Living Sermons

A BILLY GRAHAM CLASSIC SERMON

LIVING ON THE FAULT LINE

HEBREWS 12:27-28

“Don’t let the headlines frighten you. God is still sovereign. He’s still on the throne.”

BILLY GRAHAM

Canada

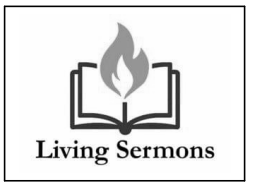
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LIVING ON THE FAULT LINE

Preacher: Billy Graham

Publisher: LivingSermons.com

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Living Sermons

FOREWORD

What can you hold on to when everything around you is shaking? In this message, preached on a windy afternoon to a stadium crowd in Canada, Billy Graham takes his text from Hebrews 12: God will shake the earth and the heavens once more, so “that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

Dr. Graham begins with a warning about the San Andreas Fault and turns it into a picture of our world: international, technological and personal fault lines grinding toward an earthquake. Then he names the things that will never be shaken: the nature of God, the Word of God, the reality of human sin, the moral law, and the promise that Jesus Christ will return.

His tone is hopeful and urgent. He speaks of a coming King whose crown no earthly sovereign can keep, of a peace conference that will finally work, and of believers who wait with patience, watch with longing, work harder than ever and prepare with urgency.

In preparing this edition, we have preserved the preacher’s message and wording. We removed time stamps and broadcast material, trimmed a few spoken repetitions, arranged the transcript into chapters with subheadings, and corrected punctuation, capitalization and obvious transcription errors.

Whatever is shaking in your life today, may these pages set your feet on the kingdom that cannot be moved.

Wisdom Epsi
— The Chief Editor, LivingSermons.com

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This book is a faithful transcript of a live sermon delivered by the preacher under the inspiration and unction of the Holy Spirit. Every effort has been made to preserve the preacher's exact words, tone, flow, and spiritual authority, while carefully proofreading and formatting the message into a clear and readable ebook format.

The message you are about to read was originally ministered in a live congregational setting. As such, it carries the weight, urgency, and atmosphere of that sacred gathering. Minor grammatical and structural adjustments have been made solely to enhance readability, without altering the substance, intent, or power of the original delivery.

Watch the live sermon from which this message was transcribed on YouTube

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Our standard is reverence for the Word of God. Our daily goal is to transform powerful live sermons into polished PDF and ebook editions for the edification of the Body of Christ. It is our prayer that as you read, the same grace, conviction, clarity, and impartation present in the live service will minister to you afresh.

— Livingsermons.com
A Spirit-led Publishing Stewardship

MAIN MESSAGE BEGINS HERE

CHAPTER 1

THINGS THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN

A WINDY AFTERNOON

Now I want you to turn with me to the twelfth chapter of Hebrews. It's very windy up here where I'm standing, and I have to hold my Bible down or it will blow away.

> *And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of those things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*
>
> **HEBREWS 12:27-28**

CHAPTER 2

"GOODBYE, SAN FRANCISCO"

NOT IF, BUT WHEN

You know, I read an article some time ago—I think it was in *Harper's Magazine*—entitled "Goodbye, San Francisco." And the title of this article indicated that the San Andreas Fault, which runs up and down California, may explode at any time into perhaps the greatest earthquake the world has ever known.

Some British scientists came over here, and the BBC, the British Broadcasting Corporation, accompanied them. And they soon felt that this thing is going to happen at any time. They said, "Not if, but when." Two plates of hot, slowly moving inner mass are beginning to rub together. The edges are rough. They're beginning to bend. And they say that it could strike right under San Francisco Bay and kill thousands of people and wound thousands of others.

A PICTURE OF OUR WORLD

And as I read that article, it seemed to say to me that it could be a picture of our world today. New economic, social, scientific and religious ideas are rubbing and bending against the traditional values that we've always held in the United States and Canada. And there's mounting internal pressure against all restraint, as more and more persons want only personal gratification.

And the world is moving toward a great international, cultural and political earthquake, unless something happens. And that something will have to be a supernatural moving of the Spirit of God throughout the world.

THE INTERNATIONAL FAULT LINE

There are international tensions. Look at the Horn of Africa, or the Mideast, or the Soviet Union and China, with all of their statements against each other. Mr. Zhou Enlai said before he died, "We are not preparing for peace in China. We are preparing for war."

THE TECHNOLOGICAL FAULT LINE

Then there's the technological fault line. Science could almost now build paradise on earth. But even when man was in paradise, he rebelled against God, and that's where the first sin was committed. There was total social justice in those days: no wars, no police forces, no armies, no Vietnams, no death, no suffering, no hospitals. In the middle of that, man rebelled against God.

Science could bring us almost to the point of paradise again, were it not for the fact that man is a sinner. He has lust and greed and hate, and because of that, man is under the sentence of death.

The technological fault line makes it impossible for history to repeat itself. We say that history repeats itself, but there's one element in modern times that's different from anything in the history of the world, and that is technology. Why, up until about 1835, man could only go as fast as a horse could run. Look how fast we can go today: eighteen thousand miles an hour through space. In less than 150 years, that's all happened.

And then we have the question today of genetic engineering and environmental manipulation, and they're causing scientists to look frantically for ethical guidelines. What is going to guide us? If we reject the Ten Commandments, and we reject the Sermon on the Mount, and we reject biblical ethics, what's going to keep us from crashing?

CHAPTER 3

PERSONAL FAULT LINES

HEARTS FAILING FOR FEAR

Then there are the personal fault lines that you have in your own life, and in your family, and your business, and your relationships with your neighbor. The tensions are there.

Jesus said there would come a time when men's hearts would fail because of fear: fear, boredom, anxieties, guilt, fear of death, loss of health.

How many people are watching me right now who have already been told that you have a terminal illness? Many of you that are sitting here will be told by the doctor this year that you only have a few months to live. And you may be a young person. The Bible says, "It's appointed unto man once to die, and after that, the judgment."

THE POWERS OF HEAVEN SHAKEN

Yes, we're living in a crisis period. And Jesus said there shall be "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

Yes, Jesus said the powers of heaven. The whole earth and heaven itself will be shaken by what is going to come. And that's what we just read in Hebrews. The Bible says God is going to shake the earth once more, and the heavens—the stars, the planets—will be shaken. But there will be some things that will remain, that will always be the same, that you can always count on.

CHAPTER 4

THE UNCHANGING GOD

HE CHANGES NOT

First, the nature of God never changes. God said, “I am the Lord God; I change not.”

The Scripture says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” That means that God hasn’t changed so much as an eyelash in all the centuries.

UNCHANGING IN HOLINESS

God is unchanging in His holiness. God is a holy and a righteous God. “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, which is, and which is to come.” God is a holy God and a righteous God, and God will not put up with sin. He still hates it, because He’s a holy God.

UNCHANGING IN JUDGMENT

And God is a God of judgment. The Bible says, “The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth.” Every secret thing will be brought to light. There is a day of judgment coming. That has not changed. The day has been set. It’s been appointed.

UNCHANGING IN LOVE

God is unchanging in His love. “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God still loves. And He loves with such an everlasting love that He gave His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for you. And if it were not for that, there would be no hope in the world. He died on the cross, and He rose again, and He’s alive, and He’s coming back. And that’s the hope that we have. And that’s the good news of the Gospel.

GOOD NEWS

The word gospel means good news. I have good news for you. The good news is: God loves you. He has a plan for your life. There’s a purpose for living. There’s a reason for existence. Don’t give up. Don’t let the headlines frighten you. God is still sovereign. He’s still on the throne. And those of us that follow Him and serve Him have a future that’s brighter than tomorrow. “Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,” wrote the Gaithers. Yes, God is love, and God so loved.

CHAPTER 5

THE WORD AND THE HEART

THE WORD STANDS FOREVER

Another thing that hasn't changed is the Word of God. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven."

The first question the devil ever asked man—Eve, in the Garden of Eden—was, "Yea, hath God said?" He tried to make them doubt the Word of God. But this Word doesn't change. It's unchanging. That's why it's important to read it every day and to study it. Let it be your guide.

HUMAN NATURE DOESN'T CHANGE

And then, human nature doesn't change. Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Has that changed? Look at the world today. Read the headlines about the murders and the robberies and the muggings and the rapes throughout the world—not just in Canada or the United States. It's worldwide: a worldwide convulsion of violence and terrorism.

That's what Jeremiah said: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Your heart, my heart. You don't know what you would do under certain circumstances.

We're all sinners: sinners by birth, sinners by choice, sinners by practice. We need sin forgiven. You cannot be reconciled to God, you cannot go to heaven, unless those sins are forgiven. And God says, "I can forgive you, if you repent of your sin and receive My Son Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior."

CHAPTER 6

THE UNCHANGING LAW

ONE TITTLE

Another thing that hasn't changed: the moral law hasn't changed. "It's easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail," said Jesus.

THE COMMANDMENTS STILL STAND

"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Idolatry is still a sin.

"Honor thy father and thy mother." Rebellion against the authority of your parents is still a sin.

"Thou shalt not commit immorality." If you have committed immorality, you're a sinner.

"Thou shalt not steal." Cheating in school, pilfering in a store.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Lying. Have you ever told a lie?

GUILTY OF ALL

You say, “Well, Billy, unfortunately, I’ve committed almost all of those.” Well, suppose you had only broken one of those laws—just one, one time? That made you a sinner. Because the Bible says that if we keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, we’re guilty of the whole law. So in that sense, we’ve all broken all the commandments.

We have sinned against God. Whatever the color of our skin, whatever our religious affiliation, we are sinners, and we need reconciliation. We need justification. We need to be redeemed. And that’s why Christ came. And that’s why He went to the cross.

CHAPTER 7

“I SHALL RETURN”

THE PROMISE HAS NOT CHANGED

And then fifthly, and lastly, the promise of His coming again has not changed. He is coming again.

General MacArthur said when he left the Philippines, “I shall return.” Christ said before He left, “I shall return.” I believe He’s going to return. “When the Son of man shall come in all His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations.”

THE GREATEST PEACE CONFERENCE

That’ll be the greatest disarmament peace conference the world has ever known, and it’s the one conference that’s going to work. All nations will be gathered. Maybe they’ll come to New York and sit in the United Nations building—I don’t know. But all the nations of the world, I think, are going to gather at Jerusalem, and the peace will be dictated. We will come under a theocracy: God ruling.

And I would rather trust the Lord Jesus Christ to rule this earth than any man that has ever lived. He would rule it with justice and love and mercy and tenderness and perfection, which we don’t have today from any man. Because any man that we elect, or that climbs to the top, is still a man. His heart has not been changed.

"I WILL COME AGAIN"

Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

As He was ascending into heaven, two men in white apparel stood beside the disciples, who had tears in their eyes. These disciples were watching the ascension of their Lord, and these two men said, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”

A SONG, A CREED AND A CROWN

Do you know what Winston Churchill’s favorite song was? “Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”

The Nicene Creed, which almost all of our denominations accept, says, “He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead.”

Charles Wesley, the great English hymn writer, wrote seven thousand hymns. We have on the platform Dr. Oswald J. Smith, who has been one of the greatest hymn writers of our century, and now the Gaithers, whose songs are being sung all over the world. But Charles Wesley wrote seven thousand hymns—can you believe it?—and five thousand of them dealt with the second coming of Jesus Christ.

When Queen Elizabeth II, your queen, was crowned, you remember, the Archbishop of Canterbury laid the crown on her head. And here is what he said as he laid it there: “I give thee, O gracious lady, this crown to wear until He who deserves the right to wear it shall return.” That’s a part of the history of Britain. When a sovereign is crowned, it’s recognized that it’s only temporary, and that crown will someday be worn by the King of kings and Lord of lords.

CHAPTER 8

WHO CAN GOVERN THE WORLD?

"SURELY I COME QUICKLY"

The great question facing the world today is: Who's going to restore order? Who can counter the dangers? Who can govern the world? I propose to you that the Lord Jesus Christ can, and He's going to do it. The Bible tells us that.

The last two verses of the Bible say, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The last thought in the Bible is the coming again of Jesus Christ.

THE SIGNS

Now, before His coming, He made certain predictions. He said there'll be some signs that you can watch for. He said there'll be convulsions. There'll be earthquakes—social and political earthquakes as well as physical. Wars, worldwide violence, moral permissiveness, tribulations, both Jews and Christians alike suffering; Antichrist; people betraying one another, leading up toward Armageddon.

Is that where we are now? I do not know, because He warned us against trying to set a date. But all the signs would seem to point to it: something has to happen pretty soon, or there may not be a human race left.

THE NEW PROPHETS

And you know, it's interesting to me that we're not hearing very much about that from the pulpit today. But we're hearing it from the scientists and the government leaders of many nations of the world. It seems that the prophets of our time have become the scientists and the sociologists and the philosophers and the political leaders who are warning us, as President Carter did the other day when he said, "We're on a dangerous course."

SIN, SUFFERING AND DEATH

Now, what will happen when Christ comes? I have some good news for you. Sin, suffering and death are the three greatest problems that man has ever faced. They've been with us since the beginning, and science has not solved any of them.

It has not solved the problem of sin in the human heart. It has not solved the problem of suffering. You can put a person in the finest hospital in the world, and he'll still suffer. Put him under the finest psychiatric care, and he'll still suffer, because man is a suffering being. Science cannot solve this terrible problem of human suffering. And we've not been able to solve the problem of death. Men still die by the thousands every day from all kinds of causes.

But Jesus is going to eliminate all that. Sin will be eliminated. Suffering will be eliminated. Death will be eliminated. Peace will be established on the earth. "His name shall be called the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end," the Scripture says.

Our social institutions will be reconstructed. Poverty will be eliminated. Social justice will prevail throughout the world. The kingdom of God will triumph.

I'M GLAD TO BE ON HIS SIDE

I'm glad to be on His side. I'm glad that He chose me a number of years ago, and I was born again, and I received Christ into my heart. And now I know that I'm ready to enter His kingdom, by His grace and by His mercy. I've already entered the kingdom and have eternal life now. I don't have to wait to die to get it. I have it now.

So the future does not hold any fears for me. But the future holds fears for me when I think of you who may not know Christ.

CHAPTER 9

UNTIL HE COMES

WAIT WITH PATIENCE

Now, what should our attitude be until that moment when He comes? We're to wait with patience. "For ye have need of patience, for yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry," in Hebrews 10.

It's been two thousand years since He made those promises. Peter said people are going to begin to ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" In all these two thousand years people have looked for Him, and He hasn't come. What's wrong? Did something happen? No. Everything's going right along according to God's timetable. God planned it this way. That's the way He meant it to be, so that we will come to Him by simple faith and accept Him into our hearts as Lord and Savior. Yes, we're to wait with patience, because He's going to come.

WATCH WITH LONGING

And then we're to watch. Do you get up some morning and say, "Lord, maybe today You're going to come"? Do you go to bed at night and say, "Lord, maybe while I'm sleeping, You're going to come"? We're waiting with longing expectation for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, said Paul in Philippians 3. Are you waiting and watching?

WORK HARDER THAN EVER

And then we are to work. Because He's coming doesn't mean that we're to go home and sit down and wait and do nothing and say, "There's nothing I can do to help the world." It ought to cause you to work harder than ever before—harder in your church, harder in your community. Do more good works than ever before. Pray for peace, work for peace, help in all good works.

The Scripture says, “Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” Jesus said that. When He comes back, He ought to find you working harder than ever before.

I’ve met some people that said, “There’s no use evangelizing. There’s no use giving to missions. There’s no use giving to the hungry of the world, because Jesus is going to come back, and we can’t solve all the problems anyway.” That is an unscriptural and an unbiblical attitude, and it’s a sin. We ought to be working and giving and praying and living with the expectation that He is going to come. But it ought to increase our zeal. It ought to intensify our efforts.

NOT RETIRING

As far as I’m personally concerned, I read in the paper once in a while where some people hopefully say that I’m going to retire soon. Well, I want to tell you, I don’t ever intend to retire until the Lord retires me. I know that I’m getting a bit older, but I want to tell you, I feel the best I’ve ever felt in my life. And the Lord has given me extra strength and given our team extra strength.

(Applause)

We are going to carry on. We’re going to carry on by the grace of God, and with your help, by your prayers and your support, carrying this Gospel throughout the world.

CHAPTER 10

BE YE ALSO READY

PREPARE WITH URGENCY

And then the last thing that we're to do: we're to prepare with urgency. Jesus said, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Are you ready? What do you have to do to be ready?

REPENT

First, repent of your sins. But you say, "How do you do that?" You say, "Lord, I'm sorry. I'm willing to change my lifestyle. I'm willing to change my way of thinking and living, and I'm ready to bring my whole life under the lordship of Jesus Christ. I'm changing my priorities." That's repentance. You can do that today—right now, today.

RECEIVE CHRIST

Secondly, by faith you receive Christ as your Lord and your Savior. Maybe you've already done that when you joined a church, but you want to reconfirm that commitment, because you're really not sure. You see, you can be a member of the church and not have a personal, daily relationship with Christ. And you're not sure that you have that relationship. His peace and His joy and His love are not yours, and the assurance is not there. And on this wonderful, glorious afternoon, you'd like to make sure.

CHAPTER 11

THE INVITATION

A MOMENT OF ETERNITY

I'm going to ask you to do something that we've seen thousands of people do during the past few days. I'm going to ask hundreds of you to get up out of your seats and come and stand in front of this platform. And after you've come and stood here, I'm going to say a word to you and have a prayer with you, and give you some literature to help you in your Christian life before you go.

If you're with friends or relatives, they'll wait on you where you are. If you've come in a bus, they'll wait. And I'm going to ask that no one leave the stadium. The temptation is to run and get ahead of everybody else, but please stay where you are. This is a holy moment. This is a moment of eternity, with thousands of people here.

WHY PUBLICLY?

Why do I ask you to come? Every person Jesus called in the New Testament, He called publicly. He said, "If you're not willing to openly acknowledge Me before men, I'll not acknowledge you before My Father which is in heaven." There's something about coming forward and standing here publicly that settles it and seals it in your life.

And many people have already started. You come from this great stand back here. Get up and come quickly. It'll take you about two minutes to come, so start now. Quickly, you come.

THE INVITATION HYMN

(Announcer) As hundreds are responding to Mr. Graham's invitation to make a public commitment to Jesus Christ, you can make that same commitment right where you are. Just pick up the phone and call the number you see on your screen. Special friends are waiting to talk with you and pray with you about this most important decision.

And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

ARE YOU READY?

You that are watching by television can see that hundreds of people are coming down every aisle in this great stadium to make their commitment to Jesus Christ. You make that commitment where you are now. Let Him come in as your Lord and Master, and be prepared for that great day.

Because, you see, He may not come in your lifetime. But if He doesn't, when you die, that's the end of the world for you. Are you ready for that event? You can make ready right now. Just receive Christ into your heart.

CLOSING WORDS

(Closing Announcement) If you just prayed that prayer with my father, or if you have any questions about a relationship with Jesus Christ, why don't you just call that number that is on the screen. There'll be someone there to talk with you, pray with you and answer those questions. And remember, God loves you! If you would like to commit your life to Jesus Christ, please call us right now, toll free at 1-877-772-4559. That's 1-877-772-4559. Or you can write to us at: Billy Graham, 1 Billy Graham Parkway, Department C, Charlotte, North Carolina 28201. Or you can contact us on the web 24/7 at peacewithgod.tv. We'll get the same helps to you that we give to everyone who responds at the invitation.

On behalf of Franklin Graham and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, thank you for watching and thank you for your prayers.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Passages quoted or alluded to in this message, in order of appearance. An asterisk (*) marks a passage the preacher did not name by chapter and verse; the editors identified it.

Hebrews 12:26-28 — Things which cannot be shaken; the text of the message. (Chapter named, verses not.) *(Chapters 1, 3)*

Genesis 3* — Man rebels in paradise. *(Chapter 2)*

Exodus 20*; Matthew 5–7* — The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. *(Chapter 2)*

Luke 21:25-26* — Signs in the sun, moon and stars; men's hearts failing them for fear. *(Chapter 3)*

Hebrews 9:27* — Appointed unto man once to die. *(Chapter 3)*

Malachi 3:6* — "I am the Lord, I change not." *(Chapter 4)*

James 1:17* — No variableness, neither shadow of turning. *(Chapter 4)*

Revelation 4:8* — "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." *(Chapter 4)*

1 Samuel 2:10* — The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth. *(Chapter 4)*

Ecclesiastes 12:14* — Every secret thing brought into judgment. *(Chapter 4)*

Romans 5:8* — "God commendeth His love toward us." *(Chapter 4)*

John 3:16* — God so loved. *(Chapter 4)*

Isaiah 40:8* — "The word of our God shall stand for ever." *(Chapter 5)*

Psalm 119:89* — "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." *(Chapter 5)*

Genesis 3:1* — "Yea, hath God said?" *(Chapter 5)*

Jeremiah 17:9* — "The heart is deceitful above all things." *(Chapter 5)*

Luke 16:17* — Easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail. *(Chapter 6)*

Exodus 20:3, 12, 14-16* — The commandments. *(Chapter 6)*

James 2:10* — Offend in one point, guilty of all. *(Chapter 6)*

Matthew 25:31-32* — The Son of Man on the throne of His glory; all nations gathered. *(Chapter 7)*

John 14:2-3* — "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." *(Chapter 7)*

Acts 1:10-11* — "This same Jesus … shall so come in like manner." *(Chapter 7)*

Revelation 19:16* — King of kings and Lord of lords. *(Chapter 7)*

Revelation 22:20* — "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." *(Chapter 8)*

Matthew 24:6-24* — Signs before His coming. *(Chapter 8)*

Revelation 16:16* — Armageddon. *(Chapter 8)*

Isaiah 9:6-7* — The Prince of Peace; of His government there shall be no end. *(Chapter 8)*

Revelation 21:4* — No more death, sorrow or pain. *(Chapter 8)*

Hebrews 10:36-37 — "He that shall come will come." (Chapter named, verses not.) *(Chapter 9)*

2 Peter 3:4* — "Where is the promise of His coming?" *(Chapter 9)*

Philippians 3:20 — Waiting for the Savior. (Chapter named, verse not.) *(Chapter 9)*

Matthew 24:46* — "Blessed is that servant." *(Chapter 9)*

Matthew 24:44* — "Be ye also ready." *(Chapter 10)*

Matthew 10:32-33* — Acknowledge Me before men. *(Chapter 11)*

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

William "Billy" F. Graham Jr. (1918–2018) was raised on a dairy farm in Charlotte, North Carolina. In 1934, at age 15, he made a commitment to faith during a revival led by Mordecai Ham. He was ordained in 1939, graduated from Florida Bible Institute in 1940, and earned a B.A. from Wheaton College in 1943, where he married Ruth McCue Bell.

After pastoring in Illinois and serving as the first full-time evangelist for Youth for Christ International, Graham was vaulted into national prominence by the 1949 Los Angeles Crusade. This event launched decades of global outreach, including historic, extended crusades in London (1954), New York City (1957), Seoul (1973), and Rio de Janeiro (1974). Overall, he preached live to nearly 215 million people in over 185 countries and territories.

In 1950, he founded the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA). Through BGEA, Graham hosted the syndicated *Hour of Decision* radio program for over 60 years, published *Decision* magazine, and authored 33 books—including bestsellers such as *Angels: God's Secret Agents* (1975) and his 1997 autobiography, *Just As I Am*.

A counselor to U.S. presidents, Graham appeared on Gallup's "Ten Most Admired Men in the World" list a record 61 times. His honors include the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1983), Congressional Gold Medal (1996), and an Honorary Knighthood (2001). Following his passing in 2018 at age 99, he lay in honor in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda, and a bronze statue of him was added to the U.S. Capitol in 2024. Billy and Ruth raised five children, 19 grandchildren, 44 great-grandchildren, and nine great-great-grandchildren.

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