed in every possible way. Six million were killed concentration camps.

Something that struck me: General Eisenhower knew that people would forget about the concentration camps. It had become just sort of a myth and we see that today. People believe that there was no such thing as concentration camps. So he had pictures taken of the bodies, as far as the eye can see of bodies. Now what I remember distinctly is a 16 year old girl, naked, stiff as a board, frozen, and these two guys picked her up by the head and the feet and threw her up on top of a pile of bodies, did not care who she was. This is what happened and I think we have to take this seriously and stay close to God because this is probably going to happen again soon.

In the Korean War there were 49,000 people killed. Vietnam, 47,000 people were killed. After 6,000 years, at last with Jesus Christ ruling there will be peace. Interesting thing about all these wars; they never solved a thing. Jesus Christ will take that assignment.

Now what will the world be like at the return of Jesus Christ and after He and we have worked with the people, perfected and helped them?

Isaiah 65:17-25 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. [That is quite some job all by itself: they will not come to mind.] But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of the weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. [It is going to be a whole different environment, one that is nothing like we have now.] No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die at one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. [What he is saying here is that we will all live 100 years. No one is going to die early. We have 100 years to be

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proven. The old man and the baby, to prove that he loves God or that he does not. Does this include the 65 billion that have been killed in abortion? I have no idea.] They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; [their homes are solid] for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, [we are going to live a long time] and My elect shall long enjoy the works of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord and their offspring with them. It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer [That is how close He is to them. They will start a prayer and He will already know what they need and give it to you. It will be a whole different environment.]; and while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," says the Lord.

It is a brand new way of living. Brethren, as I wind this down, this is the harvest we all look for. We will remember for eternity the joy that comes from the contrast of changing from what it was to what it is. This is the harvest we have all longed for and it is almost here, but we have a little more time to labor, you and I. What will our labor be? Specifically, to stand for the truth we have been given. This is very important. We will have to face those who are puffed up and say, "Hey, where is the promise of His coming, I don't see Him. " As the world around us changes we will be confronted with personal challenges that we individually have to face as those that have gone before us. It is not going to be easy. But in all of this we are to seek the Kingdom of God first.

Mathew 6:33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Ephesians 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us [talking about us here] with ever spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love [Never quite understood that, I always thought Mr. Armstrong was a little bit afraid to say that He choose us individually before the foundation of the world. I do not know. I have hunch He did.], having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

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This is why you are here, do not complain; do not be upset; be thankful to be here. Now for the final scriptures please turn to Philippians 3.

Philippians 3:20-4:1 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. Therefore, my beloved and longed for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

Stand fast!