

Stephen Roskiewicz - The Harvest

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Brother Al. Now at this time, we're going to have our brother David Rice from San Diego lead us in a word of prayer for our Brother Steve Roskowitz.

Our loving Heavenly Father, we are thankful to Thee for the spirit of fellowship we appreciate and enjoy here. We pray that it might continue in this next session, and Thy blessing be specially upon Brother Roskowitz as he ministers to us from thy word of truth. We pray that our minds and hearts might be receptive in hearing and incorporating into our hearts and lives the good things that we hear and are encouraging to us. We pray that we might be more faithful and devout, more noble and more reverent, more desirous of being fully consecrated to Thee.

And pray that this hour might assist us to that end. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Like Brother George Yike and Brother Leo Post Brother Steve Roskowitz is also a trustee of the Dawn. We're very glad to have him with us this year, and he's going to minister to us and tell us about the harvest. Brother Steve, what time have you. What time do I think we're gonna go?

As long as we want to go. We're going about 3, 4, 15.

Thank you, brother Brown.

I'm very happy to be here at this 1981 Los Angeles Fourth of July convention.

And I want to bring the greetings of love from our Grand Rapids Ecclesia and also from our family. They wanted to be remembered to you. Some of you know them all, Some of you know a few of them, but we won't take time to name them. But I'm very glad to convey that message of love, and I also want to express my appreciation for your love for the wonderful spirit of hospitality of all of your brethren here and especially the hospitality of Brother Sam and Sister Jean Christic in providing my care at their home, in listening to the discourses and the desire of our hearts as to know particularly where we are and this stream of time as it is appearing nearing the end.

We are interested, naturally, as to what our position is and how much longer are we to tread this way, this narrow way and when the kingdom will be established. Primarily, we are interested in the kingdom. We have been waiting for the kingdom for a long time. The world waits for it, yearns for it. Although they don't know what they're waiting for, we know what they're waiting for and what we're striving for to bring those wonderful blessings of life, health and joy to every corner of this earth.

And that we might share the opportunity of bringing them to the world, and so it all ends, as far as we're concerned, with the harvest period. I have been hearing many applications of the harvest, and I'd like to add my opinion, so to speak, or my thoughts to it. Now, I do this in a spirit of love, and I want you to accept it in that spirit, and I want you to use your opinion in a spirit of a sound mind and not in the spirit of a if it doesn't happen to harmonize with your thoughts that it would cause you to cease your.

Well, what. Your love or diminish your love. But it would increase your love and your determination to learn some of these things, because we are all learning, and as we find that this is our desire. So when we think of the story of Jesus, his birth, his life and death, and his resurrection, it would be of really little, comparatively slight importance if disconnected from the prophecies of his glorious kingdom, power and reign, would it not?

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It would have just ended there. But what did it accomplish? And this is something that we are interested in, under which reign all the families of the earth shall be blessed, and this has been the inspiring motivating force that has driven us, has wakened us up to God's wonderful love for the human family, and that has done something in our lives that has instilled a determination to be a part of this program in a very lively way, did it not to be a part of the blessed family, to bring these blessings to all the families of the earth? It was in view of this grand consummation to be accomplished by the kingdom that the angels sang at our Lord's birth of peace on earth and goodwill toward men, and proclaimed good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people.

What are the other words? In due time, and it's still appropriate to say today, which shall be in the future, in the future, not past. Yet it's still future, and this is the point, dear brethren, that we would like to know, as we study the Word of God, is it past, is it present, or is it future? And when we can appreciate these things, then that's when we can appreciate our Heavenly Father in the progress of the divine plan of the ages.

And this is what puts us, our interest into the program with more zeal to accomplish it.

And so in the present time, we know that that kingdom is still future. We're still praying for it every night, practically. In every prayer we pray thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven, and we know that that will be Answered in due time.

In the ninth chapter of Isaiah, there is an example that I would bring to you about what is it future, or is it past, or is it present? The prophet Isaiah speaks, and we believe that this statement pertains to the future. But it reads as if it relates to something in the past. Just as in verse six we read unto us a child is born, whereas Jesus was not born at that time yet, you see? But when that prophecy was made unto us a child is born as if it was an accomplished fact, but it was still a prophecy that was to come in the future.

And so we've got to be able to rightly divide the word of truth, do we not? Whereas Jesus was not born at that time until several centuries later. So this gives us an example here, the standpoint, and this is what the verse goes on to say about the light. The standpoint of the light shining is still future.

The great light is not yet shining upon the people. They still dwell in the land of the shadow of death worldwide, if you please. That's still the present condition of the world of mankind. The shadows of our demoralized, sinful, dying condition affect all of life's interest for the world of mankind. As the apostle explains subsequently, the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together.

They're waiting. We've heard this scripture. We've used it many times. Romans 8:22 the world is still waiting for this great light which the Scriptures promise shall in due time, down in the future, shine forth as the sun of righteousness, with healing in its beams. Malachi 4:2.

Our Lord refers to the same great event, still future, and assures us that when the sun of righteousness now listen to this. When the sun of righteousness shall shine forth, it shall include not only himself, but all of his faithful disciples, as represented by the ripened wheat of this gospel age. So evidently the harvest must be accomplished, an accomplished fact. To gather this ripened wheat into the garner, which is a heavenly condition that would gather all of the called out ones, the faithful, to the heavenly state. At the close of this age.

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He would gather the wheat crop of this age into the garner of the heavenly state, and he adds, then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him here. Matthew 13:43 now here is the point, brethren. What I'm saying, it's a means to an end.

Our heavenly Father is a God of order, and so he uses his progress and his program and a divine plan of development. He doesn't put something ahead that is supposed to be here and follow up this work. We are still, it goes on in a time of darkness. Or we are still in the time when darkness covers the earth, civilized society and gross darkness, the people, the heathen. True, there is a measure of light in the world, and this is where we come in also that light which came from our dear Redeemer, his words and his works, and still shines forth from all those who are truly his and whose hearts are illuminated by his promises and his Spirit.

We have caught on to this light, but this is not the light. We've got to separate the difference. You see, this is not the great light that shall shine unto every heart in due time. This is not the light of the world, scattering all of earth's darkness and causing all to appreciate the glory of God. It is merely the light that is in you.

In believers, it is a light of faith, a light of hope, a light of love ignited in the hearts of the little flock who shine as lighted candles in the world, and that's all it is, just a little lighted candle in the world. Not any more than that. We have found this out.

Our Lord's light shone in a little corner of the world called Palestine, way back there almost 2,000 years ago, and from his lamp many followers have lighted their lamps, and the Master's instruction is in Matthew 5:16, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. This is our work now. Instill this dark period of the world and put not your light under the bushel, but on lampstands, that it may give light to all in the house.

But he adds the darkness that is in the world at the present time, and we have learned this through experience. What does it do? Does it love the light? No.

The darkness hateth the light because its deeds are evil and are made manifest thereby. As the light shines upon the evil deeds of people, it reveals their evil works, and they don't like it.

Marvel not if the world hate you. Ye know that it hated me before it hated you. Matthew 5:15 16 and John 3:30. During this harvest time is what this happens of all those who have entered into the harvest.

So the light we possess at the present time and under the present condition is wholly inadequate to dispel the night to bring in the glorious day for which the whole creation groans and still waits. That glorious day cannot come until the Lord shall first have found the members of his body and together with Himself are to constitute the Son of righteousness. Meantime, the apostle declares, 2 Corinthians 4, 4. The God of this world blinds the mind of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the goodness of God should shine into their hearts. The church.

In this present time of darkness, the prophet appropriates the words of God to the church. In this present time of darkness, the prophet appropriates the word of God, the message of life eternal, the basis of our hopes and joys, and declares, thy word is a lamp unto our feet, a lantern unto our footsteps. Psalms 119, 105. The need for this lamp is most evident, brethren, and I want to emphasize this. Sometimes we know we have a lamp, and I want to make a statement here.

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We all have this lamp, but those who have it and don't use it, it's not any good on a shelf. But those who have this lamp and use it, do not stumble, because ye are the children of light and of the day. First Thessalonians 5, 5. Now we'd like to go just make some observations, dear brethren, in respect to this, and here are some opinions.

I call them opinions, yet they're based on Scripture, and I feel that we are in the harvest.

I used to say that with a little reservation while we're in the harvest. But we're in a great time of trouble.

Do we straddle the fence? Either we're over here or we're over here. When I was a boy, I thought I'd be smart and I'd walk a fence. It was a wood fence. Maybe you did that.

I was very brave and I walked and I fell one foot on one leg, on one side, one.

It was very painful.

It was not a very good idea, and I think what I'm trying to illustrate, brethren, that we must remember that either we're in the harvest or we're in the great time of trouble.

I think a good scripture that we have before us is Jeremiah 8, 20, and sometimes we read this, and I remember that when Israel's war of 67, I believe it was. We were at a convention in Denver, and we were talking about this war, and Brother Fay mentioned this scripture. He says, can it be?

Will this be?

And we'll read the scripture. The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

This is something to contemplate.

Well, it didn't turn out that that was Jacob's trouble at that time. But what I'm trying to say, brethren, that I worked on the farm and the harvest was always considered part of the summer.

In the Bible, the seasons are divided in two parts, summer and winter. Not into four as we divide them, spring, summer, fall, and winter, but into two parts, summer and winter. So as long as summer is here, we sow in the summer, we reap in the summer, the summer of favorable time, the summer of favor, God's favor to us, and wasn't the harvest a wonderful period of favor to the Lord's people who have been harvested at the end of the age? And we're looking at this period as the end of the Gospel age.

We have another scripture, brethren, that I want to clearly let you remember. Matthew 13:39. This comes from a parable of the picture that the Lord was portraying to the disciples and also to those that surrounded them, and in the 39th verse, he says, talking about the parable of wheat and tares, he says in the 38th verse, the field is the world. The good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one.

And the 39th verse, the enemy that sowed them, the tares is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world or the age. We have no problem with that word, do we? It's the harvest of the end of the age. The reapers are the angels.

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Well, so what I'm trying to say, the harvest comes at the end, not at the beginning, and so if we're still in the gospel age, we believe that that harvest comes in the end of that age and not in the beginning of the new age just before us.

And I think this is a good thing, a principle to remember. Are we in the end of the age or are we in the beginning? And I say that with all humility and the spirit of a sound mind in applying these lessons that the Lord has left for us.

We have other scriptures and I could be here quite a while, but we're not going to go into all of them. But I just want to call your attention to them.

Brother Russell makes a statement about the day of the Lord.

He makes a statement, and I think we ought to just heed that statement for a moment that we can clarify, because we usually apply this statement to the day of Jehovah, the day of his vengeance here at the end of the age. But listen to what he said here, page 592 in the reference.

The day of the Lord is a term which, strictly speaking refers to the whole period during which Christ will be present of the entire millennial age. That's the day of the Lord. You see the point that if that is the day of the Lord. So what happens in this day of the Lord? Because the next scripture that I want to present to you for your consideration and it's for your study and I think it will be helpful that what we see began in 1874 when our Lord did come.

We believe he is the Lord of the harvest and that the harvest work has been going on. But it wasn't the seventh millennial day. Why have we got a verification from our Lord?

I'm not saying this to start any quandary or any arguments, but the next scripture that comes to my mind is one in the 24th chapter of Matthew, and you remember what Jesus said. He was answering the disciples question, what shall be the sign of thy presence and the end of the age? A very simple question, and so he goes down in the 24th chapter of Matthew and he makes various examples, descriptions of what they could expect, not they, but that we could expect living at the end of the age.

Because he, I think very well knew they would be passed away out of the picture. But how could we look for these things?

Well, as I say, we can't straddle the fence. We can't have one foot on this side and one foot on this side. Either we're in the harvest or we're over here in that day.

In Matthew 24, the 20th and the 21st verses, Jesus said to his disciples, pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath, for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. Now let's think a little bit. Let's just analyze this. There isn't one person, not even Brother Lamello, that was born before 1874.

So we all if the Sabbath began then all of our flights took place after, and we should pray that it don't take place then, but before the Sabbath. Because the Sabbath is not a 124 hour Sabbath, but this Sabbath represents the whole thousand year day of Sabbath, a millennium, if you please, when the kingdom is established. So it would be useless. I wasn't born until 39 years after the Sabbath started, if it started then.

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And the harvest we say started in 1874. So what we're trying to say is using a spirit of a sound mind, brethren, we've seen what tremendous activity took place after that day, and not only for 40 years, because what the expectation was that in 1914 the harvest would have ended. But you know what? It was surely only beginning, and the Lord's Work was expanding, and it's still going on to this day.

It's still summertime. Because we have learned from natural circumstances and experience that the harvest was part of the summer and the winter didn't come till the harvest work. This harvest is ended.

So it is simple. If we just analyze these things and we see that this great Sabbath is still future, the thousand year period of time, this kingdom when it is established, and so the harvest work goes grandly on. Oh, it's diminishing. No question about it, brethren, but how much joy.

And this is another thing that I want to bring out to you, that there was joy experienced in the harvest. How much joy was there amongst the brethren when they all got together and put on a great effort, expended all their money to promote and to advertise the truth, to put on meetings to invite the public to hear the message of salvation, of restitution, of resurrection from the dead, had brethren who had no education, could get up and give a testimony and even give a talk, because they were inspired by this wonderful message of truth. Because it was true, it was filled with hope and reality, and then it could say, thy kingdom come and thy will be done, and we are still praying for it because we see the harvest is still going on.

Every time we have a baptismal, are we? We're glad another one comes on another grain of wheat. Brethren, what a wonderful thought. The wintertime comes when the harvest is ended. Let me read you a few more scriptures.

How I could go on with. With many scriptures in Revelation, but I'll read you one in Revelation when the harvest is finished. In the seventh chapter of Revelation, verses one to three. I've got just a quotation here. He says, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth.

That the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree, till we have sealed the servants of our God and their foreheads. Now the four winds, we realize that when they're loosed, anarchy will take place upon the earth, and then it'll be too late. The wintertime will have started. The great company will have a part possibly in that tribulation.

Because I believe this is a great company Scripture. They'll have to go through that great tribulation, and so, as Jesus said in this 20 and 21st. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time. No, nor Ever shall be. A great time of trouble then takes place, and it's the Sabbath, we say. Well, you say the great tribulation takes the Sabbath. This is what the Lord is saying.

The end of the age is the harvest. Now, how long a period it will take when the church is taken up, and when these winds of anarchy and great tribulation, and how long this lasts when the kingdoms are finally dissolved, when Satan is bound completely, when the judgments of the nations is finished, and I can't help but then read what it says in the prophecy of Zephaniah. The Lord is in control then.

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He has his bride with him. Evidently now how much of a part they have. It doesn't say it's saying what he's doing. But nevertheless, we see here in the prophecy of Zephaniah he said the trouble is graphically described by the prophet, that that day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation. That's not yet, that's still coming, a day of darkness and gloominess.

I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men. Oh, we see this, that they are going around in a hazy way. But that is still not the great time of trouble that brings the kingdom. Because they have sinned against the Lord. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath.

Zephaniah 1, 15, 18. Therefore wait upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey. For my determination is to gather the nations that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them my indignation, even all my fierce anger. For all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy, and then what?

He. Don't stop there. He doesn't mean a literal fire that will destroy the people. For then will I turn to the people. A pure language.

He has control now, does he not? And how thankful we are, brethren. The Lord has control. It's his kingdom. He's already subdued the prince of this world, Satan.

He'll turn to the people, a pure language, and that they may call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent. Zephaniah 3, the third chapter, the eighth and ninth verses.

There is so much to be thankful for. So we see, dear brethren, that the prophecy of this, not only the second verse of the ninth chapter of Isaiah, it goes far beyond the living of that time and assures us that the light will shine to those who are in the shadow of death, and the Deadly Shade. Properly a title for Hades, those who are in the Hades, and darkness upon every member of the race, the human race.

The light must shine because Christ has redeemed us once for all, and then if you follow that ninth chapter, and I want to read those verses in that ninth chapter in closing, I wished I had more time to tell you, but we see the harvest. When the harvest ends, Satan is bound, the kingdoms are judged and the Lord turns to them. As a pure language.

I forgot to mention one scripture about the church in Luke 21:36. You know, we worry. We worry about our children, our grandchildren.

But I want to tell you something. We have a wonderful, merciful Heavenly Father. Can we trust our children, our families, our grandchildren to him?

I went into the doctor's office.

I gave the gal my name, wrote it out for her. So when my turn was to go into the office, she didn't know how to pronounce it. So I got up. I knew what her problem was. I said, you know, young lady, I said, more people die of fright than of actual pain.

Everybody laughed. I said, now the name isn't so bad. Ross T wits. Now, I said, you try it. She didn't.

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Oh, she said, that isn't bad, is it? I think in this case, too, we might be more fearful than it's caused to be so fearful. For let's trust in the Lord. If I can just use a minute or two. We'd like to read that ninth chapter because we always appreciate it around Christmas time and we could use some of the Christmas temperatures.

But nevertheless, it brings a soothing, overwhelming spirit of trust and confidence, particularly in the sixth verse. For unto us a child is born, Unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called. Wonderful Counsellor.

The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David, upon his kingdom to order it, to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even forever, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform us.

And brethren, we had a wonderful theme text.

Unity of the Spirit and the bonds of peace.

We have a little rhubarb. You want to call them an owl? That's all I want. Because we get all shook up today, tomorrow we'll forget it. I know.

I've seen that amongst our children. Next day, you know, they have a battle. You think they'll never talk to each other again. The next day they're just as nice as they can be if ye don't become like these little children.

And this is what our Lord wants us to be, and so let us be determined to go home from this convention. Trying to instill this unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. May God add his blessing to our determination to fulfill our covenant of sacrifice. Amen.

Oh, did you get it?

Thank you very much, Brother Oskowitz. What more can we say? We have had three wonderful days of convention. Been sitting at the feet of our session here at this wonderful convention to thank thee for thy loving kindness and for every blessing that thou has poured upon us. We thank thee for the word of truth and for the wonderful Holy Spirit that has called us out of darkness into Thy marvelous light, that thou has provided for our strength and joy.

The harvest message that has given us this wonderful hope of.