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HIS APPEARING AND HIS KINGDOM

By Duane V. Maxey

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INTRODUCTION

PLEASE VIEW AND/OR PRINT THE JPEG GRAPHICS PERTAINING TO THIS PUBLICATION:-- In order to illustrate and clarify my chronological interpretation of various Second-Coming events, I have prepared 12 schematic drawings. Three of the larger drawings I have named "Charts": hdm0124b.jpg, hdm0124c.jpg, and hdm0124e.jpg. Nine of the smaller drawings I have named "Tables": hdm0124a.jpg, hdm0124d.jpg, and hdm0124f.jpg through hdm0124l.jpg. At the point in the text where each drawing appeared in the printed edition I have inserted a reference to the JPEG graphic that displays that Chart or Table. All of these JPGs are found in Graphics Folder. The JPGs are not displayed by the "Pictures" functions of our Preview-Menu, but can be imported and opened in any word processor or graphics program that is able to open JPEG graphics. On our CD using the PGD-Menu, one JPG is seen in the Menu and the remainder can be seen by clicking on View Graphics\Picview.

The title of this book was taken from 2 Timothy 4:1 -- "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom."

Section I deals with prophetic subjects concerning "His appearing," and Section II deals with prophetic subjects related to "His kingdom". Section III consists of appendices A to D and the Index. Appendix D presents an aspect of the author's belief concerning the possible imminence of Christ's return which is not discussed in the main body of the book. I would encourage my readers to peruse all of the appendices, perhaps even before reading Section I.

The basic aims of the first section are:

(a) to demonstrate that the return of Christ will be a single-stage second coming after the great tribulation, and that Christians will be resurrected and raptured at that time, rather than before or during the seven-year tribulation;

(b) to show that the millennium, in the church age, will expire before Christ's return, instead of taking place after His second coming.

The main purpose of the second section is:

(c) to show that, following Christ's second coming, the Messianic kingdom will take place in the eternal state of the new heaven and new earth, and not during an additional millennium of time on this earth.

The author has arrived at these positions after much study, dating back to the 1970s. I realize that there are many good and Godly people who hold much different views from those put forth in this book, and it is not my desire to create needless controversy concerning second coming prophecy. However, it is my persuasion that the Bible supports the prophetic positions set forth in this volume, and those positions represent the honest views of this writer.

Realizing that some who read these pages may question the scriptural basis for various statements, I have included numerous Bible quotations throughout the main body of this book.

Thus, my readers can more readily and easily examine the Biblical foundation of each of the prophetic positions which are put forth by the author. My readers will also observe that there is some repetition in this book, but "line upon line, precept upon precept" is sometimes the best way to fix a truth in one's mind.

It is hoped that this book will be a channel of enlightenment and blessing to all who read it. Beyond that, this volume is sent forth with the prayer that it will glorify Christ and help at least some of His Church to be better prepared for "His Appearing and His Kingdom."

Duane V. Maxey, Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, June 3, 1992

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CONTENTS

* * *

SECTION I -- HIS APPEARING

PART A -- THE CHRONOLOGY OF HIS APPEARING

Chapter 1

The Olivet Discourse

Chapter 2
The Elect In The Great Tribulation

Chapter 3
The Day Of The Lord

Chapter 4
How Jesus Described His Return

Chapter 5
What The Greek Words Indicate

Chapter 6
The Rapture Passage

Chapter 7
The Prophetic Chronology Of The Book Of Revelation

Chapter 8
The Millennium In The Church Age

Chapter 9
The 70Th Week Of Daniel

Chapter 10
The End Of The Age

* * *

SECTION I -- HIS APPEARING

PART B -- THE DAY OF HIS APPEARING

Chapter 11
The Coming Of The Day Of God

Chapter 12
The Revelation Of Christ

Chapter 13
The Conversion Of Israel

Chapter 14
The Last Trump

Chapter 15

The General Resurrection

Chapter 16
The Marriage Of The Lamb

Chapter 17
The Indignation

Chapter 18
The Consumption

Chapter 19
The General Judgment

Chapter 20
The Regeneration

* * *

SECTION II -- HIS KINGDOM

PART A -- THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF HIS KINGDOM

Chapter 21
The Kingdom Interpreted

Chapter 22
The Kingdom Age Is Eternal

Chapter 23
The Kingdom Fulfillments Of Rev. 21-22

Chapter 24
The Kingdom King And Owner

Chapter 25
The Kingdom Nation, Land, And City

Chapter 26
The Kingdom Characteristics

Chapter 27
The Kingdom Time

Chapter 28
The Kingdom Mysteries

Chapter 29
The Kingdom Appearance

Chapter 30
The Kingdom Bride, New Jerusalem

Chapter 31
The Kingdom Consummation

* * *

SECTION II -- HIS KINGDOM

PART B -- THE GLORY OF HIS KINGDOM

Chapter 32
The Kingdom Glory Of Christ

Chapter 33
The Kingdom Glory (Ensuing and Eternal)

Chapter 34
The Kingdom Glory (Consuming and Punishing)

Chapter 35
The Kingdom Glory (Heirs and Aliens)

Chapter 36
The Kingdom Glory (Magnitude and Change)

* * *

SECTION III -- THE APPENDICES

Appendix A -- Perfect Through Suffering

Appendix B -- The Early Church Tribulation Belief

Appendix C -- The Origin Of Pre-Trib Teaching

Appendix D -- The Element Of Uncertainty

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SECTION I -- HIS APPEARING

PART A -- THE CHRONOLOGY OF HIS APPEARING

Chapter 1

THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Rev. 19:10 He is both the divine Author and ultimate Authority on the interpretation of all prophecy. Therefore the chronology of second coming events which Jesus set forth in His great Olivet Discourse should be accepted, without alteration or rearrangement, as the Divine order we must follow to interpret those occurrences in their proper sequence. Rearranging that order leads to both error and confusion in one's interpretation of second coming prophecy. On the other hand, following that order will help to clarify and to correct one's perception of the subject. Further, when all second coming prophecy is interpreted according to Jesus' chronology in the Olivet Discourse, a beautiful symmetry and harmony on the subject may be seen throughout the Bible.

The scope of this discourse, which was given in response to a three-fold question from His disciples, extends from events then close at hand on through to "the end of the world," or end of the age (aionos). Matt. 24:1-3 The Olivet Discourse is found in Matthew 24:4 -- 25:46. Under 12 divisions, the entire text of the discourse is presented below. Following this, the 12 divisions are again listed with references only. Presented thus, the reader can examine both the author's perceived divisions in relationship to their various scriptures and those divisions in their immediate chronological relationship to one another. The chronology of events and subjects which Jesus related in The Olivet Discourse is seen to be as follows:

1. The Beginning of Sorrows -- Matt. 24:4-8

(4) And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. (5) For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (6) And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (7) For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. (8) All these are the beginning of sorrows.

2. Persecution, Apostasy, Perseverance -- Matt. 24:9-13

(9) Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. (10) And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. (11) And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. (12) And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. (13) But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

3. The World-Wide Preaching of The Gospel -- Matt. 24:14

(14) And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

4. THE GREAT TRIBULATION -- MATT. 24:15-22

(15) When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) (16) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: (17) Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: (18) Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. (19) And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! (20) But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: (21) For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. (22) And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

5. Instructions About His Second Coming -- Matt. 24:23-28

(23) Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. (24) For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (25) Behold, I have told you before. (26) Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. (27) For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (28) For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

6. The Cosmic Signs Ushering In The Day of The Lord -- Matt. 24:29

(29) Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

7. THE GLORIOUS SECOND COMING OF CHRIST -- MATT. 24:30

(30) And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

8. THE RESURRECTION AND RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS -- MATT. 24:31

(31) And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

9. Teachings About Readiness For His Return -- Matt. 24:32-51

(32) Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: (33) So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. (34) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. (35) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass

away. (36) But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. (37) But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (38) For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, (39) And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (40) Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (41) Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (42) Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. (43) But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. (44) Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (45) Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? (46) Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. (47) Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. (48) But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; (49) And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; (50) The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, (51) And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

10. The Marriage of The Bridegroom -- Matt. 25:1-13

(1) Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. (2) And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. (3) They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: (4) But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. (5) While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. (6) And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. (7) Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. (8) And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. (9) But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. (10) And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. (11) Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. (12) But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. (13) Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

11. The Judgment of All -- Matt. 25:14-33 (That of Servants and That of All Nations=All Individuals)

(14) For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. (15) And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. (16) Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. (17) And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. (18) But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. (19) After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. (20) And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. (21) His lord said unto him,

Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (22) He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. (23) His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (24) Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strowed: (25) And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. (26) His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strowed: (27) Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. (28) Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. (29) For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. (30) And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (31) When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: (32) And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: (33) And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

12. The Eternal State -- Matt. 25:34-46

(34) Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (35) For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: (36) Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. (37) Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? (38) When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? (39) Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? (40) And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (41) Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: (42) For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: (43) I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. (44) Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? (45) Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. (46) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

1. The Beginning of Sorrows -- Matt. 24:4-8

2. Persecution, Apostasy, Perseverance -- Matt. 24:9-13

3. The World-Wide Preaching of The Gospel -- Matt. 24:14

4. THE GREAT TRIBULATION -- MATT. 24:15-22

5. Instructions About His Second Coming -- Matt. 24:23-28
6. The Cosmic Signs Ushering In The Day of The Lord -- Matt. 24:29
7. THE GLORIOUS SECOND COMING OF CHRIST -- MATT. 24:30
8. THE RESURRECTION AND RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS -- MATT. 24:31
9. Teachings About Readiness For His Return -- Matt. 24:32-51
10. The Marriage of The Bridegroom -- Matt. 25:1-13 11. The Judgment of All --
Matt. 25:14-33 12. The Eternal State -- Matt. 25:34-46

Tracing the simple but divinely authoritative chronology given in the Olivet Discourse, note the following observations:

- (a) The rapture will occur after, not before or during, the time of the tribulation or great tribulation. (see the preceding numbers 4 and 8, and the remainder of section I of this book)
- (b) The "elect" will pass through, not be raptured out of, the great tribulation. (see Matt. 24:21-22 and Chapter 2 of this book)
- (c) We are not to look for a "secret" appearance of Christ for His saints. (see Matt. 24:23-27, also Chapter 4 and Appendix C of this book)
- (d) The second coming of Christ will be a glorious, visible, single-stage return after the great tribulation, and it will be at this revelation, not 7 years earlier, that the saints will meet him in the air. (see the preceding numbers 5,6,7; Matt. 24:29-31; and Chapters 4,5,6, and 12 of this book)
- (e) The marriage supper of the Lamb and the Judgment will occur after, not during the tribulation period. (see the preceding numbers 4,10,11, the content of their scripture references, and Chapter 16 of this book)
- (f) The great white throne Judgment of all, which shall divide the sheep from the goats, will occur shortly after Jesus returns, and not 1000 years later. (see Matt. 25:14-46 which is synonymous with Rev 20:11-15, and Chapter 19 of this book)
- (g) Jesus' Messianic reign with His saints will occur, not on this earth, but in the heavenly, eternal state which will begin shortly after His Return, and not following an additional millennium in this world. (see number 12 above, Matt. 25:34-46, and Section II of this book)

As unusual as these prophetic observations may seem to some, it is asserted by the writer that they reflect the order of second coming events which Jesus set forth and the correct Bible chronology which harmonizes with the entire body of prophetic scriptures. In the following pages

and chapters of this book I will endeavor to demonstrate to the reader, scripturally and repeatedly just how and why this is so.

* * * * *

Chapter 2

THE ELECT IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Matt. 24:21-22 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. (22) And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. The "elect" will definitely be in the great tribulation. The question is concerning their identity.

Who Are The Elect?

Regardless of whatever assertions may be made that these particular "elect" are the Jewish remnant, if it can be shown that, to the contrary, they are in fact a part of the Church, then we must conclude that the rapture does not occur before the great tribulation.

Consider the following: The word "elect" in our KJV New Testament is translated from the Greek word "eklektos" which means: "laid out, chosen, choice." Sometimes "eklektos" is translated "elect" and other times it is translated "chosen," but whether it is translated "elect" or "chosen" the meaning is the same. For the sake of convenience, every reference in this chapter to this Greek word will be listed simply as "eklektos" instead of in its various forms, for the forms of the word do not change the root meaning of the word.

The word eklektos locates the elect as in the great tribulation both in Matt. 24:22 and in Matt. 24:24. By way of showing that we have no scriptural authority for stating that these elect are Jews and not part of the Church, let us consider an earlier reference Jesus made to the elect in Matt. 22:14. Here He said: "For many are called, but few are chosen." (or elect, eklektos) The statement was made at the close of the following parable:

Matt. 22:1-14 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, (2) The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, (3) And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. (4) Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. (5) But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: (6) And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. (7) But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

(8) Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. (9) Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. (10) So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. (11) And when the king

came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: (12) And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. (13) Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (14) For many are called, but few are chosen. (elect, eklektos)

In verses 1-7 of the above parable, those of the Jewish nation who rejected Christ are likened unto those who were called to the marriage that a certain king made for his son. By failing to come when bidden, and by entreating spitefully and even slaying those who bid them, they proved themselves unworthy. In righteous wrath the king "sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city."

Following this, in verses 8-14, the Gentiles are brought into view. The king sent his servants out into the highways with instructions to bid as many as they could find to the marriage, and the wedding was furnished with guests. This pictures the invitation to salvation being given to the Gentiles and their response.

Finally, the king came in to see the guests and "he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment." He was taken away and cast into outer darkness, "For many are called, but few are chosen." (elect, eklektos)

The Elect Are Those Wearing The Wedding Garment

In Jesus' parable we can see the following:

- (a) The elect are those who accepted the king's invitation.
- (b) The elect are those who have on the wedding garment.

All who have on the wedding garment will be at the wedding feast. Further, holiness people equate having on the wedding garment with being sanctified wholly, and this is scriptural: "Elect (eklektos) according to the foreknowledge of God through sanctification of the Spirit.." 1 Pet. 1:2 When you are sanctified wholly by the fiery baptism of the Spirit, you have on the wedding garment. Consider also Col. 3:12 "Put on therefore, as the elect (eklektos) of God, holy and beloved...kindness, humbleness of mind.."

Both in Jesus' parable and in the above verses the elect are obviously not Jewish believers only, but rather they are sanctified believers which constitute the Church of Christ, including both Jews and Gentiles. That the elect of the New Testament constitute the Church, and not simply a Jewish remnant during the tribulation, is further verified by the following verses: (a) Luke 18:7 "And shall not God avenge his own elect (elektos) which cry unto him day and night..;" (b) Rom. 8:33 "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" (eklektos); (c) Titus 1:1 "according to the faith of God's elect" (eklektos).

The remnant of Israel does constitute a part of the elect. Paul wrote: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election (ekloge) of grace." Rom. 11:5 And,

"as touching the election, they (the Jews) are beloved for the fathers' sakes." Rom. 11:28
However, while believing Israel is a part of "God's elect," there is no scriptural authority for designating the elect of the great tribulation as not part of the Church.

The Elect Will Pass Through The Great Tribulation

There is much evidence to support the fact that the elect down to the end of the age, including the time of the great tribulation, are none other than the Church of Christ. That being the case, Jesus' Olivet Discourse plainly reveals that the Church will pass through the great tribulation instead of being raptured to heaven before it begins.

There is yet another difficulty in this matter for those who assert that the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place in heaven during the 7-year tribulation period. If the elect, as has been shown, are those who have on the wedding garment of holiness, then how is it possible for the marriage supper to be transpiring in heaven while they are still on earth during that time? It is those who have on the wedding garment of holiness who will indeed be called to the marriage supper, and if those elect are seen as still on earth during the great tribulation, then obviously the marriage supper will take place after that time. This corresponds exactly with Jesus' chronology in the Olivet Discourse: He mentioned the marriage after, not before or during, the great tribulation. See the listing below:

The Beginning of Sorrows -- Matt. 24:4-8

Persecution, Apostasy, Perseverance -- Matt. 24:9-13

The World-Wide Preaching of The Gospel -- Matt. 24:14

The Great Tribulation -- Matt. 24:15-22

Instructions About His Second Coming -- Matt. 24:23-28

The Cosmic Signs Ushering In The Day of The Lord -- Matt. 24:29

The Glorious Second Coming of Christ -- Matt. 24:30

Teachings About Readiness For His Return -- Matt. 24:32-51

The Marriage of The Bridegroom -- Matt. 25:1-13

The Judgment of All -- Matt. 25:14-33

The Eternal State -- Matt. 25:34-46

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Chapter 3

THE DAY OF THE LORD

Knowing When That Day Begins

In order to interpret second coming events in their proper sequence it is important to have a clear understanding about when "the day of the Lord" begins. Therefore before any attempt is made to describe just "what is" the day of the Lord, let us study just "when is" the day of the Lord in relationship to the tribulation period.

The Tribulation Not Part Of That Day

The tribulation is not part of the day of the Lord, for the day of the Lord commences "immediately after the tribulation." Joel and Jesus together pinpoint for us when the day of the Lord begins. The prophet Joel locates certain cosmic signs as occurring before the day of the Lord, and Jesus locates those same cosmic signs as occurring after the tribulation:

Joel 2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.

Matt. 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

The Great Tribulation Precedes That Day

The conclusion from the evidence of these two scriptures is obvious: The cosmic signs divide the tribulation from the day of the Lord, and therefore the tribulation cannot be in any way interpreted as a part of the day of the Lord. They are two distinct time periods separated from one another thus by the cosmic signs as shown below: [SEE ALSO hdm0124a.jpg]

[THE GREAT TRIBULATION]--[THE COSMIC SIGNS]--[THE DAY OF THE LORD]

The fact that cosmic signs will usher in the day of the Lord is also seen in the following passages as well:

Isa. 13:9-10,13 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh.. (10) For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.. (13)..I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

Isa. 24:23 The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign...gloriously.

Joel 3:14-15 ..The day of the Lord is near.. (15) The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.

Zeph. 1:14-15 The great day of the Lord is near... (15) That day is...a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.

Acts 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.

Various Terms For The One and Same Day

Various titles are used in the scripture in reference to the Lord, but they all refer to that one divine Person. In like manner, it is concluded, while various terms are used in the scripture in reference to the day of the Lord, all of these terms refer to the same day. The following table is presented for the student who may desire to study this matter in greater depth:

"The Day of The Lord"

Isa. 2:12; 13:6,9,13; Ezek. 30:3; Joel 2:31; 3:14-15; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1:7,14; 2:3; Zech. 14:1; Mal. 4:5; Acts 2:20; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Pet. 3:10; 1 Thess. 5:2

"That Day"

Isa. 2:11,17,20; 11:10-12:6; 14:3; 19:16-24; 24:21; 25:9; 26:1; 27:2,12,13; 28:5; 31:7; 52:6; Hos. 2:16,18,21; Joel 3:18; Amos 8:9-10; Micah 4:6; Zeph. 1:10,15; 3:8-11,16; Zech. 2:11; 3:9-10. 9:16; 12:3-11; 13:1-4; 14:6; Mal. 3:17; Matt. 7:22; 24:36; 26:29; Mark 13:32; 14:25; Luke 10:12; 17:31; 21:34; John 14:19-20; 1 Thess. 5:4; 2 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 1:12,18; 4:8

Other Terms For The Day of The Lord:

"The day of visitation" Isa. 10:3; 1 Pet. 2:12; "the day of His fierce anger" Isa. 13:13; "the day of vengeance" Isa. 34:8; 61:2; 63:4; "the day of His coming" Mal. 3:2; "the last day" John 6:39,40,44,54; 11:24; 12:48; "the day of God" 2 Pet. 3:12; "the great day of God Almighty" Rev. 16:14; "the day of wrath" Rom. 2:5; "the great day of His wrath" Rev. 6:17; "the day" Lu. 17:30; Rom. 13:12; 1 Cor. 3:13; Heb. 10:25; 2 Pet. 1:19; "the day of redemption" Eph. 4:30; "the day of Christ" Philip. 1:10; 2:16; 2 Thess. 2:2; "the day of Jesus Christ" Philip. 1:6; "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Cor. 1:8; 2 Cor. 1:14; "the Son of man in His day" Lu. 17:24

The reader is asked to bear in mind that while some Old Testament references to the day of the Lord may have had their nearer fulfillment in Israel's history, they may also have their greater fulfillment on that awesome, coming day at the end of the age.

Some have made a distinction between "the day of Christ" and "the day of the Lord," but there is no scriptural warrant for doing so. Jesus Christ is Lord, and therefore "the day of Christ" must also be "the day of the Lord." This being true, 2 Thess. 2:1-8 also locates the day of the Lord as beginning after the tribulation. Here, concerning the day of Christ, Paul taught that first, before that day, must come the time during which the "man of sin" shall rule the world. That time will be during the tribulation period and will close at the end of the great tribulation when he will be

consumed "by the spirit of His (Christ's) mouth" and destroyed "with the brightness of His coming. The sequence of events here should be obvious:

(a) First shall come the tribulation period during which the man of sin shall rule the earth.

(b) Then shall come the day of Christ or day of the Lord after the tribulation when Christ will utterly consume and destroy anti-Christ.

What are the events which shall occur on the day of the Lord? Obviously, one of them shall be the destruction of anti-Christ, but the author will relate more fully the things which shall take place on "that day" in the later pages and chapters of this book. (see Part B this Section)

For now, let the reader fix clearly in mind the fact that the tribulation period is not part of the day of the Lord, and that the day of the Lord shall begin "immediately after the tribulation," being ushered in by the cosmic signs mentioned by Jesus in Matt. 24:29.

Since it is important toward pinpointing the chronological time frame of a number of second coming events, the reader is asked to continually bear these facts in mind while reading the remainder of this book.

The Church On Earth Until That Day

Finally, it is plain from the scriptures that the church will be on earth until the day of Christ, and this fact precludes a pre-tribulation rapture: "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ...That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence until the day of Christ." Philip. 1:6,10 "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night..and they (the wicked) shall not escape..But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." 1 Thess. 5:2-4

Until the day of the Lord comes, after the tribulation, Christ will continue to perform or perfect His spiritual work in the heart of each Christian, and His watchful "brethren" shall be looking for Christ's return on that day.

The matters of imminence and uncertainty as to the precise time of Christ's return are discussed in Appendix D. It is the persuasion of this author that it is uncertainty in this regard, rather than imminence, which demands our watchfulness. In no case should the scriptural chronology of second coming events be rearranged to accommodate or emphasize these factors. Further, whatever one may believe in regard to them, it is clear from the Bible that Christians will be on earth until the day of the Lord comes, and that day will not arrive until after the great tribulation.

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Chapter 4 HOW JESUS DESCRIBED HIS RETURN

A Singular Event, After The Tribulation

In the Olivet Discourse, and elsewhere in the Bible, Jesus described His second coming as a singular event which would take place after the tribulation, and not as a split event, the rapture taking place before or during the tribulation, and the revelation taking place after the tribulation. In John 14:3, He did not say "I will come again and again," but simply "if I go..I will come again.."

Consider the following from the Olivet Discourse: The disciples asked Him, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" (singular, not comings plural) Matt. 24:3 Then from 24:27 "So shall also the coming (singular) of the Son of man be." Matt. 24:33 "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it (singular) is near, even at the doors." Matt. 24:37 "So shall also the coming (singular) of the Son of man be." Matt. 24:39 "So shall also the coming (singular) of the Son of man be."

This author asserts that in these references, as well as all other statements Jesus made about His second coming, He was describing a singular event rather than a double or split event with 3 1/2 or 7 years intervening between the rapture and the revelation. Further, to assert that "the coming of the Son of man" mentioned in Matt. 24:27; Matt. 24:37; and Matt. 24:39 has reference to the rapture, while "the Son of man coming" mentioned in Matt. 24:30 refers to the revelation, seems to this author to be quite obviously making a distinction which is not there. Who from the context can show that "the coming of the Son of man" and "the Son of man coming" refer to two different events?

If one were to read Matthew 24 without having been previously schooled to interpret differently, the reader would naturally take "the coming of the Son of man" and "the Son of man coming" to be in reference to the same event, and rightly so. The problem which pre-tribulationists have with the above, simple conclusion is that if they were to allow that these very similar phrases refer to one and the same event, then they would be also forced to conclude that the rapture will occur after the tribulation because "the Son of man coming" phrase in Matt. 24:30 obviously refers to an event which occurs after the tribulation.

The simple solution to this problem is to allow that these similar phrases do indeed refer to a singular, second coming event the whole of which shall occur after the tribulation. There are two aspects of the singular, second coming: (1) The revelation; and (2) The rapture. However, Jesus pictured these as occurring together and after the great tribulation. "Immediately after the tribulation":

(1) The revelation: "then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven..and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.."

(2) The rapture: "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matt. 24:29-31

From the above, one can see that if indeed one of these aspects were to precede the other it would be the revelation preceding the rapture and not vice versa. A sensible interpretation is that

at the revelation the rapture shall occur, both being but two aspects of the singular, second coming of Christ after the great tribulation.

A Sudden, Surprising Event, On The Day Of The Lord

Nowhere did Jesus describe any aspect of His second coming as "secret," but He did describe His second coming as both sudden and surprising: "Wherefore if they shall say unto you..Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. 24:26-27

Contrary to depicting His second coming and meeting with His followers as something "secret," Jesus portrayed it as like "the lightning..shineth.." Lightning "shineth" suddenly and surprisingly, but not secretly! There is often loud thunder following the flashing brilliance of a streak of lightning and such a magnitude of both sight and sound that everyone around knows about it. No, lightning is not secret, but it is sudden and often surprises people. When it strikes there is no time then to prepare for it if you are not already prepared!

Thus did Jesus characterize His revelation and the rapture on the day of the Lord. These events will be highly visible and audible, but will strike like lightning, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." 1 Cor. 15:52 The entire world from "the east..even unto the west" will suddenly see Christ coming in the clouds, but the rapture will be over so quickly that there will be no time then to get ready.

By the time a previously impenitent soul blinked his eyes shut to say a prayer, in that "twinkling of an eye" it would be forever too late to get his prayer through. It will not be secrecy, but the sudden surprise of the revelation and rapture which will snare the millions unprepared for Jesus' second coming.

An Event Requiring Personal Readiness And Scriptural Watchfulness

In Matt. 24:32-35 Jesus made two things clear: (1) The fulfillment of all preceding signs to His second coming would be the means whereby His disciples could know that the revelation and rapture were near; and (2) The disciples were to look for the fulfillment of His Olivet Discourse prophecy exactly according to His word: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Those who insist that uncertainty concerning the precise day and hour means that the rapture could not occur after the great tribulation might do well to take a hard look at the above two facts. I assert that Jesus did not tell us to expect the rapture before the tribulation, but to the contrary:

(1) He told us we could know that it was near when we saw "all these things" which He said would precede His revelation and the rapture, including "the beginning of sorrows," "the abomination of desolation," and "great tribulation".

(2) He told us that His "words" concerning these coming prophetic events would take place exactly as He said they would, for His words were the authoritative words of God and would never "pass away".

In light of this, should we not look for a post-tribulational revelation and rapture, in exact accordance with Jesus "words" concerning them?: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days...then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven...then..they shall see the Son of man coming...and..gather together his elect." Matt. 24:29-31

The Precise Day And Hour Will Not Be Known

However, while Jesus showed us how we could know when the rapture was "near, even at the doors," He also made it clear that no man could predict the precise date and time of its occurrence: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man...ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Matt. 24:36,42

Even though the revelation and rapture occur after the tribulation, the following fact alone will make knowledge of the precise day and hour impossible to know: "For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matt. 24:22 The days of the great tribulation shall be shortened, but shortened how many days? Only the Father knows that.

Therefore, spiritual readiness and scriptural watchfulness is required: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:42-44 Four times in the scriptures Jesus warned that He would come unexpectedly "as a thief": Matt. 24:13; Lu. 12:39; Rev. 3:3; and Rev. 16:15. However, in every one of these references He includes the inference that careful "watching" would make it possible for Christians to prevent being robbed of their readiness to meet Him in the air at His second coming.

The Day When Christ Will Come "As A Thief"

Again, does the fact that Jesus will come upon millions "as a thief" mean that the revelation and rapture will occur before or during, and not after, the tribulation? No, not according to the scriptures, for while we cannot know the calendar day when Jesus will come "as a thief," we can know the prophetic day when He will thus come. Jesus' coming "as a thief" will occur on the post-tribulational "day of the Lord": "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night..But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." 1 Thess. 5:2,4 "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.." 2 Pet. 3:10

We should not rearrange the Bible chronology of second coming events to accommodate our system of prophetic interpretation. That which demands our watchfulness is uncertainty concerning the precise day and hour of Christ's return, rather than a certainty that His second

coming is imminent. While the possibility of Christ's return being imminent can present a strong incentive toward personal readiness, it is also true that our watchfulness should be a scriptural watchfulness, and we should expect Jesus to come, according to the scriptures, "as a thief" on the day which shall come "as a thief," the post-tribulational "day of the Lord". (see also Appendix D)

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Chapter 5

WHAT THE GREEK WORDS INDICATE

The following three Greek words have a bearing on the correct interpretation of second coming chronology: apokalupsis, epiphany, and parousia.

Some have interpreted that the word apokalupsis refers to the revelation after the tribulation while the word parousia refers to the rapture before or during the tribulation. However, there is no indication of such from either their meaning or from the contexts in which those words are used. Instead, every indication from both the meaning and scriptural contexts of all three Greek words is that they are used synonymously in reference to the post-tribulational revelation of Christ and rapture of the saints.

The Word Apokalupsis

The Greek word apokalupsis means: an uncovering, or revelation. It is used to describe the glorious, visible return of Christ at the close of the great tribulation, and I know of no pre-tribulationists who would dispute this. However, if it can be demonstrated that Christians: (a) are waiting for the apokalupsis; (b) will receive rest at the apokalupsis; (c) will be tried until the apokalupsis; and (4) will be glorified at the apokalupsis, then it should become plain to all that the rapture of the church will occur at the revelation after the great tribulation, and not 3 1/2 or 7 years earlier.

I Cor. 1:7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming (apokalupsis) of our Lord Jesus Christ..

In what sense could Christians be waiting for the apokalupsis, or revelation, after the great tribulation if they were gone to heaven 7 or 3 1/2 years before the apokalupsis occurs?

2 Thess. 1:7-10 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed (apokalupsis) from heaven with his mighty angels, (8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; (10) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

The word "rest" in verse 7 above is a noun, not a verb. The Thessalonian Christians were being persecuted and troubled by unbelievers. (1:4-7) First Paul assured them that God would properly recompense those who troubled them, and then he also assured the persecuted

Thessalonian Christians that God would recompense "rest" to "you who are troubled." Thus, these Christians were promised here that God would give them "rest" from their persecution and troubles "with us" (with Paul) "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed (apokalupsis) from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire.."

The time to which Paul pointed as the time when both the Thessalonian Christians and himself would receive God's "rest" from all their earthly troubles was at the time of Christ's revelation after the tribulation. This passage indicates that for all Christians "rest" and the "glorified" state shall come to them at the revelation, which of course means that the rapture will occur after the tribulation.

1 Pet. 1:5,7,9 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed (apokalupsetai) in the last time. (7) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ: (9) Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Quite obviously, the apostle Peter tells us here that the Christian's faith will be tried, even with fire, until the revelation of Jesus Christ. It can also be seen here that it will be at this post tribulational revelation that Christians will "receive the end of their faith" and their final salvation will be revealed (apokalupsetai) at this "last time". This all, of course, precludes a pretribulation rapture.

1 Pet. 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ.

Notice that Peter says in this verse that "grace" will be brought unto the Christian at the revelation of Jesus Christ. What "grace" will this be? Will it be the grace of justification, or the grace of entire sanctification? No, for these works of grace are available to seekers now. The answer is that it will be the grace of glorification which Christians shall receive at the revelation.

The above verse also, then, points to the post-tribulational rapture of the Church, for who would question that the saints will be glorified at the resurrection and rapture of the just? If then the scripture tells us that Christians will be glorified at the post-tribulational revelation of Christ, then we must also conclude that the rapture will occur at that same time.

The Word Epiphany

The Greek word epiphany means: a shining forth, or manifestation, and along with apokalupsis this word is used to describe the glorious, visible return of the Lord after the great tribulation. Once again, if it can be shown from the scripture that Christians: (a) wait for the epiphany; (b) look for the epiphany; and (c) love the epiphany, which shall occur after the tribulation on the day of the Lord, then the rapture will also occur at that same time.

1 Tim. 6:14-15 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing (epiphany, shining forth) of our Lord Jesus Christ: (15) Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

When will the above mentioned epiphany occur? Paul connects it with the times when Christ shall show Who is King of kings and Lord of lords. When will Christ shine forth as King of kings and Lord of lords? Answer: at His glorious, post-tribulational revelation as recorded in Rev. 19:11-16. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him...And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Again, this verse also points to a post-tribulational rapture, for when Paul instructed Timothy to "keep this commandment..until the appearing (epiphany) of Jesus Christ," he was, in effect, telling all Christians that perseverance in obedience to Christ would be necessary until the post-tribulational, shining-forth revelation of Christ. Christians will have reached the end of their probation before they meet the Lord in the air at the rapture. Therefore urging upon Christians continued obedience until the shining-forth revelation of Christ after the tribulation is tantamount to telling them that the rapture will also be post-tribulational.

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing (epiphany) of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

There is no proof in this context for the assertion that the "blessed hope" refers to a pre-tribulational rapture, or to a mid-tribulational rapture, prior to the "glorious appearing" of Christ after the great tribulation. The blessed hope of the Christian is the glorious appearing of Christ. This verse, then, speaks simply of the Christian looking for the fulfillment of his "blessed hope" at the "glorious appearing" of Christ.

The NIV translates Titus 2:13 thus: "While we wait for the blessed hope -- the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." Here again is a verse which points to the post-tribulational rapture of the saints. For, if Christians are to look for the fulfillment of their hope at the glorious appearing (shining-forth manifestation) of Christ after the tribulation, then that must be when their rapture takes place.

2 Tim. 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing. (epiphany-shining forth manifestation)

As a loving wife would focus her attention on the very first appearance of her husband after a long absence, even thus is the bride of Christ to love his appearing. If Christians are to love the post-tribulational appearing (epiphany) of Christ, then no doubt that will be His first appearance and the rapture will occur at that time.

Further evidence that the epiphany and rapture will occur on the day of the Lord is seen in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. In 2:1 Paul speaks of "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" and of "our gathering together unto him," an obvious reference to the rapture. Then in 2:2 Paul locates the time

of this "gathering together unto Him" rapture as on "the day of Christ," or day of the Lord. Thus Paul places the rapture on the post-tribulational day of Christ the Lord.

In 2 Thess. 2:3-7 Paul explains that "that day" will be preceded by the period of anti-Christ's reign, but in 2:8 he tells us how that when "the day of Christ" comes the Lord will "destroy" anti-Christ "with the brightness (epiphany) of His coming." Thus, in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 both the epiphany and rapture are located as to occur after the great tribulation on the day of the Lord. That means that the epiphany and apokalupsis of Christ are one and the same event, the post-tribulational revelation.

The Word Parousia

The Greek word parousia means simply: coming, arrival, or presence. There is nothing in the meaning of this word to prove decisively whether it refers to the visible revelation of Christ after the tribulation or to an alleged secret coming of Christ before or during the tribulation. In order to establish one idea or the other, one must study the context of scripture in which the word occurs.

What does scriptural investigation of the contexts in which parousia appears reveal? While it can be proven beyond question that the word parousia is used in reference to the visible coming, or revelation, of Christ after the tribulation, there is no scriptural context to prove that any parousia of Christ occurs before or during the tribulation.

2 Thess. 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness (epiphany)) of His coming. (parousia)

The Parousia is here connected with the glorious, visible revelation of Christ after the tribulation on the day of the Lord, for the epiphany which Paul mentions here is none other than the (brightness, shining-forth manifestation) of Christ's coming (parousia) which shall consume and destroy the anti-Christ.

Who would dispute that the destruction of the "man of sin" occurs at the close, and not before, the great tribulation. Here then is scriptural proof that Christ's apokalupsis, epiphany, and parousia refer to one and the same event, the post-tribulational revelation and return of Christ.

Matt. 24:27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming (parousia) of the Son of man be.

We can see here that Jesus described His genuine parousia as a shining, visible parousia seen from east to west. A study of Matt. 24:21-27 seems to further clarify the fact that Christ was here emphasizing not only the suddenness of His parousia, but also the world-wide visibility of this event. He warned the elect, sanctified Christians, going through the great tribulation not to be deceived by word of a local parousia, "he is in the desert," or by word of a secret parousia, "he is in the secret chambers." To those who might be tempted to believe the report of such an alleged parousia of Christ, Jesus said: "believe it not" and "go not forth." Why not follow after parousias

of these descriptions? "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming (parousia) of the Son of man be."

Quite plainly, Christ warned His disciples not to expect His parousia to be localized, secret, or invisible, but rather to expect it to be a sudden, open, highly visible, and universal event. The genuine parousia which Jesus thus described matches His coming at the post-tribulational revelation. How can we doubt, then, that they are one and the same event?

Both Matt. 24:37-39 and Lu. 17:26-30 compare the parousia of Christ to the days of Noah, and Luke includes the days of Lot. Matthew: "...so shall also the coming (parousia) of the Son of man be." Luke: "And as it was in the days of Noe, shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." (apokalupsetai)

When does the above parousia mentioned by both Matthew and Luke occur? The answer: "When the Son of man is revealed," (apokalupsetai) and since the apokalupsis, or revelation, occurs after the great tribulation, we conclude that this mention of Christ's parousia is also presented as at that time.

There is further evidence in these comparisons which Jesus made as to the time of Christ's parousia and the rapture: "The day that Noe entered into the ark," and "the same day Lot went out of Sodom" there was immediate and total destruction! If, then, Noah and Lot are types of the raptured church at the parousia of the Lord, then we see that immediately following the rapture there will be an outpouring of God's wrath which will suddenly and totally overthrow the wicked.

Such a picture of Christ's parousia would again place it after the great tribulation, for it will be on the day of the Lord that God's wrath is poured out in such a manner that it will suddenly and totally overthrow the wicked as God overthrew Sodom. It will be this final outpouring of God's wrath on the day of the Lord which Christians will escape, and not the prolonged 7-year time of trouble and persecution during the reign of anti-Christ which precedes the day of his sudden and total destruction.

In answer to the position of pre-tribulationists which might assert that Noah entered into the ark 7 days before the flood, typifying the rapture before the tribulation and 7 years before anti-Christ is suddenly overthrown, consider the following: While Genesis 7:1-4 seems to indicate that Noah entered the ark 7 days before the flood, other evidence concerning the matter seems to contradict that interpretation. Genesis 7:7 declares that Noah and his family entered the ark "because of the waters of the flood." This seems to correspond with other scriptures which locate the day Noah entered the ark, or completed his entry into the ark, as the very day the flood began: Matt. 24:38-39 and Lu. 17:27 "the day that Noe entered into the ark..the flood came.."

A reasonable interpretation of Gen.7:1-7 and the Matthew and Luke accounts is this: 7 days before the flood began, God invited Noah into the ark, but that entry which included the many

animals as well as Noah and his family was not completed until the 7th day, the last to enter the ark being Noah and his family on the very day the flood came.

Thus we can see in the comparison of Christ's parousia to this time a post-tribulational rapture as follows: (a) A period of time preceding the day of wrath during which the ark of divine salvation is being filled; and (b) The parousia of Christ and rapture of the church at the commencement of the very day of the Lord when His wrath is poured out in sudden and total overthrow of anti-Christ and this wicked world.

2 Pet. 3:4,10,12 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? (parousia) for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (10) But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (12) Looking for and hasting unto the coming (parousia) of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Here Peter says that scoffers would question the sign of Christ's parousia, and he refutes their wicked unbelief by saying: "But the day of the Lord will come," and exhorts Christians to be "Looking for..the parousia of the day of God." Again in this passage, the parousia of Christ is not located before, but after, the great tribulation on the day of the Lord.

2 Thess. 2:1-2 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, (2) That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

Here again, Paul locates the parousia of Christ and rapture of the saints as to occur on the day of the Lord, not 3 1/2 or 7 years earlier.

In addition to the preceding references, the parousia of Christ is mentioned in the following verses:

Matt. 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, (parousia) and of the end of the world?

Here, as part of the Olivet Discourse it should be interpreted as occurring at the same time as the later mentionings of it in that passage, and that would be after the Tribulation.

1 Thess. 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming (parousia) of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

1 Thess. 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the above verses an honest interpretation should correspond with a reference in 5:2 which ties these mentionings of the parousia to "the day of the Lord". (see also Chapter 6, The Rapture Passage)

2 Pet. 1:16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

In the above verse, the parousia refers to Christ's first coming.

1 Cor. 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (parousia)

1 Thess. 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? (parousia)

James 5:7-8 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming (parousia) of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. (8) Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming (parousia) of the Lord draweth nigh.

In the three verses above, it might be argued that there is nothing in the immediate context to locate the time of their occurrence. But, if the time of these parousias cannot be shown by their context, then consistency demands that they be taken as occurring at the same time as all other references to the parousia are shown to occur, after the great tribulation on the day of the Lord.

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Chapter 6 THE RAPTURE PASSAGE

While in a specific sense the "rapture passage" might be listed as 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, we should not cut this passage off from its very important connection with chapter 5 which immediately follows. Accordingly, I have included 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3,11,23 below as verses which are very relevant to the proper interpretation of the time at which the rapture shall occur.

1 Thess. 4:13-18 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thess. 5:1-3 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. (2) For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (3) For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

1 Thess. 5:11,23 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do...(23) And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word "rapture" is not found in the King James Version of the Bible. It is taken from the Latin word for "caught up" in verse 17 of the above passage. Thus, the term "rapture" is widely used in reference to the event wherein those that are Christ's shall be "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air.

Who then would disagree that the rapture of the saints is described by Paul in 1 Thess. 4:13-18? I know of none who would dispute that. However, perhaps some who teach a pre-tribulation rapture would declare that while Paul is indeed describing the rapture in 1 Thess. 4:13-18, his subject has changed when in 5:2 he refers to "the day of the Lord." But, such an assertion appears to be quite unwarranted.

Notice the similarity of Paul's language in 4:18 and 5:11 where in both instances he is urging the Thessalonian Christians to mutually comfort one another in light of the hope which both they and their dead brethren have of meeting the Lord together in the air. No, the general subject of the rapture which Paul began in 4:13 carries on through 5:11, and even through 5:23. The parousia of Christ mentioned in 4:15 is identical with that mentioned in 5:13, and the being "caught up" rapture of 4:13-18 is definitely linked with "the day of the Lord" which Paul mentioned in 5:3.

Some pre-tribulationists might admit this, but contend that the tribulation occurs during the day of the Lord, and Paul was simply mentioning the rapture in chapter 4 as occurring before the commencement of the tribulation on the day of the Lord in chapter 5.

Such may sound plausible, but how could it be scriptural when the day of the Lord begins after, not during, the tribulation? No, since the tribulation ends before the day of the Lord begins, such a chronology is not possible. When Paul mentions the rapture in chapter 4 and the day of the Lord in 5:2, he is not referring to two events occurring one after the other. Instead, his mentioning of the rapture and the day of the Lord in almost the same breath, so to speak, should simply show us one more time that these events occur together, after the great tribulation.

How Christ Shall Come Both For and With His People

From 1 Thess. 4:16, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout," concerning the word "descend," Gundry states: "Other things being equal, the word 'descend' (katabaino) indicates a complete, uninterrupted descent." In other words, when Christ descends from heaven at the rapture, the saints will rise to meet Him in the air, but after that meeting Christ will continue His descent with them to the earth.

In support of this idea being conveyed generally in the word *katabaino*, Gundry gave the following references: Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; and John 1:32,33; 3:13; 6:33,38,41,42,50,51,58. He said further: "Where a reversal from downward to upward motion comes into view, a specific statement to that effect appears, as in Acts 10:11,16...In absence of a statement indicating a halt or sudden reversal of direction, we naturally infer a complete descent to the earth, such as will take place only at the post-tribulational advent."

The Greek word for "shout" in this verse is a form of "*keleusma*" which is interpreted as "a call, a summons, a shout of command, a signal shout." Alford says, "the word primarily signifies not only 'the shout of battle,'..but it is used of any signal given by the voice -- " From this, then, it appears that the word "shout" used in this verse could have the significance of a "cry of command, a war-cry, commander-in-chief's order" as Arthur D. Katterjohn interprets it.

If this is the significance of the word "shout" in 1 Thess. 4:16, it would seem to indicate that this "shout" will be that of our Commander-In-Chief as He raises, raptures, and rallies His troops with Him to the battle of Armageddon.

How A Commander Came Both For And With His People

In support of the interpretation that Christ will both come for and with His people on the same day, Alexander Reese wrote:

"During the Balkan War of 1912 an incident took place that illustrates, in a measure what will take place at the return of Christ.

"When the Serbian commander and his troops were approaching an ancient Serbian town in the hands of the enemy, they could be seen wending their way down the hill overlooking the city below; the inhabitants of the town were electrified by the sight: the Serbian descendants with joy, the Turks with fear and trembling. As the Commander and his troops came nearer, the officials and loyal citizens went forth to meet the man whom they were hailing as their deliverer.

A scene of delirious enthusiasm and exultation followed, and then the assembled multitude, having met him, turned and accompanied the commander and his troops on the way back to the city. The Turkish flag was hauled down and the Serbian one hoisted in its place. He had come for and with his rescued people on the same day.

Now, at the parousia in triumph of our Lord Jesus Christ, His faithful people, as they see Him coming, will be caught up to meet Him in the air: they go forth to meet Him, and then return with Him to earth to share His triumph in the kingdom of glory. Christ has come for His saints, and with them at the same crisis.."

1 Thess. 4:17 says: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The Greek word for "to meet" here is a form of *apantesis*.

Concerning this word W. E. Vine says: "It is used in the papyri of a newly arriving magistrate." Moulton Greek Test. Gram. says: "It seems that the special idea of the word was the official welcome of a newly arrived dignitary." Alford says concerning this word: "To meet occurs twice more in the New Test. and each time implies meeting one who was approaching, not merely 'meeting with' a person."

F. F. Bruce said: "When a dignitary paid an official visit or parousia to a city in Hellenistic times, the action of the leading citizens in going out to meet him and escorting him on the final stage of his journey was called the apantesis." Such an apantesis, or meeting of the Lord in the air to accompany Him back to earth in triumph, could only occur at His post-tribulational revelation. If that is the sense in which we are to understand apantesis in 1 Thess. 4:1-7, then it would be yet one more indication that the rapture will occur after the tribulation on the day of the Lord.

The same Greek word for "to meet" (apantesis, exact form apantesin) is used in Matt. 25:6 and Acts 28:15. The reader is invited to study the word in these verses. Acts 28:15 tells of a group of brethren at Rome who went out from Rome "to meet" the apostle Paul and those with him and who then accompanied Paul as he continued his journey to Rome.

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Chapter 7 THE PROPHETIC CHRONOLOGY OF REVELATION

The Literary Chronology Not The Prophetic Chronology

The literary chronology of the Book of Revelation should not be confused with the prophetic chronology of the book. In the literary chronology of Revelation, there is an unbroken continuity, with each successive portion of the book unfolding out of that which preceded and leading into that which follows unto the end. It is easy to see why some tend to interpret the book of Revelation as if each succeeding literary portion will be fulfilled following its preceding portion, like the next link in a chain of events.

Thus interpreted, the events of each literary portion of the book would all be fulfilled before any events of the next literary portion could begin, just like day 7 of each week must be past before day 1 of the next week can begin.

There are 4 series of 7s in the Book of Revelation. The literary chronology of the book presents the 4 series of 7 churches, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, and 7 vials in that order respectively. From this one can get the impression that their fulfillment will take place much like 4 consecutive 7-day weeks: 1234567, 1234567, 1234567, 1234567.

After all, each year we live is 52 series of such 7-day weeks one after another chronologically. Thus, it can seem quite natural to interpret that first shall come the time of the 7 churches, next shall come the time of the 7 seals, third shall come the time of the 7 trumpets, and

finally shall come the time of the 7 vials, like weeks laid end to end, each finished before the other begins.

However, this writer asserts that such an interpretation of the series of 7's in the book of Revelation wrongly takes the literary chronology to be also the prophetic chronology of these events, when the two are not the same.

The Prophetic Chronology Rightly Perceived

In the literary chronology of Revelation, each series concludes before the other begins, but in the prophetic chronology the series overlap in time. In the literary chronology there is constant progression, transition, and continuity from start to finish. However, in the prophetic chronology of Revelation there is retrogression, repetition, and return to the same point in time, the grand finale at Christ's second coming.

Thus, while each of the 4 series begins at a different point in time, the 7th Church, 7th Seal, 7th Trumpet, and 7th Vial are all seen to share one identical time of conclusion on the day of Lord. This, the writer asserts, reflects the true, prophetic chronology of the book of Revelation and harmonizes perfectly with the order of second coming events as presented throughout the scriptures. (see Chart #1 and the writer's subsequent comments)

PLEASE NOTE: CHART #1 THE PROPHETIC CHRONOLOGY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION appeared in the printed text at this point. This chart is found as the hdm0124b.jpg file. The reader is here asked to view and/or print hdm0124b.jpg and then to study its interpretation below:

The Chart Interpreted

Please note the following concerning the above chart: (1) Points A to C represent the entire Church Age; (2) Points B to C represent the 7-year Tribulation-Great Tribulation period as synonymous with the "little season" following "the thousand years;" (see the next chapter regarding the millennium in the Church Age and preceding the Tribulation) (3) Points C to D represent the Cosmic Signs which usher in the Day of the Lord; (4) Points D to E represent the Day of the Lord; Points E to F represent Eternity, immediately following the Day of the Lord, and synonymous with the Messianic Age and The Eternal Kingdom of Christ.

The seven churches are interpreted as representing 7 successive stages of church history from its beginning through the great tribulation, the conclusion of the church age on earth, and into the day of the Lord. Points A to B, representing the church age before the tribulation, are not intended to be in proper proportion to points B to C, which represent the time of the church during the tribulation, great tribulation period.

Further, Chart #1 shows that the 4 series of 7 churches, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, and 7 vials end at the same time, on the day of the Lord. Each of their narratives in the book of Revelation is seen to bring the story to the same point of conclusion.

The narrative of the 7 churches begins far before the others, at the commencement of the church age, and concludes on the day of the Lord. Next, instead of the following narrative of the 7 seals, beginning chronologically after the first narrative, this narrative is seen to swing back in time and begin at the start of the tribulation, and then again bring the narrative to the same point of conclusion on day of the Lord.

The narrative of the 7 trumpets again swings back in time to a point during the tribulation, great tribulation period, and then likewise progresses to the same point of conclusion.

Then finally, the narrative of the 7 vials retrogresses somewhat into the last part of the great tribulation, and more rapidly brings the story to that same climactic point with the other 3 series on the day of the Lord.

The 4 series of 7s are seen to overlap in time with the 7th of each series bringing the narrative to the one and same grand finale.

In presenting the scriptural evidence for the preceding interpretations regarding the prophetic chronology of the 4 series of 7 churches, seals, trumpets, and vials, let us consider first the opening of the 7 seals, Rev. 6:1 -- 8:5.

The Seven Seals

Regardless of when one may interpret that the opening of the 7 seals begins, it should be obvious that at the opening of the 6th seal the narrative has brought us to the close of the great tribulation and the beginning of the day of the Lord. The cosmic signs which usher in that day take place at the opening of the 6th seal:

Rev. 6:12-17 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; (13) And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. (14) And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. (15) And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; (16) And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: (17) For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

The cosmic signs recorded in verses 12-14 above are the signs which Jesus Himself said would come "Immediately after the tribulation," and which Joel prophesied would occur "before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come." Matt. 24:29; Joel 2:31

Quite plainly, the opening of the 6th seal has brought that series of 7s to the cosmic signs which mark the close of the great tribulation and the beginning of the day of the Lord.

For that reason, in the chart on the previous page the writer placed seal #6 within C to D, the section designating those occurrences. Revelation chapter 7 mentions those blood-washed saints "which came out of great tribulation" and recites some of the bliss awaiting them. Then, Rev. 8:1-5 records the opening of the 7th seal, which, since it follows the post-tribulational 6th seal events, is placed on the chart at the point of the grand finale and rapture on the day of the Lord.

Identical Signs Show One, Common Conclusion For The 7th Of Each Series

Before moving on to a discussion of the other series, let us notice some quite identical signs which are mentioned after all 4 of these series: (1) After the 7th church, "lightnings and thunderings and voices," Rev. 4:5; (2) After the 7th seal, "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake," 8:5; (3) After the 7th trumpet, "lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail," 11:19; (4) After the 7th vial, "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake," 16:18.

After all 4 series "lightnings, thunderings, and voices" are mentioned, and after the 7th seal, trumpet, and vial "an earthquake" is mentioned. Then too, "a great earthquake" is mentioned after the opening of the 6th seal, which time-wise is closely connected with the 7th seal. The recurrence of these identical signs at the close of each series of 7 is remarkable, and I interpret that we should take them as prophetic signposts marking the identical point of conclusion in time for them all.

The Seven Trumpets

The narrative of the 7 trumpets actually begins with 8:2, overlapping that of the preceding series, and concludes at 11:15-19. Notice again how the 7th trumpet has clearly brought the narrative one more time to the grand finale on the day of the Lord:

Rev. 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

When shall "the kingdoms of this world..become the kingdoms of our Lord?" Obviously, after the great tribulation on the day of the Lord. Therefore, the 7th trumpet is seen to conclude simultaneously with the 7th seal.

The Seven Vials

The narrative of the 7 vials begins at Rev. 15:1 and concludes with 16:21. Once again, the pouring out of the 7th vial has brought the narrative to the identical point of conclusion.

Rev. 16:15-17 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (16) And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (17) And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

The Battle of Armageddon clearly marks the events here at the close of the great tribulation, and the divine statement "it is done" speaks of completion. Thus, with the pouring out of the 7th vial, the narrative is seen to have brought us again to the same, climactic end on the day of the Lord as that of the 7 seals and 7 trumpets. Interestingly, Rev. 16:15 seems to confirm that it will be at this post-tribulational day of the Lord that Christ will "come as a thief" and rapture the church: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

The Seven Churches

The narrative of the 7 churches begins at Rev. 1:9 and concludes with 3:22, and these churches are taken to represent 7 successive stages in church history. Without here attempting to elaborate upon just when each of the 6 preceding stages begin and end, let us consider the scriptural indications of how the 7th church, or Laodicean church, will pass through the great tribulation and how the "gold tried in the fire" Christians therefrom will be raptured on the day of the Lord.

Rev. 3:17-18,21 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: (18) I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. (21) To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Consider the following: (a) Christ's counsel for the 7th church to buy of Him gold "tried in the fire" indicates that the Laodicean church will be purified in the fiery testings of an anti-Christian world during the great tribulation period, instead of being raptured to heaven before it begins; and (b) Christ promised rapture and glory for the 7th church only to those who overcame, "even as" He "also overcame". 3:21 How did Christ overcome? By being raptured away from the testings of Gethsemane and the sufferings of Calvary? No! Most assuredly not. He overcame by passing through them, and then He was "caught up unto God, and to his throne." Rev. 3:21; 12:5

The 3 Hebrew Children Typical

Rev. 3:15-17 reveals that what the 7th Church needed, instead of being sweetly wafted away from trouble, was a purging away of their dross in the midst of fiery trials in order to make them fit to spend eternity with Christ. Thus, it is seen that, like the 3 Hebrew children, the Laodicean church will pass through the furnace of the great tribulation, instead of being delivered from it.

The furnace was heated "one seven times more" for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and was this not a type of the 7 times, or years of tribulation? Be that as it may, the 7th church is seen to pass through the great tribulation and then the overcomers therefrom being "caught up unto God," our Saviour at the same point where we see the grand finale of each of the other series, on the day of the Lord.

The Typical Rapture After Being Tried In The Fire

It is interesting that following Christ's counsel for the 7th church to buy of Him "gold tried in the fire," Rev. 3:18, then, in Rev. 4:1-2, we see what many have suggested is the prophetic point of the rapture: "After this I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard was as it were a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither...and immediately I was in the spirit.."

It is seen that this indeed may typify and locate the rapture, however, not as a pre-tribulational event, but rather as a post-tribulational event which takes place after the fiery testings of persecution during the reign of anti-Christ. The invitation to "Come up hither" was after, not before, Christ's counsel to buy of Him "gold tried in the fire."

PLEASE NOTE: CHART #2 SHOWING REVELATION LITERARY EVENTS appeared in the printed text at this point. This chart is found as the hdm0124c.jpg file. The reader is here asked to view and/or print hdm0124c.jpg and then to study its interpretation below:

Chart #2 Interpreted

Chart #2 on the following page shows that not only the 4 series of 7s end together at the end of the age, but that the first 7 literary divisions of Revelation all conclude together at the arrival of the day of the Lord. The 8th division, which gives the account of the New Jerusalem, commences and continues forever in the eternal state.

In the first division, both the 7th church in chapter 3 and the "typical rapture" in chapter 4:1-2 are seen as concluding this literary section at the day of the Lord.

In division two, both the saints coming " out of great tribulation" and the 7th seal are seen to conclude this section at the day of the Lord.

In divisions three, four, and five, the 1260 days, the 3 1/2 years, and the 42 months are clear time references which mark their conclusion at the day of the Lord.

In division six the triumphant return of Christ and the battle of Armageddon mark the end of this division at the day of the Lord.

In the seventh division, the 1000 years is taken to be the period of time from Calvary to the "little season" during which satan is bound by Christ. The "little season" is taken to be the tribulation period at the close of the church age. Following this is the Judgment, bringing this division also to its conclusion at the day of the Lord.

Many interpret the millennium to take place after Christ's return. The writer's position is that this interpretation of the millennium contradicts many other scriptures, while the interpretation presented in the chart harmonizes with the entire body of prophetic scriptures.

In Conclusion

It is seen that while the 4 series of 7s, and the first 7 literary divisions do indeed follow one another in the Book of Revelation, we are not to interpret that they follow one another in the times of their fulfillment. Instead, their time-spans are seen to parallel in part and to conclude together, forming one, identical grand finale at the close of the great tribulation and the commencement of the day of the Lord. Then, literary division 8 is seen to depict the final estate of all following the common conclusion of divisions 1-7. This interpretation of the literary portions of Revelation is seen to reflect the prophetic chronology of the book in harmony with the Olivet Discourse and all other Second Coming prophecy.

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Chapter 8

THE MILLENNIUM IN THE CHURCH AGE

Are we to interpret the "thousand years" of Rev. 20 as an extension of time after the return of Christ, during which He shall reign from an earthly Jerusalem over a kingdom which is made up of both wicked, flesh and blood people and holy, glorified saints? Or, should we interpret the "thousand years" to be now taking place in the church age as the period of time from Calvary to the "little season" during which satan is bound, and which shall conclude before Christ's Return?

My answer to the first question is "No," and to the second question "Yes". The first interpretation is seen to conflict with numbers of scriptures, among which are those that reveal the following:

(a) With the completion of the events on the day of the Lord there will "be time no longer". Rev. 10:6-7

(b) "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God," any time or anywhere. 1 Cor. 6:9-10

(c) "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." 1 Cor. 15:50

In previous pages of this book I have endeavored to show that it is a mistake to interpret that there will be two second comings of Christ, one before the tribulation and another after the tribulation. I further state here that it is equally a mistake to interpret that there will two kingdoms of Christ, the first of those kingdoms being in time, during which He will reign from an earthly Jerusalem over a "mixed multitude" of wicked, fleshly people and holy, glorified people, and the second being in eternity, during which He will reign in the New Jerusalem over a people wholly sanctified, glorified, and forever separated from the wicked.

Consistently, throughout the scripture, the kingdom of Christ is spoken of as singular and separate from evil, and His Messianic reign is shown to be eternal in duration, not simply "a thousand years" in length. Should we not, therefore, look for an interpretation of Rev. 20 which

places it in line with all of the other scriptural testimony in these matters, instead of fixedly fastening upon it a line of interpretation which contradicts that testimony and actually creates more interpretative problems than it resolves? I assert that we should look for a different interpretation of this passage than that which is put forth by pre-millennial teachers.

In coming chapters the writer will endeavor to present more fully the other scriptural testimony which weighs in favor of interpreting the "thousand years" of Rev. 20 as taking place in the church age and concluding before, rather than commencing after, Christ's return. However, this chapter will focus primarily upon Revelation chapter 20 itself. From the text of the chapter I will attempt to show the reader how, as presented on Chart #2 in Chapter 7, the time-frame of the 1000 years plus the "little season" will be completed at Christ's return, rather than follow His second coming.

Revelation Chapter 20 Verse By Verse

(1) And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

A. "An angel" The pre-incarnate Christ was referred to as "an Angel" in Ex. 23:20-21. Who then, can say that the above reference does not also apply to Him?

B. "came down from heaven" In John 6:38 Jesus said: "I came down from heaven," and John 3:13 speaks of Him as "He that came down from heaven."

C. "having the key" In Rev. 3:18 Jesus said: "I have the keys.."

D. "of the bottomless pit" The Greek word is abussos, the infernal "abyss," "the deep," "Many devils..besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the deep." Luke 8:31 Jesus controls the door of "the deep," "the bottomless pit."

E. "and a great chain in his hand" More will be presented about the "chain" involved here under verse 3, section C. In Whose "hand" is the power to chain "the dragon"? Jesus said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in the earth." Matt. 28:18 It is with this power that "whatsoever (is) bound on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever (is) loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. 17:19

(2) And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

A. "And he laid hold on the dragon..the Devil," Christ, none of His angels, is stronger than the Devil: "When a strong man (satan) armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he (Christ) shall come upon him he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."-Lu. 11:21-22 Isaiah 53 brings out that because Christ "poured out His soul unto death," therefore "He shall divide the spoil.." It was at Calvary, and as the result of Calvary, that Jesus bound the devil.

B. "and bound him" It was necessary that Christ first bind satan by His death at Calvary before He began the centuries long process of spoiling satan's house: "How can one (Christ) enter into a strong man's house (satan's house) and spoil his goods, except he (Christ) first bind (satan) the strong man? And then he will spoil his house." Matt. 12:29

Reader, please take note: Christ did indeed begin the spoiling of satan's house immediately following His death and resurrection, for the Bible says so: "And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Col. 2:15 How much plainer need it to be? None. Therefore, since the spoiling began immediately after Christ's death and resurrection, the conclusion should be obvious: Christ bound satan at Calvary.

C. "a thousand years" The term "a thousand" or "thousand" elsewhere in the Bible has been used to denote a large, but indefinite, amount of a thing: Deut. 1:11-"The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are." Deut. 7:9-"God...keepeth covenant..with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations." Deut. 32:30-"How should one of you chase a thousand." Ps. 84:10-"A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand." Ps. 90:4-"For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday." 2 Pet. 3:8-"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Ps. 91:7-"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand." Isa. 60:22-"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation." 1 Cor. 14:19-"I had rather speak five words with my understanding..than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." Ecc. 6:3,6-"If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years..Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet he hath seen no good."

While the term "a thousand" is never used loosely in the Bible, it is often used figuratively, instead of literally, to denote "many" or a large, but indefinite, amount of a thing. Therefore, with the support of the above evidence, the "thousand years" of Rev. 20 is interpreted to be the long period of time from Calvary to near the close of the church age during which satan is bound by Christ, and which shall be followed by the "little season" when satan will be "loosed" and the great tribulation shall take place.

(3) And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed for a little season.

A. "and cast him" "Now (at Calvary) shall the prince of this world be cast out." John 12:31

B. "into the bottomless pit" Satan is the king of the bottomless pit: "And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon." (Destroyer) Rev. 9:11 Does not Jesus refer to satan in John 10:10 as one who "cometh not, but for to kill, and to destroy?" Satan is the Destroyer.

C. "and shut him up, and set a seal upon him" Satan is presently bound, along with all of the other angels that sinned: "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."-2 Pet. 2:4 "And the angels which kept not their first estate..He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude 6 When Christ "came down from heaven, having..a great chain in

His hand," He bound satan through His death on the cross. Satan's power to destroy is limited to the perimeter within the length of his chain. Thus, he walketh about, to the full length of his restraint, like a chained, yet ferocious, lion, "seeking whom he may devour." 1 Pet. 5:8 Whom may satan devour? Only those who sin willfully so as to place themselves, by their own choice and actions, within the perimeter of satan's chain.

D. "that he should deceive the nations no more" Satan's power to deceive is removed by Jesus sacrificial death: "And He will destroy in this mountain the face: of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations." Isa. 25:7 Only unbelievers are blindly deceived by satan: "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ..should shine unto them."-2 Cor. 4:4 "Nevertheless when it (unbelieving Israel, or any unbeliever) shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away." 2 Cor. 3:16

E. "till the thousand years should be fulfilled" From the time when satan was first bound at Calvary until the "little season" of final tribulation near the close of the church age: "For these be the days..that all things which are written may be fulfilled." Lu. 21:22

F. "and after that he must be loosed for a little season" Near the close of the church age, satan's deceptive power will be "loosed" and the anti-Christ will use that power to deceive an unbelieving world as never before: "And ye know what withholdeth (presently binds satan's deceptive power) that he (anti-Christ) may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only He who now letteth (bindeth satan's power to deceive) will let (continue to restrain that power) until He be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed..even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish...But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren..because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth." 2 Thess. 2:6-13

We see here that during the "little season" of great deception under anti-Christ "them that perish" will be deceived while the elect, who have on the wedding garment of "sanctification of the Spirit," will "believe the truth" unto their final salvation. However, so strong will be the deception of those days that "if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matt. 24:24

(4) And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

A. "I saw the souls of them" 100 out of 105 times in the new testament, when souls are mentioned, it refers to the spirits of men apart from their bodies.

B. "and they lived" The dead in Christ still live: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" John 11:25-26 After a Christian dies, his

or her "life is hid with Christ in God," but the individual continues to live still in God's presence. Col. 3:3

C. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them...and reigned with Christ" Christ now sits on the throne, and Christians are now reigning with Him, including the dead in Christ: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."-Rev. 3:21 "God..hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."-Eph. 2:4,6 "They which receive abundance of grace..reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:17

D. "and judgment was given unto them" With Christ, the saints will judge the world: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?...know ye not that we shall judge angels?" 1 Cor. 6:2,3 This judgment will be given when Jesus comes again, and it will be a rulership that both judges and destroys the evil ones: "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.." Rev. 2:25-27

(5) But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

A. "this is the first resurrection" In John 5:25,28,29 we can see that Jesus told of two different resurrections: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."-verse 25 Obviously, the first resurrection which Jesus mentioned is the spiritual resurrection. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.."-verses 28,29 Quite plainly, the second resurrection which Jesus mentioned is the bodily resurrection. Therefore, using this as a basis, the "first resurrection" spoken of in the above verse is interpreted to be the spiritual resurrection.

B. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." If we are born again, we now live again unto God, we see the kingdom of God and are living in a consciousness of His presence. Thus, during the "thousand years," or millennium in the church age, men may now "live again" spiritually and then die physically in the Lord, but "the rest of the dead" (those both physically and spiritually dead) will not "live again" in any sense until the "mystery of God..is finished" and all men are resurrected at the second, and bodily, resurrection. Rev. 10:6-7

*An Important Observation

That there will not be 1000 years between the bodily resurrection of the righteous and the bodily resurrection of the wicked is seen to be proven by Matthew 26:64:

Speaking to the wicked Caiaphas, Jesus said: "I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Since Jesus will be seen "coming in the clouds of heaven" just after the close of the great tribulation, must we not conclude from this verse that either:

(a) Caiaphas was (or would become) a righteous man, and Jesus was telling him that he would be resurrected with the righteous and thus see the Son of man coming with all of the other righteous; or,

(b) Caiaphas was a wicked man, and this verse shows us that the wicked will also be resurrected at Jesus' second coming so close following the resurrection of the righteous as to be able to actually see Jesus "coming in the clouds of heaven."

I interpret the latter to be true, and that the statement in Rev. 20 which says that "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" should not, therefore, be interpreted to mean that there will be 1000 years between the two bodily resurrections.

If Caiaphas were to be resurrected with the wicked some 1000 years after Christ came "in the clouds of heaven," how then could he see Christ "coming in the clouds of heaven" when the event was already one millennium in the past?

Matt. 26:64 presents a dilemma for those who insist that 1000 or more years will separate the bodily resurrection of the wicked from that of the righteous. However, Matt. 26:64 does harmonize perfectly with a number of other scriptures which locate the bodily resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked at the time of Jesus' second coming.

(6) Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

A. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection" The spiritual resurrection is characterized by both happiness and holiness. Those who have part in it are not only made "alive unto God through Jesus Christ," but conversely they are to reckon themselves "dead indeed unto sin." Rom. 6:11 Having "part in the first resurrection" involves all 3 works of grace: justification, entire sanctification, and bodily glorification. While both the righteous and the wicked shall be resurrected on the day of the Lord, "the dead in Christ shall rise first," as the recipients of both God's heavenly blessing and God's holy nature.

B. "on such the second death hath no power" "Truly God is good..to such as are of a clean heart." Ps. 73:1 The 3 Hebrew children who refused to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image were "men, upon whose bodies the fire" of his furnace "had no power". Dan. 3:27 Even thus, the flames of the lake of fire will have "no power" to harm those whose hearts are pure, not just because of where they will be, in heaven, but also because of what they will be, glorified beings "upon whose bodies" the fire of that lake could inflict "no hurt". Dan. 3:25,27 God's goodness to His eternal children will make this so.

C. "but they shall be priests of God and of Christ" "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.."-Rev. 1:6 "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood..." 1 Pet. 2:9

D. "and shall reign with him a thousand years" See the comments on verse 4, part C. Christians are now reigning with Christ, and that reign will not only span the millennium in the

church age, or the time from Calvary to the "little season," but it will continue forever in the eternal, Messianic kingdom of Christ: "they shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. 22:5

(7) And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

A. "Satan shall be loosed" This statement is seen to mark the end of the time during which satan's deceptive power is restrained and the commencement of the "little season" of great deception and then great tribulation. See the comments on verses 1-3. Satan's "prison" in this verse is the Greek word "phulake," which Strong's Concordance defines in part as: "a guarding". God will guard, or restrain satan from exercising certain of his deceptive powers until that final, fateful "little season". Rev. 20:3 Then the "man of sin" will "be revealed in his time." 2 Thess. 2:3-12

(8) And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

A. "And shall go out to deceive the nations..in the four quarters of the earth" This statement compares with conditions which the apostle Paul said would be in the world during the time of anti-Christ: "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time..Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they might all be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But..brethren, beloved of the Lord..God hath..chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." 2 Thess. 2:6,9-13 During the "little season" when satan is loosed by God to send "strong delusion" to "the four quarters" of a wicked, pleasure loving world, "they" will "believe a lie" and "be damned," but through the Spirit, the sanctified elect will be enabled to "believe the truth" unto their final salvation.

B. "Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." Notice the similarities between all of verse 8, including this portion, and an earlier reference to the battle of Armageddon: "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty ..And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Rev. 16:14,16 Thus the "little season" is taken to be identical with the reign of anti-Christ, and the battle of Gog and Magog to be identical with the battle of Armageddon.

(9) And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

A. "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city:" Once again, notice the similarity between the above portion of verse 9 and a statement of Jesus, as recorded in Luke's version of the Olivet Discourse: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed about with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh...And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars..for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Lu. 21:20,25,26,27 Who would say that the scene in Luke was not the compassing

about of Jerusalem just before Armageddon and the Lord's Return? The striking similarity between the passage in Luke and the above portion of Rev. 20:9 is taken as more than a coincidence, and as another indication that the battle of Gog and Magog, as recorded in Revelation chapter 20, and the battle of Armageddon are one and the same battle.

B. "and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Again, notice the similarity between how the enemies are destroyed at the battle of Gog and Magog and how they are destroyed at Christ's return, a similarity which is taken as yet further evidence that the battles of "Armageddon" and "Gog and Magog" are one and the same battle: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel..who shall be punished with everlasting destruction.." 2 Thess. 1:7-9

(10) And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

A. "where the beast and the false prophet are" On Chart #2 in chapter 7 the writer endeavored to show that the first 7 literary divisions of Revelation all conclude at the same point. Accordingly, the last part of division #6, Rev. 19:11-21, is seen to end with the battle of Armageddon on the day of the Lord. And, likewise, Rev. 20:10, in division #7 is seen to have brought us to that same point. Thus, while the statement that the beast and the false prophet "are" in the lake of fire, may seem to some as proof that Rev. 20:10 has brought us to a later time than that of Rev. 19:20, I interpret that such is not the case. As related to the literary sequence, which presents John's visions as a continued story with one vision following another, Rev. 20:10 does indeed follow Rev. 19:20. But, as related to the chronological sequence in which they shall be fulfilled, Rev. 19:20 and Rev. 20:10 are taken to be fulfilled in the same period of time.

We might liken this to a 7-Act drama in which each act relates a different aspect of the same story and brings the story to the same point in time at its conclusion. Let us say that Act #6 tells of how two notorious criminals are brought to justice, and concludes with their being cast into prison. Then, from a different perspective of the same story, Act #7 tells of how their boss is brought to justice, and concludes with his being cast into prison at the same time that his two accomplices were imprisoned.

In the presentation of such a drama, the two criminals "are" in prison before their boss only inasmuch as the end of Act #6 precedes the end of Act #7. If we grasp the actual chronology of the drama correctly, we understand that the boss and his two criminal accomplices were imprisoned at the same time.

This, I interpret, is the way the beast and the false prophet "are" in the lake of fire before satan himself is cast therein. They may indeed land in the lake of fire somewhat before satan is cast therein, but satan shall be cast into the lake of fire with them during the same climactic time frame at the end of the age, and not 1000 years later.

B. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone...and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever Luke 12:47-48 makes it clear that the wicked will

suffer varying degrees of divine punishment from the Lord: "That servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.." According to this rule, it would appear that the one who will be tormented the most, and who will suffer the most, in the lake of fire will be satan himself, and that forever!

(11) And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

A. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it" This is the same judgment which Jesus portrayed in Matt. 25:31-46 at the close of the Olivet Discourse: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then (on the day of the Lord) shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.." Matt. 25:31 Thus, with this judgment being identical with that mentioned in Matt. 25:31-46, the final scenes of Revelation 20 are seen to conclude on the day of the Lord. More will be mentioned at verse 12 about the judgment in Matt. 25:31-46.

B. "from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away"

*An Important Observation

The fleeing away of the present earth and heavens will take place at Christ's second coming on the day of the Lord, and not 1000 years later. This is seen in 2 Peter 3:3-13: "There shall come.. scoffers.. saying, Where is the promise of his coming?..But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away.. the earth also..shall be burned up." Again, Rev. 20 is seen to conclude on the day of the Lord, and not 1000 years later.

C. "and there was no place found for them" No place will be found for this present universe at the great Judgment scene. The heaven and earth, as we now know them, will vanish on the day of the Lord. At the opening of the 6th seal we read: "the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places." Rev. 6:14

In Heb 1:10-12 we read: "..the earth; and the heaven..shall perish..And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed.." We can establish the time in which these dramatic changes will occur by reading an earlier portion of the first chapter of Hebrews: "When He bringeth again the Firstbegotten into the world.." Heb. 1:6 (marginal alternative KJV) Also, as has been earlier pointed out, seals 6 and 7 have brought us to the day of the Lord. Thus, we again see that the removal and regeneration of the material universe will occur on the day of the Lord, and not 1000 years thereafter.

(12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

A. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God" This is the general judgment. Every man, woman, boy, and girl who ever lived will be there, without exception. This same,

general judgment scene is spoken of in different terms in Matt. 25:31-33: "Then shall He sit upon the throne..and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left." This will not be a judgment of nations as groups. Rather, it will be a judgment of all nations as individuals, every individual from every nation. When Jesus said: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations," He meant that we should teach all individuals everywhere.

The view of the judgment in Matt. 25:31-46 to be an earlier judgment of "nations" as various world groups is a misinterpretation of the term "nations". Jesus pictured the Judgment in Matt. 25 to be like when a shepherd "shall separate" the sheep and the goats "one from another," a one by one discerning and dividing. Therefore, the two crowds and the two judgments recorded in Matt. 25:31-46 and Rev. 20:11-15 are the same. While the two passages employ different descriptions, they both tell of the general and final judgment by Christ of every human being.

B. "and the dead were judged...according to their works" "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9:27 Indeed, all will not die, according to 1 Cor. 15:51, but we shall all be changed, and "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.." 2 Cor. 5:10 As pictured in Matt. 25:33-40, it will be first the sheep who will be judged "according to their works," and then second the goats will be judged "according to their works". Matt. 25:41-46 This agrees with the statement in 1 Pet. 4:17 which says that "judgment must begin at the house of God."

(13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

A. "and they were judged every man" None shall escape from being brought to the judgment. "Every man" will be there! "There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." Job 34:22 Men may have their bodies cremated and their ashes scattered across a vast expanse of ocean in the attempt to avoid the resurrection and final judgment, and yet God will see to it that "every man," without exception, will be there on judgment day.

(14) And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

A. "This is the first resurrection...This is the second death" These two brief statements, written in similar form, seem to present to the reader two emphatic opposites: The first resurrection, bringing spiritual and eternal life; and the second death, including spiritual and eternal death. Those resurrected twice, spiritually and bodily, will die once, bodily, while those resurrected once, bodily, will die twice, bodily, and eternally.

(15) And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

A. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life" This statement seems to provide another confirmation that all will be at this judgment as the general, and final judgment of every human being. " Further, it suggests that there will be many judged there who will be found written in the book of life. I plan to be among those, don't you?

Thus, we see that Revelation chapter 20 concludes at the same, awesome final judgment as that portrayed in Matthew chapter 25, where those not found written in the book of life "shall go away into everlasting punishment," and where "the righteous," whose names are found written in the book of life, shall go "into life eternal". Matt. 25:46 The judgment portrayed in Revelation chapter 20, being identical to the judgment portrayed in Matthew chapter 25, will occur on the day of the Lord, and not 1000 years later.

Reader, consider how many proofs are found in Revelation 20 which point out to us that the conclusion thereof is not one millennium beyond the return of Christ, but rather that it is at Christ's second coming on the day of the Lord. When the "thousand years" and "little season" of Revelation chapter 20 are interpreted as in the church age, and spanning the time from Calvary to the day of the Lord, then the time of the final judgment of all, Rev. 20:11-15, is seen to occur at exactly the same time that all other scriptures locate its occurrence: on judgment day, the day of the Lord. (See Acts 17:31 and Romans 2:5.)

PLEASE NOTE: Table #2 APPEARED IN THE PRINTED TEXT AT THIS POINT. This chart is found as the hdm0124d.jpg file. The reader is here asked to view and/or print hdm0124d.jpg.

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PLEASE NOTE: CHART #3 THE 70TH WEEK OF DANIEL 9:24-27 appeared in the printed text at this point. This chart is found as the hdm0124e.jpg file. The reader is here asked to view and/or print hdm0124e.jpg and then to study its interpretation below:

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Chapter 9 THE 70TH WEEK OF DANIEL

The 70 Weeks Defined

The chronology of other parts of Daniel's prophecies can be seen in connection with his "seventy weeks" prophecy found in chapter 9:24-27, and particularly in connection with the chronology of the 70th week, 9:26b-27. The "seventy weeks" are not weeks of days, but rather weeks of years, and thus the scope of the prophecy covers 7 years per week x 70, or 490 years.

Daniel was told that the conclusion of those 70 weeks, or 490 years, would "finish the transgression... make an end of sins..make reconciliation for iniquity..bring in everlasting righteousness..seal up the vision and prophecy.." and arrive at the time "to anoint the most Holy."

The Futuristic And Preterit Views Of The 70Th Week

The first 69 weeks, or 483 years, of the prophecy were fulfilled at the time of Christ's crucifixion: "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.." Dan. 9:26a However, the full range of the 70 weeks was to conclude at the anointing of Christ as

King of kings, and not at the point of His crucifixion. Therefore, it does indeed appear that there is an hiatus, or pause, in the fulfillment of this prophecy at the point of Christ's crucifixion, with the remaining week, or 7 years, to be fulfilled at the end of the age.

There is a preterit, or historical, interpretation of the 70th week. (see Appendix D, subdivision: The Possibility Of Post-Tribulational Imminence) However, the futuristic interpretation of the 70th week seems to this writer to be the most likely and the most scriptural. Chart #3 below interprets the 70th week in the futuristic sense, and the remainder of this chapter will also focus upon the 70th week in that way, as the final 7 years of this age. The 70th week might also be termed as the brief, world wide, and terrible reign of anti-Christ.

The Coming, End-Time 70th Week -- See Chart #3 The 70Th Week Of Daniel 9:24-27

Following the futuristic interpretation, "the man of sin," spoken of in 2 Thess. 2:3, is "the prince that shall come," referred to in Dan. 9:26b. Also, apparently the anti-Christ will be the false Messiah which Jesus said the Jews would one day receive: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." John 5:43 Anti-Christ may also be "the prince of the covenant," spoken of in Dan. 9:27 and 11:21-22, who will "obtain the kingdom by flatteries," and "confirm the covenant with many (of the Jewish nation) for one week," or 7 years. Note in Chart #3 that 7 years of 30 day, lunar months would be a total of 2520 days.

The same personage may be referred to in Dan. 8:9 and 8:23 as the "little horn" and as the "king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences" who will "stand up," or rise to power. Apparently anti-Christ will be a clever, mental genius. His description continues: "his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power (he will be satanically empowered) and he shall destroy wonderfully (perhaps it will seem futile to resist his miraculous might) and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and holy people." (he will destroy both all of his mighty, worldly enemies and God's saints under his control.)

At first the world will prosper materially and financially: "And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand." Dan. 8:24-25 It would appear that "he shall come in (to power) peaceably" through both his seemingly irresistible might and his brilliant ability to bring world peace and prosperity.

Through a study of Daniel 8:2-14, it also appears that the actual length of anti-Christ's reign may not be a full 7 lunar years, or 2520 days, but rather will be a total of 2300 days from commencement to conclusion. Leaving out the italics, the first question of Dan. 8:13 could be read: "How long..the vision?," or "How long will the entire vision be?" One edition of the New English Bible poses two questions in this verse: (1) "For how long will the period of this vision last?" and (2) "How long will the regular offering be suppressed, how long will impiety cause desolation?"

In Chart #3, the writer has interpreted the answer of Dan. 8:14 to be the answer to the question about how long shall be the entire length of anti-Christ's reign, or how long shall be the portion of anti-Christ's reign which is portrayed in the vision: "And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; and then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

Thus, the actual term of anti-Christ's reign may be 220 days short of the full 2520 days of 7 lunar years, or perhaps this particular vision covered only 2300 days of anti-Christ's 2520 day reign. In any case, Daniel's vision of chapter 8:2-14 concludes with the close of the final 3 1/2 years of anti-Christ's reign.

In "the midst" of anti-Christ's 7-year covenant with Israel, he will apparently break that covenant in a deceitful manner: "And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people..and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain..and his heart shall be against the holy covenant.." Dan. 11:23,26,28

Thus, it appears that somewhere near the middle of his reign, Israel's false Messiah will become Israel's fearful murderer. And, he will at that time both cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease and will make Jerusalem desolate with the overspreading of his abominable armies: "And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations (margin or, with the abominable armies) he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation." Dan. 9:27

What The Abomination Of Desolation Is

Quite plainly, the armies of anti-Christ will have a part in "the abomination that maketh desolate." Daniel 11:31 reads: "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." Luke 21:20 says: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Also, in Dan. 8:12-13 we read: "And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it (the host, or army) cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered...and another saint said... How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give..the sanctuary...to be trodden under foot?"

However, while the armies of anti-Christ will have part in making Jerusalem desolate, and in treading it under foot, the "abomination" itself will apparently be a thing which is "placed" or "set up" in the rebuilt temple of God at Jerusalem: "And they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." -- dan. 11:31 "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up.." -- dan. 12:11 And, it also appears that the "abomination" will be the anti-Christ setting up the worship of himself as God in the temple of God: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." 2 Thess. 2:3-4

The "setting up," or "placing" of this "abomination" in the temple at Jerusalem will be accompanied by a world wide apostasy from the worship of the true God and from the worship of Christ, His true Messiah: "And all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon (satan) which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast (anti-Christ)

saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies." Rev. 13:3-5

The satanic exaltation of "the man of sin" and his blasphemy may also be seen in Daniel: "I considered..another little horn..and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things...And he shall speak great words against the most High."-Dan. 7:8,25 "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself." Dan. 11:36-37

Thus, "in the midst" of his 7-year covenant with Israel, anti-Christ will repudiate that covenant, will cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease at Israel's rebuilt temple, will overspread and tread down Jerusalem with his armies, and will set up the worship of himself as God in the temple of God.

That Which Marks The Beginning Of The Great Tribulation

The "placing" or "setting up" of this "abomination" in the temple at Jerusalem marks the beginning of the great tribulation: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place...then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."-Matthew 24:15,21 "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not...then...shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be." Mark 13:14,19

Jesus told us when the great tribulation would begin. Daniel chapter 12 tells us the length of that great tribulation: "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time...How long shall it be..? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." Dan. 12:1,6-7

The great tribulation, then, is shown to continue for 3 1/2 times, or 3 1/2 lunar years. From Dan. 12:11 we can see that there will be 1290 days from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away to the close of the great tribulation: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days."

Three and one-half lunar years would total 1260 days, not 1290 days. However, this poses no real problem. Perhaps we may understand from Dan. 12:11 that the daily sacrifice will be caused to cease 30 days prior to the completed setting up of "the abomination," and then following that setting up will come the 3 1/2 times, or 1260 days, of the great tribulation. Such a 30 day

interim between the forced cessation of the daily sacrifice and the completed setting up of "the abomination" seems to be quite plausible.

Anti-Christ's armies will tread down Jerusalem during the final 42 lunar months, or 1260 days, of his fearful reign: "the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."-Rev. 11:2 "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the gentiles, until the times of the gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24

Perhaps we may see from Zech. 13:8-9 that two-thirds of the population of Israel will be slaughtered during this time by the Jew's false Messiah, turned to be their fearful murderer: "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: and they shall call on my name.."

It is, perhaps, this one third of the nation of Israel, who will finally "believe on the Lord Jesus" and be saved, "yet so as by fire." 1 Cor. 3:15 Also, it may be this same Jewish remnant which is pictured in Revelation chapter 12, and which shall be divinely preserved during the fearful, final 3 1/2 years of anti-Christ's reign: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her a thousand two hundred and threescore days...And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." Rev. 12:6, 14

Apparently, while numbers of the Jews will refuse to worship anti-Christ and will thus become the objects of his murderous fury, there will be many who do capitulate to his demands: "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries...They that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days...but many shall cleave to them (to their corrupters or to the apostatizing Jews) with flatteries." Dan. 11:32-34

From Rev. 11:3 we can see that God's "two witnesses" will prophecy during the great tribulation: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days." This special ministry, just before the day of the Lord, appears to be part of the fulfillment of Mal. 4:1-6: "For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch...Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers.."

It seems that those who shall finally turn to the Lord out of Israel may do so, at least partly, because of the ministry of the two witnesses. But who will Elijah's companion witness be? Will it be Enoch, the only other individual, besides Christ Himself, who was translated to heaven? Or, will it be Moses, or someone else? I will leave that question for the reader to answer, if possible, to his or her own satisfaction.

From Jeremiah 30:7 we can see that Israel's bloody and fiery trial for 3 1/2 years under the hand of anti-Christ will culminate on the day of the Lord with that final "trouble" out of which the Jewish remnant shall be saved: "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."

The Great Tribulation Will Be World-Wide

However, prophetic statements by both Jesus Himself and John the Revelator indicate that the coming great tribulation will not be confined to Palestine and to the Jewish nation, but will be a world-wide crisis which shall fall upon every nation and every individual upon earth: "And there shall be..upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.," Luke 21:25-26. "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.." Matt. 24:22

Concerning the world-wide menace of "the man of sin," John wrote: "Power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life." Rev. 13:7-8

Of the second "beast," or the false prophet, John wrote: "He had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." Rev. 13:15-18

It should be quite plain to all who read the Olivet Discourse in the three synoptic gospels, and who read the book of Revelation, that the coming great tribulation will not be simply "the time of Jacob's trouble," but will be, rather, a world-wide time of trouble.

Indeed, while many in Israel will suffer during the great tribulation, "the time of Jacob's trouble" is more precisely located at the day of the Lord: "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jer. 30:7 Out of the midst of great anguish, a remnant of penitent, believing Jews shall be "born" again "at once" on the day of the Lord. Isa. 66:8 (see Part B, Chapter 13) Nevertheless, while that trouble and deliverance, at that time, will be peculiarly theirs, the preceding great tribulation will be a time through which shall pass all individuals then living on earth, "the Jews, the Gentiles, (and) the Church of God." 1 Cor. 10:32

The Saints Of Revelation Are Christians

The writer has already endeavored to demonstrate in Chapter II that "the elect" who shall pass through the great tribulation are the sanctified of the church, those having on the wedding garment. But what about the "saints" mentioned repeatedly in the Book of Revelation by the apostle John? As a Christian, did John think of people as being "saints" apart from being washed in the

blood of the Lamb? Or, did John think of "saints" as being those who constitute the church, the bride of Christ?

From Rev. 19:7-8 we can see that quite obviously the apostle John thought of the "saints" in this latter sense: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

John thought of the "saints" as the "wife," or bride of Christ. None, then, should presume to interpret that when the "saints" are mentioned elsewhere in Revelation they are not part of the church, Christ's bride. And, since John shows in Revelation that the "saints" will suffer during the reign of anti-Christ, it should be obvious to those who read this prophecy that the church will pass through the great tribulation.

I maintain that indeed all of the references to the "saints" in Revelation speak of those who comprise the church, including the following reference:

Rev. 13:4-10 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? (5) And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. (6) And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. (7) And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. (8) And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (9) If any man have an ear, let him hear. (10) He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

In Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13 and 3:22, the statement "He that hath an ear, let him hear" always concerns "what the Spirit saith unto the churches." When, therefore, Christ makes a strikingly similar statement in Rev. 13:9-10 (see above) to the "saints," is it not inconsistently presumptuous to interpret that His statement there is not also directed to "the churches"? I suggest that it is. Furthermore, who can show that the following references to the "saints" in Revelation do not apply to "the church"?:

Rev. 14:11-12 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. (12) Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Rev. 16:6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. Rev. 17:5-6 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (6) And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

Rev. 18:24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Both John's concept of saints, and the contexts in which the term appears, make it probable that every reference to the "saints" in Revelation applies to none other than to the church of Jesus Christ, His blood-washed bride. That probability being so, the Book of Revelation provides overwhelming proof that Christians will pass through, rather than be raptured out of, the great tribulation. (see also Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4; 11:18; 15:3; and 20:9)

The Saints Of Daniel Are Christians

The prophetic statements about the "saints" in the book of Daniel, then, should also be interpreted in the light of the book of Revelation. For, while perhaps the prophet Daniel himself did not envision "saints" as those comprising "the church" of Christ, the Spirit Who inspired his prophecy did. Therefore, the following statements from Daniel are seen by this writer as applying to the church:

Dan 7:18-27 But the saints of the most High (Christians) shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.. (21) I beheld, and the same horn made war with (Christians) the saints, and prevailed against them; (22) Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.. (25) And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out (Christians) the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (26) But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. (27) And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, (the people of Christ) whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

The "saints" and "holy people" in the book of Daniel are seen to be identical to the sanctified church of Christ. This taken to be so, consider also the following quotations from Daniel:

Dan. 8:23-25 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. (24) And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: (by satan's power) and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy (the saints of the Church) the mighty and the holy people. (25) And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; (Christ) but he shall be broken without hand.

Dan. 12:4-7 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. (5) Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. (6) And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the

waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? (7) And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; (3 1/2 lunar years) and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of (the Church) the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

Thus, the Book of Daniel, in correlation with both the Olivet Discourse and the Book of Revelation, is seen to demonstrate the fact that the "saints" of Christ's church will pass through "the little season" of tribulation at the end of the age, including the final 3 1/2 years of the great tribulation, and that their final triumph will come at Christ's return on the day of the Lord.

The 1335 Days

But what about the 1335 days mentioned in Dan. 12:12? To be quite candid, I am not sure just what is signified there. I will leave the matter of determining the interpretation of the 1335th day to the reader. I will only put forth a speculation of mine, being content to leave it thus, as merely a speculation. The 1290 days of Dan. 12:11 have already been interpreted in Chart #3 as ending at the close of great tribulation. Then, in the next two verses we read:

Dan. 12:12-13 Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. (13) But go thou thy way (Daniel) till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Could it be that the day of the Lord will span 45 earthly days, and that at the close of the 1335 days Daniel, along with all the saints of God, will receive his eternal reward and "stand" in his heavenly "lot"? The 1335th day would come 45 days after the 1290th day of Dan. 12:11, the close of the great tribulation. According to this writer's interpretation, the thousand years of Rev. 20 is not a thousand year day following Christ's return, and I further suggest that the day of the Lord may be, in terms of earthly reckoning, a span of time much shorter than a thousand years: "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." 2 Pet. 3:8

It seems possible that the 1335th day which was mentioned to Daniel may be the point where "time shall be no more," the point at which the day of the Lord shall end, and the point at which all of the wicked shall be cast into the lake of fire and all of the righteous shall be ushered into their lot within the eternal kingdom of Christ Jesus.

From Daniel 12:1-3,7 we can see that following the 3 1/2 times or years of the great tribulation shall come the resurrection of the dead, when those who "sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." This locates the resurrection and judgment of both the righteous and the wicked on the day of the Lord. Following this, whether it be marked by the above mentioned 1335th day or not, eternity shall begin, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and..as the stars for ever and ever."

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Chapter 10

THE END OF THE AGE

In the King James Version, the Greek word "aion" is generally translated "world" instead of "age". This is reflected in Matt.12:32 where these words are found: "neither in this world, neither in the world to come." These words could also be translated: "neither in this age, neither in the age to come."

Beyond this "world," or "age" there remains but one more age, "the age to come." At the close of this present "age," and before the "age to come," shall be the day of the Lord. Thus, the day of the Lord will be the transitional period between this age and the age to come, and on that day both the consummation and the precise end of this age shall occur.

PLEASE NOTE: Table #3 APPEARED IN THE PRINTED TEXT AT THIS POINT. This chart is found as the hdm0124f.jpg file. The scheme of Table #3 is shown below, and the reader may also view and/or print hdm0124f.jpg.

[The Present Age]--[The Day of The Lord]--[The Age to Come]

[The Present World]--[The Consummation]--[The World to Come, End of The Age]

The following two Greek words are translated "end" in the KJV:

(a) "telos," meaning: "the conclusion of an act or state of termination." "Telos" might best apply to the precise point at which this age will terminate.

(b) "sunteleia," meaning "entire completion, i.e. consummation." (Strong's Greek Dictionary #5056 and #4930) "Sunteleia" may best refer to the entire series of events which shall take place at the end of the age on the day of the Lord. (see Chapters 11-20, and Chapter 31, The Kingdom Consummation)

The Telos (Precise End Of The Age) On The Post-Tribulational Day Of The Lord

That the precise end of the age will come on the day of the Lord, can be seen from the use of the word "telos" in 1 Cor. 1:7-8: "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Bear in mind that "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" is one and the same as "the day of the Lord" in the scriptures.

Consider the implications of 1 Cor. 1:7-8 in regard to when the rapture will occur. If Christians will be Divinely "confirmed" in their faith unto the "precise end of the age on the post-tribulational "day of our Lord Jesus Christ," then it should be clear that a probation-ending rapture before, or during, the great tribulation would be impossible. Further, it is asserted that in the references below, which use the word "telos," it should be kept in mind that "the end" to which they point will be on the post-tribulational Day of the Lord:

Matt. 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Matt 24:13-14 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (14) And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Heb. 3:6,14 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end...For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.

Heb. 6:11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.

1 Pet. 1:9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Rev. 2:25-26 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.

1 Cor. 15:24 also verifies that the ""telos" end of the age will not occur prior to, or during, the great tribulation: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." This total "put down" of all of Christ's opposers will occur on the day of the Lord, and no sooner. Thus again we can see that if Christians will be "confirmed" in their faith until the time when Christ shall "put down" all anti-Christ "rule," then the "end" time at which they shall be raptured and rejoice in that triumph shall not occur until after the great tribulation.

The Sunteleia (Consummation) On The Day Of The Lord

This writer maintains that not only the precise end of the age will come on the Day of the Lord, but also the entire series of events which comprise the end of the age will also take place after the great tribulation on that Day. Is this not demonstrated in Matt. 13:39-40, 49-50 where the Greek word "sunteleia" is used?: "The harvest is the end (sunteleia) of the world; (aion=age) and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world".. "at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire."

A "harvest" does not suggest one, single act, but rather a series of actions at the end of the growing-ripening season. Still, all of the events comprising the "harvest" in the above references are seen to take place after the great tribulation on the Day of the Lord -- The reaping (or cutting off from earthly life of all) -- the gathering (or resurrection of all) -- the severing (or Judgment and eternal separation of the evil from the righteous). Thus, the entire "harvest" (or "consummation," consisting of the entire series of events at the end of the age) is seen to take place within the scope of the post-tribulational Day of the Lord.

Additionally, from the Old Testament, Dan. 9:27 shows that the consummation will commence at the point where the career of anti-Christ shall end: "and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." (or upon the desolator, anti-Christ) Here the Hebrew word "kawlaw" may be used in two senses of its meaning: (a) completion, and (b) destruction, for at the consummation Christ will both complete God's probationary dealings with man and destroy forever satan and his followers.

Both the "telos," precise "end of the age," and the "sunteleia," series of events related to that end, are seen to take place after the great tribulation on the day of the Lord. Therefore, this precludes the possibility of a pre, or mid-tribulation rapture of the church, because the rapture is shown by the scriptures to await the arrival of the post-tribulational "end of the age".

PLEASE NOTE: Table #4 APPEARED IN THE PRINTED TEXT AT THIS POINT. This chart is found as the hdm0124g.jpg file. The reader is here asked to view and/or print hdm0124g.jpg.

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SECTION I -- HIS APPEARING

PART B -- THE DAY OF HIS APPEARING

Chapter 11

THE COMING OF THE DAY OF GOD

2 Pet. 3:11-12 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, (12) Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Mal. 4:1,5 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. (5) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Isa. 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

Zech. 14:1 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

The Coming Of That Day Is Certain

2 Pet. 3:3-4,10 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, (4) And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell

asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (10) But the day of the Lord will come..

The Solemnity Of That Day

Joel 2:11 He is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

Mal. 4:5 ...the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

Acts 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.

The Surprise And Sudden Destruction Of That Day

1 Thess. 5:2 ...the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night..

Mark 13:35-36 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh..Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

1 Thess. 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them..

Jer. 51:8 Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed..

Rev. 18:2,17 Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen...in one hour...

The Seen Approach And Closeness Of That Day

Heb. 10:25 ..exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Isa. 13:6 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

Ezek. 30:3 For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day..

Joel 1:15 Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

Joel 2:1 The day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand..

Joel 3:14 The day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

Obad. 1:15 The day of the LORD is near..

Zeph. 1:7,14 Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand..The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly.

The Prelude To That Day

The outpouring of vials 1-6 "upon the earth, upon the sea, upon the rivers, upon the sun, upon the seat of the beast, and upon the great river Euphrates" near the close of the great tribulation is seen to be the ominous prelude to the "coming of the day of God." Rev. 16:1-14 They are the fearful signs of the impending, Almighty wrath which shall be poured upon the wicked on the day of the Lord itself.

The outpouring of these 6 vials appears to correspond with the events described by Jesus in Lu. 21:25-26: "And 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, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.."

Note: The church is seen to be on earth during the prelude to the Indignation, or final outpouring of God's wrath, for Jesus said, following the above: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Lu.21:18 He went on to counsel: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape (according to one scholar, the Greek word *ekpheugo* used here means "to escape out of the midst of") these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Lu. 21:36

Thus, while Christians shall indeed be delivered from the final "wrath to come," the church is seen to be still on earth at the close of the great tribulation during the prelude to the indignation "when these things begin to come to pass."

The account of vial 6 speaks of the preparations for the battle of Armageddon and records a caution from the Lord that the rapture is near at this point:

Rev. 16:12-16 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. (13) And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. (14) For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (15) Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (16) And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

The Commencement Of That Day

The Commencement, or Coming, of the day of the Lord appears to take place with the outpouring of the 7th vial: "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done." Rev. 16:17 With the 7th vial the events comprising the consummation shall begin to unfold quickly unto the "telos"

precise-end of the age where God's probationary dealing with all of His creatures shall be forever "done".

PLEASE NOTE: Table #5 APPEARED IN THE PRINTED TEXT AT THIS POINT. This chart is found as the hdm0124h.jpg file. The reader is here asked to view and/or print hdm0124h.jpg.

The Sequence Of Events On That Day

(1) A great earthquake will rock the entire world when Christ ariseth to shake terribly the earth:

Rev 16:17-18 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. (18) And..there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

Isa 2:19-21 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. (20) In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; (21) To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Along with Babylon the great, the lofty towers of cities around the world will fall: "And the great city was divided..and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath...another angel came down..And he cried..Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen..Thus with violence shall that great city..be thrown down." (see Rev. 16:19 -- 18:24)

(2) The powers of the heavens shall also be shaken, perhaps simultaneously with the terrible shaking of the earth:

Heb. 12:26 Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

Mt. 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

Revelation 6:12-17 provides additional evidence that the shaking of earth and heaven shall occur quite simultaneously as the signs which shall usher in the day of the Lord:

Rev. 6:12-17 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; (13) And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. (14) And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. (15) And the kings of the earth, and the

great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; (16) And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: (17) For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Then, the following events, which shall be enlarged upon in subsequent chapters, are seen to occur with the coming of the day of God:

The Revelation and Exaltation of Jesus Christ

The Conversion of Israel's Remnant

The Last Trump and General Resurrection of All of the dead

The Rapture, Marriage Supper, The Return of Christ

The Indignation, which includes the battle of Armageddon

The Consumption of All Material Things

The General Judgment of All

The Regeneration and Restitution of All Things.

While the writer does not present the occurrences listed above as necessarily in their exact order, these events are all seen as taking place after the great tribulation and on the day of the Lord. (see Chapters 12-20 following)

* * * * *

Chapter 12

THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

1 Pet 1:13. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Time Of The Revelation

Matt. 24:29-30 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: (30) And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Apparently, the revelation of Christ will immediately follow the fearful shaking of heaven and earth. After centuries of forgetting God, suddenly the world will be shaken as it has never been shaken before, and awakened as it has never been awakened before, at the august sight of God, in the Person of Christ, coming to bring all flesh into judgment.

Together, All Who Ever Lived Will See Christ

Rev. 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him..

Isa. 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

All flesh shall see the revelation of Christ "together". Here we see proof that there will be a general resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked at Christ's appearing. "Together" with everyone who ever lived on this earth, you and I shall see the revelation of Christ! (see Chapter XIX, The General Resurrection)

The Opposite Results Of Christ's Revelation

The revelation of Christ will bring both the grace of glorification and eternal rest to His saints. At the same time, His revelation will bring divine vengeance and eternal punishment upon the wicked:

2 Thess. 1:7-10 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, (8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; (10) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints...in that day.

Rom. 2:5 ...treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

The Singular Exaltation Of Christ

Isa. 2:10-17 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty. (11) The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. (12) For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: (13) And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, (14) And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, (15) And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, (16) And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. (17) And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

Philip. 2:9-11 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: (10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; (11) And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

At His Exaltation, Every Foe Will Be Forever Silenced

Jude 14-15 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, (15) To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all..of all their ungodly deeds..and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Psalms 46:6,8-10 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. (8) Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. (9) He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. (10) Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

* * * * *

Chapter 13

THE CONVERSION OF ISRAEL

The kingdom will not be restored to flesh and blood Israel, because "the kingdom is the Lord's," and never did belong to them. Ps. 22:28 However, while the kingdom will not be restored to flesh and blood Israel, a final remnant of flesh and blood Israel will be restored to the kingdom. Apparently on the day of the Lord, just before the resurrection and rapture of the righteous, a final remnant of the Jews will travail in genuine repentance and be born again at once:

Isa. 66:8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

The Travail Of The Remnant

It would appear that the fires of anti-Christ persecution just before Armageddon will be used of God's goodness to bring spiritual travail upon the remnant, which will finally result in their sudden birth into Christ's kingdom:

Zech. 13:8-14:2 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. (9) And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God. (14:1) Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. (2) For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be

taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

In their anguish, the remnant will begin to call upon Jesus: "I will bring the third part through the fire, and...they shall call on My Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, the Lord is my God...And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." Zech. 13:9; 12:10

Along with everyone living upon the earth, the Jewish remnant will see Jesus when He appears: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Rev. 1:7 The august sight of God Himself, in the Person of Christ, coming in the clouds will evoke mourning around the world: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Mt. 24:30

The Remnant's Mourning Will Be Unto Their Salvation

However, while the mourning of multitudes on earth will but precede their approaching doom, the mourning of the Jewish remnant will be a travail which issues in their spiritual birth and salvation. Perhaps such a special dispensation of God's grace to them at that time will be possible not only because of His eternal purpose in their regard, but also because "the Spirit of grace and supplications" shall have already brought them into a state of total repentance and faith toward Christ Jesus just before He appears. Be that as it may, Israel's mourning on the day of the Lord will result in their salvation:

Zech. 12:11 -- 13:1 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart...All the families that remain, every family apart...In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness..

Rom. 11:23,25-27 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. (25)...blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. (26) And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. (27) For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

The apostle Paul wrote that this dramatic conversion of flesh and blood Israel would not occur "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Rom. 11:25 Jesus said that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."-Lu. 21:24 Rev. 11:2 says "The holy city shall they (the Gentiles) tread under foot forty and two months." From a comparison of these three scriptures we can see that "the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled" at the end of the final 42 months, or 3 1/2 years, of the great tribulation. Apparently, "the fulness of the

Gentiles" will "be come in" at that point, and then shall follow the conversion of the Jewish remnant upon the day of the Lord.

When The Remnant Will Be Received By Christ

Romans 11:15 seems to hint that Christ will receive the penitent, believing remnant of Israel into His kingdom immediately preceding the resurrection of the righteous: "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" In other words, immediately after the last Gentile is saved, then shall come the sudden conversion of Israel, and immediately after "all Israel shall be saved," the resurrection "life from the dead" shall occur, and the rapture of all the righteous to meet the Lord in the air.

Of course, when the final remnant of Israel is saved they will experience a great spiritual resurrection. Ezekiel 37:1-14 seems to depict Israel's spiritual resurrection: "these bones are the whole house of Israel...And ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live.." Spiritual resurrection is very much "life from life dead," but I suggest that the apostle Paul was hinting at more than spiritual resurrection at the time when Christ receives Israel's remnant.

The idea of the bodily resurrection and rapture of the righteous immediately following Israel's national conversion seems to be further re-enforced by two passages in the Book of Revelation, Rev. 6:12 -- 8:1 and Rev. 11:1-20:

The Sealing Of The 144,000 (Rev. 6:12 -- 8:1)

In Chart #1, Chapter 7, I have shown that with the opening of the 6th seal the narrative has been brought to the day of the Lord and concludes with the opening of the 7th seal on the day of the Lord. Between the opening of the 6th seal and the opening of the 7th seal we have the account of the sealing of 144,000 "of all the tribes of the children of Israel," 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes. Rev. 7:3-8

The significance of spiritual sealing can be seen from Eph. 1:12-13: "That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

Therefore, the sealing of these 144,000 Jews is seen to signify that they shall have become true believers in Christ and consequently sealed by, and born again of, His Spirit. In other words, the sealing of the 144,000 Israelites is synonymous with the conversion of Israel's final remnant.

Then, following the account of Israel's' conversion, or the sealing of the 144,000 Jews, we have the account of "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations...which have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 7:9-17 This is taken to signify the entire, aggregate body of the church from "all nations," the final Jewish remnant included.

Thus, Rev. 7:3-17 is seen to depict the "receiving" by Christ of the Jewish remnant into His Church, constituting the final segment of His Body to be added before His return to the earth. This event is shown to occur just before the opening of the 7th seal, a time seen to be synonymous with that of the sounding of the 7th trumpet, or "last trump".

The sounding of the 7th trumpet is "the time of the dead," or the time when the dead shall rise. Rev. 11:15-18 This corresponds perfectly with the events at "the last trump": "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The sealing of the 144,000 Jews just before the time of the opening of the 7th seal, then, is seen to show that the national conversion of Israel's remnant shall occur immediately before the sounding of the 7th trumpet, or "the last trump," at which the resurrection and rapture of the righteous shall occur.

In the opinion of the writer, it seems likely that this converted, Jewish remnant, as the final segment added to the Church, will be "changed" then "in the twinkling of an eye" and rise to meet the Lord in the air along with all of the other glorified saints. This would correspond with Jesus' statement when, at the close of His earthly ministry, He said to the Jews: "Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Matt. 23:39 Having been thoroughly converted to Christ Jesus, the Jewish remnant might well utter such an exclamation just before, along with the rest of the church, they rise to meet Him in the air at His return.

The 144,000 And The Final Harvests (Rev. 14:1-20)

As the final part of literary division #5, this passage has been shown on Chart #2 as concluding chronologically at the day of the Lord. In Rev. 14:1-5 we have a different view of the 144,000 sealed Israelites, or Jewish remnant. In these verses they are seen with Christ the Lamb "on the mount Sion...having His Father's name written in their foreheads." This is taken to be but another description of their "receiving" by Christ into His church.

Hebrews 12:18,22,24 describes the spiritual relocation of those who have been born again in these terms: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched..But ye are come unto mount Sion...And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." Thus, Rev. 14:1-5 is taken to describe the spiritual transport of the Jewish remnant into spiritual Zion. In other words, these verses reveal their conversion and reception by The Lamb into His blood-bought Church, spiritual Zion.

Following this account, Rev. 14:13-20 is seen to depict the two final harvests: The first harvest depicting the resurrection and reward of the righteous, and the second harvest depicting the resurrection and rewarding of the wicked. Thus again we see the conversion of the Jewish remnant and their reception into Christ's Church located immediately before the resurrection of the just:

The First Harvest -- The Resurrection And Rewarding Of The Righteous

Rev. 14:13-16 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their

labours; and their works do follow them. (14) And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. [This appears to signify Christ, Who when He comes again in the clouds shall cut off all from their earthly connection]

(15) And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. (16) And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. [This appears to depict how Christ will then first resurrect, or reap, those who have "died in the Lord" into His presence, after which they shall be rewarded for their "works," which "do follow them"]

The Second Harvest -- The Resurrection And Rewarding Of The Wicked

Rev 14:17-20 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. (18) And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. (19) And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. (20) And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

The first reaping had gathered "the harvest of the earth," but now this reaping gathers "the clusters of the vine of the earth," two entirely different crops. Those of the first harvest, God's "wheat," will be rewarded by being gathered into His heavenly garner. Those of the second harvest, satan's followers, will be rewarded much differently. While the battle of Armageddon is apparently pictured in the above passage, there appears to be also a depiction of the eternal punishment which the wicked shall experience after their reaping, or resurrection, and judgment. They will not be allowed to enter the New Jerusalem, but instead shall be eternally trodden in "the winepress of the wrath of God" without the city!

Apart from the main point at hand, the reader's attention is also called to the fact that the picture presented by Rev. 14:13-20 is not that of two resurrections which are 1007 years apart as would be the case if the pre-trib, pre-millennial teachings were so. Instead, the second resurrection is pictured as directly following the first resurrection.

However, coming back to the main point of the chapter, it is seen from the preceding that Rev. 14:20, along with Rev. 6:12 -- 8:1 and Romans 11:15, locates the national conversion of Israel just before the resurrection and rapture of the righteous on the day of the Lord.

The Dramatic Conversion Described

A study of various scriptures related to this subject seems to paint the following prophetic picture: Near the close of the great tribulation Israel's darkest hour will come. Many of the Jews shall have been slaughtered and the future prospect will seem even darker as the foreboding shadows of the approaching battle of Armageddon cast a pall over the Jewish people. Yet, out of

that anguish shall commence the travail and subsequent repentance and faith toward Christ of the Jewish remnant, and that deep mourning over their sins and turning to Jesus shall bring about their spiritual salvation.

When the day of the Lord dawns and Christ appears, they shall have been brought to the very point of their birth into Christ's kingdom. Then, when He appears they will mourn over their individual sins and the fact that they, as a nation, have crucified Jesus, their Messiah and King. Next, as the fountain is "opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness," and as they are spiritually "received" by Christ, born again, and cleansed from all unrighteousness, their sorrow shall turn to joy. Viewing Jesus as He continues to be seen approaching the earth, they will proclaim: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Suddenly, the trumpet will sound! "Life from the dead" will be experienced by all of the dead in Christ as they are resurrected from their graves. The newly saved and cleansed Jewish remnant, along with all of the other saints of Christ, shall be "changed" into their glorified bodies and then be "caught up," or raptured to meet the Lord in the air!

The Final Addition To Christ's Church

Centuries ago, Jesus promised that He would build His Church and confidently assured all that the gates of hell would not, could not, prevail against it. He will finish the building of His church unto its final perfection. With the addition of the Jewish remnant, it is seen that the Church of Christ, which is His Body, shall have reached "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 1:13

Should we not conclude, then, that following the conversion of the Jewish remnant, all of Christ's Body, including that final remnant, "shall be raised incorruptible" to meet Him at His Return? 1 Cor. 15:52. This writer asserts that even thus "all Israel shall be saved," being all the spiritual "Israel of God" who are delivered from the eternal wrath to come. Rom. 11:26; Gal. 6:16

* * * * *

Chapter 14

THE LAST TRUMP

1 Cor. 15:51-52 Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

When The Last Trump Shall Sound

The resurrection and rapture of the righteous will follow the sounding of "the last trump," and I know of no fundamental Christian who would deny this. However, there is a wide disparity of beliefs as to just when this trumpet shall sound. Some assert that "the last trump" shall sound before the tribulation period. Others say that this trump shall sound at the middle of the tribulation.

It is my persuasion that Jesus said in effect that "the last trump" would sound after the great tribulation:

Matt. 24:29-31,40-41 Immediately after the tribulation of those days... (30)...they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven..... (31) And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other...(40) Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (41) Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left..

The 7th Trumpet Shows The Last Trump To Be Post-Tribulational

Need we any clearer statements than those above to discern just when "the last trump" shall sound? However, there are other scriptures which support the interpretation that "the last trump" shall sound after, not before or during, the great tribulation.

The sounding of the 7th trumpet, Rev. 11:15-19, is an event seen to take place at the close of the great tribulation on the day of the Lord. As was earlier mentioned, the sounding of the 7th trumpet is at "the time of the dead," or at "the time of" the resurrection of "the dead".

Thus, since the 7th trumpet is both "the last trump" of Revelation and "the time of" the resurrection of "the dead," it is seen to be synonymous with "the last trump" of 1 Cor. 15:52. (see Rev. 11:18) Further, since the 7th trumpet is seen to take place after the great tribulation, it is viewed as another scriptural proof that "the last trump" will sound after the great tribulation on the day of the Lord, and not before or during the 7 year Tribulation period.

Other Bible Evidence Showing The Last Trump To Be Post-Tribulational

In Chapter 3 the writer endeavored to show how that the tribulation is not a part of the day of the Lord, and how that the day of the Lord, in fact, follows the tribulation period. Allowing this, then, Zeph. 1:14-16 seems to present yet another proof that "the last trump" will sound after the great tribulation: "The great day of the Lord is near...That day is...a day of the trumpet.." Then too, in Isa. 27:13, which from the context is seen to occur on the day of the Lord, we read: "The great trumpet shall be blown." Both of these references appear to locate the time at which "the last trump..shall sound" to be on the day of the Lord, and not previously, before or during the tribulation period.

The context of Zechariah chapter 9 clearly refers to Christ's second coming as the time when He will "cut off..the battle bow" and when He will take "dominion". Zech. 9:10 The time when Christ shall do these things will definitely be on the day of the Lord. During this time, then, we read in Zech. 9:14 that "the Lord God shall blow the trumpet.." This prophetic statement is taken to be yet another indication that "the last trump" will sound after the great tribulation on the day of the Lord.

To continue, while even pre-tribulationists agree that 1 Thess. 4:15-18 describes the resurrection and rapture of the church, it should be noted that St. Paul, immediately following those remarks, wrote concerning the time at which this resurrection and rapture would occur: "But of the

times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." 1 Thess. 5:1-2

The obvious conclusion is that while in 1 Thess. 4:15-18 Paul described the manner in which the resurrection and rapture would occur, in 1 Thess. 5:1-2 he revealed the time at which they would occur, the day of the Lord. Therefore, when we read in 1 Thess. 4:16 that at the resurrection and rapture of the Church "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," we should bear in mind that this will occur on the day of the Lord. Thus we have another confirmation that "the last trump" will sound after the great tribulation on the day of the Lord.

In Chapter 7 the writer endeavored to show that literary division 1 of the Book of Revelation closes with John's "typical rapture" on the day of the Lord. Rev. 4:1-2a reads as follows: "After this I looked and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit.."

While this passage is taken to be but a "typical rapture," it may indeed demonstrate to us again that "the last trump" will "talk" with God's saints on the day of the Lord and invite them at that time to "Come up hither" to Christ out of both mortality and death "to meet the Lord in the air."

The Conclusion

Uniformly, throughout the scriptures, "the last trump" is seen to occur after the great tribulation on the day of the Lord, precluding the possibility of the resurrection and rapture of the saints before that time.

* * * * *

Chapter 15

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION

The Time When All Shall Be Resurrected

Concerning the fact that both the righteous and the wicked will be resurrected at Christ's return on the day of the Lord, see Chapter 12, The 144,000 And The Final Harvests, where the resurrection of the wicked is pictured as immediately following that of the righteous, and not 1007 years thereafter. Also, in support of the fact that at Christ's second coming there will then be a general resurrection of all of the dead, consider the following scriptural proof:

Dan. 12:1-2 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, (for a time, times, and an half) such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. (2) And many (or the many) of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Here, the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked is seen to follow the 3 1/2 year long "time of trouble," or great tribulation. The context suggests that those who are resurrected "to everlasting..contempt" will be raised immediately after the resurrection of those raised "to everlasting life," with little or no intermission between the two: "at that time...them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt."

One Resurrection Unto Two Different Fates

John 5:28-29 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, (29) And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

In the above verses Jesus said that all of the dead will be resurrected at the same hour, not 1007 years apart as would be the case if the pre-trib, pre-millennial rapture teaching was so. Further proof that the resurrection of the wicked will not be separated from that of the righteous by a millennium or more is seen in a statement which Jesus made to the wicked Caiaphas. Jesus' statement to him presents a fact which perhaps many pre-millennialists have overlooked.

The Wicked Will See Christ Coming In The Clouds

In Matt. 26:69 Jesus said to the wicked Caiaphas: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

This Proves A General Resurrection At Christ's Return

Reader, Please note: The pre-millennial teaching places the resurrection of the wicked 1000 years after the post-tribulational revelation of Christ. It would be utterly impossible for Caiaphas to see Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven at the close of the great tribulation if he, as a wicked man, was resurrected 1000 years after that event took place!

Matt. 26:69 forces us to conclude one of two things:

(a) Jesus saw that Caiaphas was, or would become, righteous, so as to be resurrected with the righteous at His revelation; or

(b) Jesus was telling Caiaphas that all of the dead would be resurrected at His revelation, the wicked as well as the righteous, and that Caiaphas, among the wicked dead raised in that hour, would thus "see the Son of man...coming in the clouds of heaven."

I submit that it is the latter of these two possibilities which is correct, proving that there will not be 1000 years between the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked, but rather that the wicked will be raised at the same hour in which the righteous are raised, at "the last trump"!

The 7th Trumpet Shows One Time Of Resurrection For All Of The Dead

Rev. 11:15,18 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (18) And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

The evidence in the above verses points to the fact that "the time of the dead" spoken of is "the time" at which all "of the dead" shall be raised. Nothing within these verses suggests that there will be a millennium or more between "the time" at which the righteous dead are raised and "the time" when the wicked dead are raised. Instead, here again, the wicked and the righteous are shown to be resurrected at the same hour on the day of the Lord, with no 1000-year hiatus between the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked.

The Time When All Of The Dead Shall Be Resurrected Points To A Pre-Second Advent Fulfillment Of The Millennium

Hopefully, the reader can see that, uniformly, the scriptures show that both the wicked and the righteous dead shall be resurrected at Christ's second coming, and that therefore the "1000 years" and the "little season" of Revelation 20:1-8 must be interpreted as having their fulfillment before the second advent of Christ.

Rev. 11:18 places the time of the dead at time of the time of Christ's second coming. From Rev. 20:12 we can see that this same time of the dead will be after the millennium and the little season. Thus, the writer interprets that when all of the dead are raised at the time of Christ's second coming, the millennium and the little season of great tribulation will be past, having been fulfilled in the Church Age before Christ's return.

Further, the writer hopes that the reader can see that an interpretation of Rev. 20:5-7 which places the resurrection of the wicked dead 1000 years after Christ's second advent is in plain contradiction to the majority of other Bible passages bearing on this subject which show that both the righteous and the wicked shall be resurrected at the same hour on the day of the Lord.

In Conclusion

When the apostle Paul says in Acts 24:15, "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust," it is noted that a resurrection, singular, is mentioned and not resurrections, plural. It is seen from this along with the other scriptures that there shall be a single time of resurrection during which all the dead, both the just and the unjust, shall come forth from their graves, and that general resurrection is seen to occur after the great tribulation on the day of the Lord.

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Chapter 16

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

The Marriage After The Great Tribulation

In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus spoke of the marriage of the Lamb after His description of the great tribulation, Matt. 24:21-29 compared with Matt. 25:1-13. The reader is also referred to Chapter 1 where, in a chronological listing of second coming events from the Olivet Discourse, the marriage of the Bridegroom is 10th following the 4th and 8th listings of the great tribulation and the rapture.

It can be seen also from the Book of Revelation that the marriage of the Lamb shall take place after the great tribulation and on the day of the Lord. The reader is referred to Chart #1, Chapter 7. It is after the time of the 7th seal, trumpet, and vial, that we have the account of the marriage of the Lamb in Rev. 19:7-9. This account of the marriage is seen just before the Lamb, riding upon a white horse, leads forth His holy armies toward victorious warfare against anti-Christ at Armageddon. Rev. 19:11-21

The Seventh Vial

Rev. 16:17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

The Marriage Of The Lamb

Rev. 19:7-9 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (8) And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (9) And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

The King Of Kings Riding Forth To Victory At Armageddon

Rev. 19:11-21 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. (12) His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. (13) And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. (14) And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. (15) And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (16) And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

(17) And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; (18) That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of

mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. (19) And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. (20) And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. (21) And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

The Marriage And Armageddon Again Closely Associated

Interestingly, this same close connection between the wedding and the warfare of the Lamb can be seen in Psalm 45 where within the scope of 17 verses we are both told that the bride "shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework" and that the King in His majesty shall "ride prosperously" into the battle wherein His arrows shall be "sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people (shall) fall under" Him.

Psalms 45:1-7,13-15 My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. (2) Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. (3) Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. (4) And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. (5) Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. (6) Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. (7) Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. (13) The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. (14) She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. (15) With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

The Marriage On The Day Of The Lord

This twice-recorded, close connection between the marriage of the Lamb and the battle of Armageddon suggests that both of these events shall occur after the great tribulation. This corresponds with Jesus' location of these events in the Olivet Discourse. Thus, it is seen that the scriptures unitedly place the marriage of the Lamb after the great tribulation and on the day of the Lord.

* * * * *

Chapter 17 THE INDIGNATION

Isa. 26:20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

That Which The Church Shall Escape

God has never promised that His church would escape from either persecution or martyrdom at the hands of a God-hating, Christ-rejecting world in this present age. No, the church will not escape persecution and martyrdom, even during the great tribulation at the hands of anti-Christ, until the very "telos" end of the age. But, the church of God shall escape the divine retribution which shall be poured out with omnipotent fury upon anti-Christ and a wicked, Christ-rejecting world immediately after the great tribulation on the day of the Lord.

The Indignation Includes More Than Armageddon

The defeat of anti-Christ's armies at the battle of Armageddon will apparently be only a part of "the wrath to come" upon wicked earth-dwellers at that day. The picture painted by prophecies bearing on the subject is that of "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" throughout the entire earth. Heb. 10:27

Properly defined, then, "the indignation" encompasses much more than simply the battle of Armageddon, and will consist of a "sudden destruction" of all of the ungodly that is universal in its scope. It will be an inundation in divine vengeance which will forever end evil-doing and rebellion against God on this earth. This present world-order will be totally overthrown, and "as it was in the days of Noah," all men who have not been received into The Ark of Salvation (Christ) will physically perish. However, that vengeance which brings the bodily death of the entire wicked world at that day will not issue in their annihilation, for it will be but the precursor of the impending "vengeance of eternal fire" which they will next soon suffer in the second death, Jude 7.

The Prelude and Arrival Of The Indignation

The prelude to the Indignation is seen to be the outpouring of vials 1-6 at the close of the Great Tribulation. Rev.16:1-14 Following this, at the outpouring of the 7th vial, the Day of the Lord is seen to commence. Heaven and earth will be shaken. Christ will appear. The saints will be resurrected, changed, and rise to meet Him in the air. Then, after the Church of Christ has been caught away into the safety of His presence, "the wrath to come" will come! Those who long, and finally, spurned His offers of salvation will suddenly become the objects of His Omnipotent fury and destruction, "and they shall not escape". 1 Thess. 5:3

The Various Terms Which Denote This Vehement Outpouring

The Indignation, Or Indignation

Isa. 10:25 For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction.

Isa. 30:27 Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire.

Isa. 34:1-3 Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. (2) For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. (3) Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. (Armageddon seen in this passage)

Isa. 66:14-16 And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. (15) For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. (16) For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

Jer. 10:10 But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.

Jer. 50:24-25 I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD. (25) The LORD hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this is the work of the Lord GOD of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans. (fall of Babylon seen)

Dan. 8:19,23-25 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be... (23) And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. (24) And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy (Christians) the mighty and the holy people. (25) And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against (Christ) the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. (the destruction of anti-Christ seen at the indignation)

Dan. 11:35-36 And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: (Christians will suffer trials and persecution to the very end of the age) because it is yet for a time appointed. (36) And the king (anti-Christ) shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. (anti-Christ seen to be destroyed at the indignation)

Nahum 1:5-6 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. (6) Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.

Zeph. 3:8 Therefore wait ye 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

mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. (Armageddon, world-wide destruction at the indignation)

Rom. 2:5,8 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; (8) But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath. (the indignation seen here to occur on "the day of wrath," or the day of the Lord)

Heb. 10:25-27 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (26) For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, (27) But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. (here again the indignation is seen to occur on the day of the Lord)

The Hour Of Temptation

Rev. 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

The Wrath To Come

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

1 Thess. 1:10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Sudden Destruction

1 Thess. 5:2-4,9 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (3) For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. (4) But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. (9) For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Vengeance and Recompense

2 Thess. 1:7-8 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, (8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Isa. 61:1-2 The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; (2) To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.

Isa. 63:1-4 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. (2) Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? (3) I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. (4) For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

Jer. 51:6 Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense.

Punish

Isa. 13:9-11 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. (10) For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. (11) And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. (the cosmic signs=the indignation post-tribulationally)

Isa. 24:21,23 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. (23) Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

Isa. 26:21-27:1 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. (27:1) In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea. (here the indignation is seen to occur just after the resurrection and rapture of the church on the day of the Lord)

Wrath and Anger

Isa. 13:13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. (cosmic signs again locate the indignation on the day of the Lord)

Zeph. 1:14-2:3 The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. (15) That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, (16) A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. (17) And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. (18) Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to

deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land. (2:1) Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; (2) Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you. (3) Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger. (escape for the church is seen here)

Rev. 6:12-17 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; (13) And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. (14) And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. (15) And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; (16) And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: (17) For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (the cosmic signs precede the indignation on the day of the Lord)

Rev. 11:17-18 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. (18) And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. (here the indignation is seen to occur at the time of the 7th trumpet=the last trump)

The Indignation On The Day Of The Lord

The time of The Indignation should be quite apparent. Repeatedly, the cosmic signs which shall occur on the day of the Lord are spoken of in direct connection with the time in which the indignation shall occur. Then too, plain statements which name "the day of the Lord" are seen to locate the indignation "at that day."

PLEASE NOTE: Table #6 APPEARED IN THE PRINTED TEXT AT THIS POINT. This chart is found as the hdm0124i.jpg file. The reader is here asked to view and/or print hdm0124i.jpg.

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Chapter 18 THE CONSUMPTION

Isa. 10:22 For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

Isa. 28:22 Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

2 Pet. 3:3-4 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, (4) And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 1 Pet. 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

Isa. 24:19-20 The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. (20) The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

Heb. 12:25-29 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.. (26) Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. (27) And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. (28) Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: (29) For our God is a consuming fire.

Rev. 6:14 ...the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together..

The Consumption Is Certain

The Lord is going to shake, consume, dissolve, and remove all material things as they now exist in our universe. This is divinely decreed and determined, all mockers to the contrary notwithstanding! Those who complacently suppose that all things will "continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" are in great error. No doubt millions will be shocked at the sudden "end of all things" when Christ returns. "Our God is a Consuming Fire" Who shall utterly dissolve the universe with fervent heat on that Day! The absolute certainty of this rests, not on the statements of those fundamentalist preachers, whom the world has labeled "doom-sayers," but on the divine authority of Christ Himself, Who declared: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." Matt. 24:35

Environmentalists Won't Save The Earth

The frantic efforts of misguided environmentalists and scientists will not defer this event. Planet earth, along with every planet and star of the cosmos, is doomed to death and dissolution. As the hour of awesome, universal disintegration approaches, "Men's hearts (will fail) them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Luke 21:26 Millions who have tried to make themselves a heaven on this earth will then desperately hope to avert the impending cataclysm. Nonetheless, at the time appointed the "consumption, even determined" by God's Own counsel will take place. The earth, as it presently exists, will be removed forever, and both sin and sinners shall be eternally purged therefrom.

The Consumption Will Occur At Christ's Return

It can be clearly demonstrated from the scriptures that the consumption will be at the time of Christ's return. Further, 2 Peter 3:10-12 shows that this dissolving of all things will take place on the day of the Lord.

2 Pet. 3:10-12 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (11) Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, (12) Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

The Consumption And Armageddon Part Of The Indignation

Consider the following references which apparently place the time of the consumption and the time of the indignation together on the day of the Lord:

Mal. 4:1,5 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. (5) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Isa. 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

Isa. 24:5-6 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. (6) Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. (few shall escape the indignation and consumption)

Nah. 1:5-6 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. (6) Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.

Isaiah 34 and Zephaniah 3 place the consumption within the time frame of both the indignation and Armageddon:

Isa. 34:2-4,8 For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. (3) Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. (this is Armageddon) (4) And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. (this is the consumption) (8) For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.

Zeph. 3:8 Therefore wait ye 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 mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

In point of fact, then, it appears that the battle of Armageddon and the consumption of the material universe are both part of the indignation which shall be poured out upon the ungodly on the day of the Lord.

The Consumption Just Before The Judgment

Ps. 75:2-3 appears to tie the time in which the earth shall be dissolved with the time of Christ's judgment of all, and from Rev. 20:11 we can see that apparently the consumption will occur just before the judgment:

Ps. 75:2-3 When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly. (3) The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.

Rev. 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

No Place For A Millennial Kingdom After The Consumption

The fact that the consumption will occur at the time of Christ's return, and not 1000 years thereafter, negates the possibility of a millennial kingdom on this present earth following that time. According to Rev. 20:11, there will be "found no place" for this present heaven and earth at the time of the Judgment, and the Judgment is repeatedly shown by the scriptures to occur at the time of Christ's second coming.

Naturally, then, there would be no place for present earthly kingdoms in Jesus' Messianic kingdom. In addition to Rev. 20:11 above, the following reference from Daniel also contains a "no place found for them" phrase which applies to Christ's destruction and removal of all of earth's present, wicked kingdoms at His return:

Dan. 2:35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Thus, from the scriptures heretofore quoted in this chapter, we can see the following:

(a) The consumption will occur at Christ's return, perhaps just before the judgment on the day of the Lord.

(b) There will be "no place found" in the Messianic kingdom of Christ for any of the present, wicked kingdoms of this world.

(c) There will be "no place" for material things, as they now exist, in Christ's kingdom.

Consumption Does Not Mean Annihilation

However, though we look for the consumption, the dissolution, and the "removing" of the material universe as it now is, we should not look for its annihilation. From Heb. 6:1-12 we can see that at the time of Christ's second coming the universe will indeed "perish," and be "folded up," but not unto annihilation, but rather unto its being "changed" into a new heaven and a new earth:

Heb. 1:6, 10-12 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, (or when He bringeth again the firstbegotten into the world, NIV) he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.... (10) And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: (11) They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; (12) And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

The Conclusion

It is maintained by this writer that when the apostle Peter wrote: "The end of all things is at hand," he meant that at Christ's second coming all material things will be removed and dissolved, never to return in their present state. 1 Pet. 4:7 The material universe will be gloriously changed, but, concerning its present state, Isaiah 24:20 tells us that "it shall fall, and not rise again."

With the consumption at Christ's return, the sinner's earthly home, and earth-centered hope, will forever vanish. Even the Christian's hope lies not in the perpetuation and preservation of material things as they now exist, but rather within God Himself and within that which is spiritual, heavenly, and eternal:

Heb. 10:34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

2 Cor. 5:1-3 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: (3) If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

Ps. 46:1-5 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (2) Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. (3) Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. (4) There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. (5) God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

* * * * *

Chapter 19

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT

Judgment Day Is The Day Of The Lord

2 Tim. 4:1,8 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; (8) Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Acts 17:30-31 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: (31) Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

God has appointed "a day" in which He will judge the world by Christ Jesus, the righteous Judge. Judgment day, according to the apostle Paul, will be the day of "His appearing." That means that judgment day and the day of the Lord are one and the same day. Also, the fact that judgment day will arrive at the time of Christ's second coming is repeatedly confirmed in the scriptures.

One Judgment Of All At Christ's Return

Matt. 16:27 The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Matt. 25:31-34,41,46 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: (32) And before him shall be gathered all nations: (that is, all individuals) and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: (33) And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. (34) Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 41 } Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: (46) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

All Nations Means All Individuals

Jesus' use of the term "nations" in Matt. 25:32 is seen to be identical with His use of the term in Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Christ did not command us to go and teach all "nations" as a mass, or totally assembled group, but rather that we should teach all "nations" as individuals. Even thus shall all "nations" as individuals be gathered before Christ at his return for both personal and universal judgment.

Further, that the judgment in Matt. 25:31-46 is the general judgment of all men, rather than a supposed judgment of nations as social groups, is seen in these statements: "He shall separate them one from another," and "these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." These statements speak of a very personal, individual dividing and eternal destiny, not that of impersonal, wholesale lots of massive groups.

Judgment Time Inseparable From Second Coming Time

Rom. 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

I Cor. 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

2 Thess. 1:7-10 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, (8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; (10) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Heb. 10:35-37 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. (36) For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. (37) For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

James 5:9 The Judge standeth before the door. (ready to come and judge)

2 Pet. 3:3-4,7,10 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, (4) And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (7) But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment.. (10)...the day of the Lord will come..

Jude 14-15 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, (15) To execute judgment upon all..

Rev. 11:15,18 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (18) And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

Rev. 22:11-12 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. (12) And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Nine of the twelve references heretofore quoted indisputably connect the judgment with Christ's coming again. Further, the author asserts that there is no reference anywhere in the Bible which severs these two events, for they will both occur in their entirety on the day of the Lord.

James pictures The Judge ready to come through heaven's door into the view of all, take his seat, and call the eternal judgment court into session. A judge walks through the door and comes into the courtroom for one purpose, to judge, and one of the primary reasons that Jesus shall come again is to "judge the quick (those still living) and the dead at his appearing."

Both Matt. 25:31-46 and 2 Thess. 1:7-10 show that everlasting punishment will be meted out upon the wicked at the time Christ comes! And the 2 Thessalonian reference also locates the time of this judgment as "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed." This means that eternal judgment will be passed upon all men at the revelation of Christ. Both Rom. 2:5 and Rev. 11:15, 18 locate the judgment at the day of wrath, which also places this awesome event on the day of the Lord.

Rev.11:15-18 unites judgment day for all with resurrection day for all, and both of these events are seen to occur at the time when Christ returns in triumph over all "the kingdoms of this world." Unquestionably, that time will be at His revelation on the day of the Lord.

Scriptural evidence repeatedly negates the pre-trib interpretation of a judgment and rewarding of the saints before the revelation, and it also invalidates the pre-millennial interpretation of a judgment and rewarding of the wicked 1000 years after the revelation and return of Christ. Both the righteous and the wicked will be judged at the one, and only, General Judgment of all at the time of Christ's return on the day of the Lord.

The 1000 Years, The Tribulation, Then The Judgment

Many prophetic interpreters place part of the Judgment before the Millennium. In this writer's opinion, such an interpretation is in error, since the Judgment of all will follow the Thousand Years. View 1 shown below is seen by the author to be correct, and View 2 is seen to be in error:

PLEASE NOTE: Table #7 APPEARED IN THE PRINTED TEXT AT THIS POINT. This chart is found as the hdm0124j.jpg file. The reader is here asked to view and/or print hdm0124j.jpg.

Further, as the author interprets the scriptures, no judgment by Christ will be followed by 1000-plus years of earthly time, but rather, at His second coming all will be resurrected, judged, and immediately each shall enter his or her eternal abode.

Time Ends At the 7th Trump, The Last Trump

Reader, please note: Rev. 10:5-7 declares that time will end with the sounding of the 7th trumpet, or the last trump!:

Rev. 10:5-7 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, (6) And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: (7) But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

There is an eternal finality spoken of concerning both the sounding of the 7th trumpet and the outpouring of the 7th vial, events which the writer interprets to be identical as to the time of their fulfillment: At the 7th trumpet we read: "there should be time no longer," and "the mystery of God should be finished." At the 7th vial we read: "It is done". They speak of earthly conclusion, with eternity to follow.

The Mystery Of God Will Be Quickly Finished

Further, as this writer views it, the scope of time which the 7th trumpet and vial span is not pictured in the scriptures as a thousand or more years, but rather their scope is pictured as a series of rapidly unfolding events which are successively fulfilled without lengthy intermission. It is not declared that "in the years" when the seventh angel begins to sound the mystery of God shall be finished, but rather it is said that "in the days.. when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God (shall) be finished."

I Cor. 15:22-24 does tell us that there will be an "order" in which all shall be resurrected, but again there is no hint of a thousand year hiatus between the resurrection and judgment of the righteous and the resurrection and judgment of the wicked. Instead, it appears that at Christ's coming all shall be brought to an end, including both the resurrection and judgment of every individual: "In Christ shall be made alive..every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end.."

With a rapidity which shall, perhaps, astonish even those who are spiritually prepared, the events of the 7th trumpet and vial shall be accomplished on the day of the Lord, and God's earthly, probationary dealings with mankind shall be forever "finished" and eternally "done".

No 1000 Earthly Years Divide Or Follow The Judgment

Reader, please take note: If, as Rev. 10:5-7 indicates, time will end with the sounding of the 7th trumpet, or the last trump, and if, as Rev.11:15-18 indicates, all shall be resurrected and judged at that trump, then we are forced to the following conclusions:

(a) There will be no 1000 years of earthly time between the resurrection and judgment of the righteous and the resurrection and judgment of the wicked.

PLEASE NOTE: Table #8 APPEARED IN THE PRINTED TEXT AT THIS POINT. This chart is found as the hdm0124k.jpg file. The reader is here asked to view and/or print hdm0124k.jpg.

(b) There will be no 1000 years of earthly time following the resurrection and judgment of either the righteous or the wicked, but rather, following the resurrection and judgment of all at Christ's second coming, every soul will enter eternally into either the lake of fire or the holy city, New Jerusalem. (see hdm0124l.jpg)

This being the case, the Messianic Kingdom of Christ will not be in time, nor in a millennium upon this earth, but rather it will be in eternity and in the new heavens and new earth. The author will have much more to say about this in coming chapters. (see hdm0124l.jpg and Section II of this book)

Accordingly, Rev. 20:1-10 is seen to bring the prophetic narrative from the beginning of the Church age to the "consumption" of all material things on the day of the Lord. Then, Rev. 20:11-13, the great white throne judgment, is seen to be the general judgment of all on the day of the Lord. Directly following the judgment, we see every soul entering into the eternal state. Rev. 20:14 -- 22:15 (see hdm0124l.jpg)

PLEASE NOTE: Table #9 APPEARED IN THE PRINTED TEXT AT THIS POINT. This chart is found as the hdm0124l.jpg file. The reader is here asked to view and/or print hdm0124l.jpg.

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Chapter 20 THE REGENERATION

Matt. 19:27-28 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? (28) And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Rev. 21:1,5 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away..(5) And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new...

2 Pet. 3:10,13 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (13) Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Rom. 8:19-23 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. (20) For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, (21) Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (22) For we know

that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. (23) And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Psalms 82:5 states that "all the foundations of the earth are out of course." God is not satisfied with "all things" the way they are now. Even material things are not in the condition in which they should be. To use a common expression, things are "out of whack". There is discord and decay everywhere. The entire creation is suffering from the effects of sin and the curse, but the time is coming when God will forever "make all things new."

"The Regeneration" Defined

The word "regeneration" used in Matt. 19:28 is "paliggenesia," pronounced "pal-ing ghen-es-ee'-ah. It means: "rebirth (the state or the act), i.e.(fig.) spiritual renovation; spec. Messianic restoration:--regeneration." It is a compound of "palin," which can be interpreted "anew" or "once more" and "genesis". (See Strong's Greek Dictionary #3824, #3825, #1078) We can see from the definition of this word that "the regeneration" to which the Lord referred in Matt. 19:28 will be the time of the "anew-genesis," the time when all things will be "made new". It will be the time when "once more" there is a "genesis," a new beginning with all things renovated and restored by the Messiah into their proper state.

"All Things" Including the Animals And Elements

Apparently the phrase "all things" includes the innocent animals, the plants, and the elements of the universe, along with redeemed mankind.

When God's accountable creatures sinned, necessitating their Creator's curse, the entire creation was thrown out of kilter into a state of discord, decay, and eventual destruction, including mankind, the animals, the plants, and even the elements. The hearts of men were warped and depraved. The plant kingdom began to produce noxious weeds, thistles, and thorns. Ferocity and a wild-brute nature turned the formerly docile animals into fearful beasts. And, things went "out of whack" in the elements of our universe, shifting the stars and planets "out of" their original, orderly arrangement and "course" into a "collision course" which shall finally result in cosmic chaos and the collapse and dissolution of the entire material creation on the day of the Lord.

Whatever part of the responsibility satan and his fallen angels must share with man for the curse which has warped the universe, it is clear that the animals, plants, and elements were not responsible. Paul wrote: "For the creature (ktisis=original formation, creation, creature) was made subject to vanity (mataiotes=inutility, transiency, moral depravity, vanity) not willingly.." Rom. 8:20 The elements, plants, and animals didn't exercise a will contrary to God's will, thereby bringing about their warped condition and ultimate destruction. No, the curse came entirely as the result of the sin of God's accountable creatures, angels and men.

Therefore, since the elements, plants, and animals were innocent victims of the curse, according to Rom. 8:19-23, they also will "be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." That is, like ourselves, out of death and destruction, they

too will be resurrected into "the glorious liberty" of eternal life with glorified bodies. Is that not precisely what the apostle Paul says in the passage?

The Regeneration At The Time Of The Rapture

Paul wrote that "they" are "waiting for the.. redemption of our body" as the time when they too will "be delivered from the bondage of corruption." That, of course, means that this glorious change will take place on the day of the Lord, the same time frame during which the dead in Christ shall "be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" into our glorified state. 1 Cor. 15:52 This corresponds with Heb. 1:6-12 which reveals that the time in which "they shall be changed" is the time at which the Father shall "again" bring "the Firstbegotten into the world." (Christ)

What The Regeneration Change And Time Exclude

Everything will be changed at the time of Christ's return, and not 1000 years thereafter. At the time of His second coming, nothing will remain as it is now either mortally or materially. Therefore, there will be no 1000-year Messianic kingdom in the present world, and none will enter into that kingdom in their present body. (see also Chapter 36, The Kingdom Glory, Magnitude and Change)

The Restitution And The Regeneration Synonymous

Another term used in the Bible concerning this miraculous resurrection and change of the innocent and redeemed creation is "restitution": In Acts 3:20-21 we read: "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things.." The Greek word for "restitution" in verse 21 is "apokatastasis," and means "reconstitution". See Strong's Greek Dictionary #605.

What The Restitution Time Rules Out

"The heaven must receive" Christ until the time arrives for that restitution, or reconstitution, to be accomplished. This statement, then, precludes the possibility of a pre-tribulation rapture of the church because of the following:

(a) The restitution will include the changing and reconstituting of the entire universe along with the redemption and glorification of the saints bodies, a transformation which could not possibly take place until after the reign of anti-Christ ends at the close of the great tribulation.

(b) At the time of Christ's ascension, "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Mark 16:19 Since "the heaven must receive" Christ "until" the time arrives for the post-tribulational "restitution of all things," a pre- or mid-tribulational rapture would not be possible.

"In The Regeneration" Means In The Eternal State

The re-created order described by the Bible terms "changed," "restitution of all things," "make all things new," and "the regeneration" is not seen by this writer to refer to a transitory condition, but rather to a state which shall be eternal, a state which once brought about shall never be reversed. In other words, "the regeneration" and the eternal state of the blessed are identical.

Thus, when Jesus spoke of "the regeneration" as the time and state during which He would sit in the Messianic "throne of His glory," He spoke of a Messianic Reign, not lasting 1000 years, but which would continue forever. This, I maintain, is the true, Biblical concept of Jesus' Messianic reign. In coming chapters I will endeavor to enlarge upon this point and demonstrate from the scriptures why this is so.

Consider the following things which are seen to take place, not in an earthly millennium, but in "the" eternal "regeneration" and everlasting kingdom of Christ which shall begin shortly after His second coming:

The Universal Reign And Worship Of Christ

Ps. 24:7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Dan. 2:35 Then..the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Zech. 14:9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Isa. 9:7 Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end..

Luke 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Ps. 66:4 All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name.

The Earth Filled With The Glory And Knowledge Of The Lord

Nu. 14:21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

Hab. 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

The Universal Joy Of The Redeemed

Isa. 25:8-9 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. (9) And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for

him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Isa. 35:10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Isa. 51:11 Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

World-Wide Peace And Righteousness

Ps. 37:11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Ps. 72:7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

The Changed Nature Of The Animals

Rom. 8:21 ..the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Isa. 11:6-9 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. (7) And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. (8) And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. (9) 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.

Isa. 65:25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Bible passages which many have taken to speak of conditions during a millennial reign of Christ on this earth, the writer takes to speak of conditions which shall exist in the eternal "regeneration" and everlasting kingdom of Christ. The genuine "golden age" of the regeneration is seen to be one which will never end, in the "land that is fairer than day," of the New Heaven and New Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. (see especially Chapters 31 -- 33 following, along with the whole of Section II, "His Kingdom")

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SECTION II -- HIS KINGDOM

PART A -- THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF HIS KINGDOM

Chapter 21

THE KINGDOM INTERPRETED

Acts 13:27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

Two Elements Of Messianic Prophecy Not Recognized

The unbelieving Jews during Jesus' earthly ministry failed to recognize two of the most vital elements of Messianic prophecy:

- (a) "They knew Him not," and failed to see The Spiritual Mission Of Christ.
- (b) "They knew..not..the voices of the prophets," and failed to see The Spiritual Meaning Of Messianic Prophecy.

Fundamental Christians are well aware of the spiritual mission of Christ. However, many fundamental believers have failed to recognize, to the extent they should, the spiritual meaning of Messianic prophecy, and its past, present, and future fulfillments to the Church. Let us next consider more fully the failure to recognize both of the above mentioned elements of Messianic prophecy.

The Spiritual Mission Of Christ Not Recognized

When reading the New Testament, Christians sometimes wonder and marvel at how the unbelieving Jews who "knew Him not" could have failed to recognize the spiritual mission of Christ. Had not both Daniel and Isaiah prophesied centuries before His first coming that the Messiah would die?:

Dan. 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself..

Isa. 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Still, at Christ's first coming, perhaps most of the unbelieving Jews were expecting the Messiah, when he came, to live forever: "The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" John 12:34 Apparently they were interpreting that since Christ's reign was to be eternal, therefore He would not die. They failed to recognize that unless Christ did die He could

not complete His spiritual mission -- to provide a spiritual and eternal salvation for the Jews and for all mankind.

Even the pre-Pentecostal followers of Jesus were slow to recognize the fact that their long awaited Messiah must die, rather than live forever on this earth. After Jesus "began to show His disciples that He must go unto Jerusalem, and..be killed,..Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Matt. 16:21-22

After His resurrection, when Christ communed with the two doleful disciples on their way to Emmaus, He said to them: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Then Jesus, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets,..expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:25-27 No doubt He spoke to them of how the sacrificial death of Christ was typified and pointed out repeatedly in the scriptures.

At Pentecost, the veil of imperception concerning the spiritual mission of Christ was removed from the hearts of the 120 in the upper room. Their insight into the necessity of Christ's death and into the spirituality of Christ's salvation was made clear. A reading in the book of Acts of the subsequent preaching of Peter and of others substantiates that fact.

Later, Paul wrote: "..we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock.." 1 Cor. 1:23 After His dramatic conversion, Paul saw perhaps more clearly than any of the apostles into the spirituality of Christ's mission. Yet, many in earthly Israel who "knew Him not" had no desire to accept One as their true Messiah Who had suffered the ignominious death of crucifixion. Their Christ Who thus died, instead of living forever in this world and delivering them from Rome, became their "stumblingblock". Thus, countless thousands of the Jews missed forever the nature of His spiritual mission and the eternal deliverance of His spiritual salvation.

The Spiritual Meaning Of Messianic Prophecy Not Recognized

Because the unbelieving Jews "knew..not..the voices of the prophets," they also failed to properly recognize the spiritual meaning of Messianic prophecy. However, this writer suggests that even with the benefit of God-given spiritual insight, many fundamental Christians are still failing to grasp the full extent of the spiritual meaning of Messianic prophecy and the spiritual manner of its fulfillment.

Let me hasten to say, though, that insight into the spiritual meaning of prophecy is not always automatic with one's spiritual birth or baptism. Sometimes spiritual perception of these truths in God's Word comes only after prayerful, protracted study. When Messianic prophecy was originally written, "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1:21 Yet, sometimes the very prophets themselves did not at first comprehend the spiritual significance of their inspired prophecies. They didn't know quite how to interpret some things until, after their diligent searching, the Spirit revealed to them the deeper, spiritual meaning of their prophecies.

The Spiritual Meaning Of Messianic Prophecy Recognized

1 Pet. 1:10-12 Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: (11) Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. (12) Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven..

From the above passage, we can see that there is a veiled, spiritual significance in Old Testament Messianic prophecies, a meaning in their messages which the prophets did not discover until their minds were divinely illumined. Apparently, those earnest inquirers were not satisfied with what only seemed to be the literal meaning of their prophecies. They wanted insight into the substance behind the shadow. They wanted to know "what" salvation it was of which they prophesied and "what manner of time" it would be in which their prophecies would be fulfilled.

Do we not see from this passage that "what" the Messianic prophets really spoke of was not the political, materialistic salvation which a literal interpretation of their prophecies seemed to predict, and which most of the Jews expected, but rather it was a spiritual salvation:

(a) Taken literally as applying to "themselves" and earthly Israel, the prophecies seemed to point to deliverance from Rome, or whatever earthly, political power dominated the Jews.

(b) Spiritually, and correctly interpreted as applying to "us," those prophecies referred to deliverance from sin, and from whatever evil power may seek to dominate those of Christ's Church.

Messianic prophecies spoke of a spiritual and universal salvation for all men, and not merely of a political and national salvation for earthly Israel. In the above quoted passage, when Peter said that the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies was unto "us," he meant unto "us" of "the Church". This is verified by the fact that within the scope of the same epistle we see that "us" means those "which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God." 1 Pet. 2:10 It is the Church, spiritual Israel, which is receiving the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy, and not earthly Israel. The unbelieving Jews failed to discern this "voice" of the prophets, this spiritual meaning and manner of fulfillment. Those of the Church should not fall into this same error, and ascribe an earthly Israel fulfillment to Messianic prophecy which has its true realization in the spiritual salvation and heavenly realms of Christ's Church.

Much of Messianic prophecy which is couched in earthly, temporal, and material terms, has a deeply spiritual significance in its true interpretation. Just as Jesus illustrated spiritual kingdom truths with earthly comparisons in the parables, even so spiritual kingdom truths are often couched in material terminology in the prophets. If one is to rightly interpret Jesus' parables concerning His kingdom, he must see beyond the literal into their true spiritual meaning. Likewise, if one is to rightly interpret much of Messianic kingdom prophecy, he must see beyond the literal into its true spiritual meaning and manner of fulfillment.

Kingdom Prophecy Is And Shall Be Fulfilled In The Church

Often, fundamental Christian preachers discern spiritual, gospel truth in the Old Testament Messianic prophets, and preach therefrom concerning both the spiritual salvation and the spiritual, heavenly kingdom of Christ. They see that couched within passages which seem to apply to earthly Israel is truth which has a spiritual application in the Church. Why, then, do some of these very discerners of the gospel in Old Testament terminology feel that Messianic promises to Israel must have a literal fulfillment to earthly Israel, when in fact those promises have been, are now, and shall be fulfilled in the spiritual "Israel of God," the Church?

It is those of the Church who are the "heirs of the kingdom." Jas. 2:5 Paul wrote in Rom. 4:14 and Gal. 3:29: "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void".."And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." In relationship to all mankind, including earthly Israel's remnant, Christ's kingdom is His Church. The only way any human being can enter Christ's kingdom is by being born again. Never will this be changed. Therefore, at the end of the age, the only way the remnant of earthly Israel will inherit Messianic kingdom promises is by being born again and thus incorporated into Christ's Church.

When the remnant of earthly Israel is brought into the Church, they, and all of the spiritual Israel of God, will inherit the final fulfillment of Messianic kingdom promises. That fulfillment, however, will not come in accordance with a strained, literal interpretation of kingdom prophecy, but rather it will be realized in accordance with the true, spiritual meaning of Messianic kingdom promises.

Also, the realm of fulfilled kingdom prophecy will be heavenly and eternal, far transcending "the weak and beggarly elements" of this world which are described in the literal meaning of that prophecy. Some unfulfilled passages of Messianic prophecy do indeed seem to call for a literal fulfillment in this present earth. However, where the literal fulfillment of these passages contradicts the overwhelming majority of other Bible testimony on the subject, they too should be understood as having their fulfillment in the spiritual, heavenly, and eternal realms of Christ's Church.

In coming chapters I will expand upon this interpretation of Messianic kingdom prophecy. The reader is invited to personally search and compare scripture with scripture on the subject.

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Chapter 22

THE KINGDOM AGE IS ETERNAL

The Messianic Age will be in the eternal state, and not during a millennium of time. It will take place in the new heaven and earth, and not in the present heaven and earth. Christ will reign therein from the New Jerusalem, and not from the Jerusalem which now is. These interpretations, along with others related to the Messianic kingdom, the writer will endeavor to prove to the reader from the scriptures in this chapter and in coming chapters.

While the Messianic reign is often described in "this-earthly" terms, that reign is at the same time inseparably tied to things which are eternal, not temporal. In one breath, so to speak, the prophet may describe Messiah's reign in very mundane language, yet in the next breath he associates that reign with things which are obviously eternal. In this writer's view, we should not allow "mundane" terminology to "muddle" our interpretation of Messianic prophecy, and the evidence within that prophecy which irrefutably associates Messiah's reign with things eternal should prove to us that "The Kingdom Age Is Eternal."

The purpose of this chapter will be to convince the reader through a study of Isa. 11:1-10; 65:17-25; 66:22-24; 2 Pet. 3:10-13 and Revelation 20:7,11 -- 21:5 that the Messianic age, or reign, will not take place in any earthly millennium, but will instead take place within the new heaven and new earth of the eternal state. The reader is asked to first read carefully each scripture passage below and then to follow closely the logic of the writer's subsequent observations and conclusion.

Isaiah 11:1-10 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: (2) And 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; (3) And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: (4) But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. (5) And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. (6) The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. (7) And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. (8) And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. (9) 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. (10) And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Observation: The Messianic Age follows the Slaying of Anti-Christ.

Isa. 11:1-10 above shows that the commencement of the golden age of the Messianic reign of Christ will follow the slaying of anti-christ: (4) "...He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall He slay the wicked..(6) The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb..(9) They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord..(10) ...His rest shall be glorious. Perhaps most fundamental interpreters of prophecy would agree with this observation.

Isaiah 65:17-25 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. (18) But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. (19) And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. (20) There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not

filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. (21) And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. (22) They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. (23) They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. (24) And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. (25) The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Observation: The Messianic Age will be during the time of the New Heaven, New Earth, and New Jerusalem.

Isa. 65:17-19 locates The Messianic reign as during time of the "new heavens and new earth" and new "Jerusalem" wherein there will be no more weeping. All three -- the new heavens, new earth, and new Jerusalem -- Are all part of the eternal state. Therefore, Jesus' Messianic Reign will be in the eternal state.

Isaiah 66:22-24 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. (23) And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. (24) And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

Observation: The Eternal, Messianic Reign is often described with "this-earthly" terms.

While both Isa. 65:17-25 and 66:22-24 couch much of their description of the Messianic age in "this-earthly" terms, these passages unite the time of Messiah's reign with the "new heavens" and "new earth" state, which is, of course, the eternal state.

Observation: Outside of the Jerusalem from which Christ shall reign is the eternal lake of fire, not an earthly, temporal environment!

Isa. 66:22-24 not only pictures the "new heavens" and "new earth" and new "Jerusalem," as included in the Messianic age, but quite graphically portrays the worshippers of that new Jerusalem viewing sinners who are outside of the city suffering in the lake of fire: (24) And they shall..look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.. It would appear that when Jesus spoke of the undying worms and unquenchable fire of eternal punishment, He made reference to this very verse:

Mark 9:43-48 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: (44) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (45) And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: (46) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (47) And

if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: (48) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Thus, here again we see in Isa. 66:22-24 an association between the Messianic reign, or age, and things which are inseparable from the eternal state, the latter of which refers to the awful, eternal suffering in the lake of fire of those who shall be outside of the golden bliss of Messiah's kingdom.

2 Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (11) Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, (12) Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (13) Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Observation: This earth will have been consumed before the golden age of the Messianic reign begins.

2 Pet. 3:10-13 places the time of the new heaven and new earth after the consumption: (12)..the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (13) Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Christ's reign is clearly shown to be during the time of the new heaven and new earth. Thus, His Messianic reign could not possibly be on this earth, for it will have been consumed before the time of the new heaven and new earth.

Rev. 20:7,11-21:5 And when the thousand years are expired...(11) I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. (12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. (14) And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. (15) And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (21:1) And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. (2) And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (3) And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (4) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (5) And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

The Final Observation And The Conclusions

Rev. 20:7,11 -- 21:5 places the time of the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem: after the millennium; after the consumption; and after the judgment. Since this is so, and since Messianic prophesies in Isaiah unite the Messianic reign with the new heaven, new earth, and things which are inseparable from the eternal state, then:

(a) The Messianic reign will not take place on this earth during an additional millennium of time following Christ's return.

(b) Jesus' Messianic reign will take place in the eternal state.

(c) The golden age of the Messiah when "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb" and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord," etc., shall be fulfilled in the eternal state of "the regeneration" after Christ has made "all things new".

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Chapter 23

THE KINGDOM FULFILLMENTS OF REVELATION 21-22

It is asserted by this writer, that in Old Testament Messianic prophecy we often find prophetic pictures, couched in "this-earthly" language, of a Messianic reign which shall take place in the eternal state. In support of this assertion, does the Bible anywhere show the eternal state fulfillment of Messianic prophesies which seem to describe a Messianic reign on this present earth? Consider Revelation 21 and 22.

On Chart #2, Chapter 7, the writer displayed eight literary divisions in the book of Revelation. The first seven of those divisions were all shown to conclude on the Day of the Lord. Division eight, Rev. 21-22, is shown to describe things beyond the Day of the Lord, things which are eternal. I know of none who would say that these two chapters describe things as they will be in any millennium on this present earth. Therefore:

When we repeatedly find described in Revelation chapters 21 and 22 the fulfillment of Messianic prophesies, things which some interpret to take place during a millennium in this world, should we not see clearly that the Messianic reign will take place in the eternal state and in the new heaven and earth? I say that we should.

Below is a comparison of Old Testament prophetic portions with their corresponding portions found in Revelation 21 and 22. I maintain that the striking similarity between the things described in these Old Testament portions and the things described in Revelation 21 and 22 should convince us that the Messianic kingdom will take place in the Eternal State, and not during any millennium on this present earth. Below, please note: (a) that which is prophesied to be in the Messianic Age -- Compared with -- (b) its corresponding fulfillment shown to be in the Eternal State.

New Heavens And New Earth, Former Things Passed Away

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 65:16-17 ...because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes. (17) For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:1,4 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away..(4) ..the former things are passed away.

Eternal Bliss, With No Sorrow Or Tears

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 65:18-19 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. (19) And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes..and there shall be no more..sorrow, nor crying..

Nothing Hurtful Or Painful

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 65:25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and...They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:4 ..neither shall there be any more pain..

Long Life, No Death

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 65:22 ..for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:4 ..and there shall be no more death..

No More Curse, But Instead Blessing

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 65:23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD..

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:3 And there shall be no more curse..

Jerusalem The Prominent City, Honored By Nations

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Micah 4:1-2 But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. (2) And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD..and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (see also Isa. 2:2-3)

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:2,10,24,26 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven..(10) And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem..(24) And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it..(26) And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

Jerusalem Become The Dominant City

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Micah 4:8 And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. Isa. 60:11-12 Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. (12) For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:24,26 ..and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. (26) And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

Jerusalem's Gates Be Continually Open

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 60:11 Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:25-26 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day.. (26) And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

Jerusalem's Dimensions Be Foursquare

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Ezek. 48:20 ..ye shall offer the holy oblation foursquare, with the possession of the city.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth..The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

Jerusalem's Wall Foundations Garnished With Precious Stones

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 54:11-12 ..I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. (12) And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones..

Jerusalem's Gates Named After The 12 Tribes Of Israel

Ezek. 48:31 And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel..

Rev. 21:12 ..twelve gates..and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

Jerusalem Divinely Lighted

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 60:1-3 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. (2) For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. (3) And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:23-24 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. (24) And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

Jerusalem Experience Endless Day

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 60:19-20 The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. (20) Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Jerusalem Adorned As A Bride

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 52:1 ..put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city..

(b) Shown to be in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Jerusalem Pure And Holy

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 52:1 ..put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Zech. 14:20-21 In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. (21) Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts..and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts. Isa. 60:21 Thy people also shall be all righteous..that I may be glorified.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.. 2 Pet. 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Eternal Damnation To Those Without The City

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 66:22,24 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. (24) And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. (8) But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The Tabernacle Of God With Men

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Ezek. 37:27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:3,22 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God..(22) And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

The Water Of Life And Tree Of Life

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Ezek. 47:1,9,12 Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward.. (9) And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live..and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.. (12) And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all

trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine. Zech. 14:8,11 And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem.. (11) And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:1-2 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. (2) In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Jerusalem The Place Of God's Throne

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Jer. 3:17 At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem..

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:3 ..the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it..

The Eternal Presence Of Christ

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Ezek. 48:35 It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:3 ..the Lamb shall be in it..

Christ Reigning Over All The Earth From Jerusalem

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Zech. 14:9,16 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.. (16) ..all the nations..shall even go up .. (to Jerusalem) to worship the King, the LORD of hosts..

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it (New Jerusalem); and his servants shall serve him.

Jesus Reigning Forever, Endless Increase, Peace, And Order

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. Isa. 66:10,12 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.. (12) For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream..

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:3,5 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.. (5) ..for ever and ever.

Jerusalem Filled With God's Glory

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Ps. 87:3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah. Isa. 60:13 ..I will make the place of my feet glorious.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:10-11 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, (11) Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

In Conclusion

Surely all of these marvelous things shall have their fulfillment, not in the Jerusalem which now is, nor during a millennium of time, but rather in the New Jerusalem of the eternal state. Beloved, let us not look for the realization of Messianic kingdom promises within the feeble framework of time and matter here below, but rather in the "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. 11:10

Heb. 12:18,22 tells us: For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched.. (22) But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.. That which is touchable and visible often appeals more to the human mind than that which is spiritual and invisible, but should not the above quotations from Hebrews reveal to us that our hope is not to come to the touchable Jerusalem on this earth, but rather our hope and purpose should be to enter in through the gates into "the heavenly Jerusalem." Nowhere in the Bible is the Christian pointed to this present earth as the location where God's promises shall be fulfilled to Christ's Church. Why, then, after the return of Christ, should we expect to re-inhabit, for even a thousand years, this old earth and the Jerusalem which now is?

This writer asserts that, along with numerous other scriptures, the comparisons of scripture with scripture presented in this chapter should convince us that the Jesus' Messianic reign will take place in the eternal state within the New Heaven, the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem. Further, I suggest that since Revelation 21 and 22 speak primarily of the bliss which Christ will share with His Church, we should also be able to see from the comparisons presented in this chapter that the Messianic kingdom will not be a fulfillment of "this-earthly" promises to flesh and blood Israel, but will instead be a fulfillment of "the world to come" promises to the entire, spiritual "Israel of God," Christ's Church.

At His return, Christ will shake down, utterly consume, and remove from His sight all material things. I maintain that this "consumption" will eliminate the possibility of a Messianic reign on this earth.

Heb. 12:26-29 ..now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. (27) And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. (28) Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: (29) For our God is a consuming fire.

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Chapter 24 THE KINGDOM KING AND OWNER

Ps. 22:28 ..The Kingdom is the Lord's..

As our divine King, Christ both governs and owns the kingdom. This truth seems so elementary that it should need no explanation, but perhaps it was a basic misunderstanding concerning to Whom the Kingdom belonged that prompted the disciples to ask the Lord before His ascension: "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" -- As if the kingdom somehow belonged to flesh and blood Israel.

When David was driven from Jerusalem, at the time of Absalom's conspiracy, Ziba accused Saul's son Mephibosheth of saying: "To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father," as if he, not David, was the rightful heir to the throne. Before Pentecost, even after the disciples had been instructed forty days by the resurrected Christ "of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God," it would appear that they still clung to the concept that the Kingdom somehow belonged to earthly Israel and should be restored to them, when in fact the kingdom has always belonged to the Lord, and always shall.

A portion of Ps. 69:4 says: "then I restored that which I took not away." As this writer perceives the matter, the Lord will not restore the kingdom to anyone, including flesh and blood Israel, for He did not take away the kingdom from anyone. However, while He will not restore the kingdom to flesh and blood Israel, He will restore a remnant of flesh and blood Israel to the kingdom when they turn to Him in repentance and faith on the day of the Lord.

But who is Israel in the greatest and most perfect fulfillment of the meaning of that name? The patriarch Jacob, of course, had the name Israel divinely bestowed upon him: Gen. 32:28 "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Later, the offspring of Jacob became known collectively as the nation Israel. Yet, above and beyond these who were thus identified, a study of the Hebrew meaning of the name, as well as various scriptures, seems to point out the following:

(a) The Lord Himself is the One to Whom the name Israel primarily belongs, and the One through Whom its prophetic significance will be perfectly fulfilled.

(b) Christ, along with His 12 apostolic sons and spiritual offspring constitute the spiritual "Israel of God" which is typified by Jacob-Israel, his 12 sons, and his flesh and blood offspring.

(c) Christ, the Greater Israel, will grant entrance into the kingdom of only the spiritual "Israel of God" and will, as the Owner of that kingdom, rule over it eternally with His 12 apostolic sons occupying seats of high honour and power under Him.

In support of the preceding points (a), (b), and (c), consider the following:

The Hebrew Meaning Of The Name Israel

According to Strong's Hebrew-Chaldee Concordance, the name Israel is Yisrael in the Hebrew, and is pronounced Yis-raw-ale, being derived from two other words: (a) "sarah," (saw-raw) meaning "to prevail, have power as a prince;" and (b) "el," (ale) meaning "strength, mighty, especially the Almighty, God. The name Israel, according to Strong's means: "He will rule as God". Who is it that will "rule" over His own kingdom "as God"? None other than Christ Himself will thus rule, and from this it appears that the very definition of the name identifies Christ as Israel in the fullest prophetic significance of that name.

Israel Is The Name Of The Lord Himself

Num. 6:27 "And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them." 2 Chr. 7:14 "..My people, which are called by My name.." Dan. 9:19 "..Thy people are called by Thy name." If Israel has been given the name of the Lord, then it would appear that the name Israel is one of the names of the Lord Himself.

Israel Is God's Son

Ex. 4:22 "..Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son.." Hosea 11:1 "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." Matt. 2:14-15 "When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." In both Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:14-15 it was God's son who was called out of Egypt. In the first instance it was the earthly nation Israel which was identified as God's son, and in the second instance it was Jesus who was identified as God's Son. Conclusion: Jesus is Israel the greater, God's Son.

Israel Is God's Divinely Named And Blessed People

Gen. 32:28-29 "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel..and he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there." Gen. 35:9-10 "And God appeared unto Jacob again..and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name.." Can we not see in the first quotation above that while the Lord did not tell renamed Jacob His name, He had in fact just bestowed that name, Israel, upon him and do we not see in both quotations a close connection between the reception of God's blessing and the reception of God's name, Israel? Consider as well this close connection in Num. 6:27: "And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them."

Israel Consists Of Those Born Of Christ's Spirit

Even though a remnant of flesh and blood Israel will indeed be converted on the Day of the Lord, it would appear from the Scriptures, that presently God recognizes only the spiritual offspring of Christ as those who are "Israel". Consider the following quotations:

Gal. 6:15-16 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

Rom. 9:6 "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel."

Rom. 2:28-29 "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Rev. 2:9 "...I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

In Summation

Christ The Lord, God's Son, is seen to possess both the name and the kingdom of Israel. His spiritually born and blessed offspring, not flesh and blood Israel, will inherit that kingdom. At the time of His return when Matthew 25:34 is fulfilled, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The "Israel of God" is seen to consist of both Christ, God's eternal Son, and of all who have become the sons and daughters of God through godly sorrow, repentance, and faith in Jesus:

Jer. 31:9 "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel.."

At the Rapture, God's people will be gathered together in one from all around the world. The following passage from Isaiah is seen to be the Father's promise to His Son, the Owner of the kingdom, and to His offspring, spiritual Israel:

Isa. 43:5-7 Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; (6) I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; (7) Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

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Chapter 25

THE KINGDOM NATION, LAND, AND CITY

The Nation Of The Kingdom

Matt. 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

The only way anyone, including flesh and blood Israel, can possess the kingdom of God is by "bringing forth the fruits thereof." Part of those fruits are repentance and faith: Mark 1:15 "...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Thus, when earthly Israel failed to bring forth the fruits of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, their peculiar national share in the kingdom of God was forfeited and taken from them. This does not mean that Jacob-Israel's descendants may not personally have part in God's kingdom. The following, from Romans, chapter eleven, should make this clear:

Rom. 11:1-2,5 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. (2) God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.. (5) Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

It does mean, however, that earthly Israel's peculiar national part in God's kingdom has been removed from them to be given from henceforth only to those who obediently bring forth the fruits of God's Spirit, both Jews and Gentiles. Earthly Israel no longer owns the unique recognition by God of being His peculiar people, His holy nation. That special recognition, that coveted identity and possession with all of its eternal benefits in God's kingdom, has been given to a new Israel, the spiritual "Israel of God." The nation of the kingdom and the Church of God, then, are one and the same:

1 Pet. 2:9-10 But ye are..an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (10) Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God..

There is no division between Jews and Gentiles in spiritual Israel, God's new kingdom nation. This is brought out clearly by the apostle Paul in Ephesians:

Eph. 2:11-14,19 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh..(12) That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise..(13) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (14) For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us..(19) Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

Is it not therefore a mistake to reconstruct a "middle wall of partition" between flesh and blood Israel and spiritual Israel in our kingdom teachings and distinctions? The "Israel of God" is "one nation, under God," not two, half being redeemed Jews and the other half being born again

Gentiles. Therefore, it seems quite Biblical that we should not make an interpretative division between the fulfillment of kingdom prophecy to the converted Jewish remnant and the fulfillment of kingdom prophecy to the Church, especially when they together constitute the "Israel of God," His new kingdom nation.

God revealed to the apostle Paul "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." Eph. 3:6 Therefore, should we not look for the fulfillment of Messianic kingdom promises to all, including the converted Jewish remnant, within the context of the Church of God? I assert that we should, and that being the case, it appears that much unfulfilled kingdom prophecy which some expect to be fulfilled in the earthly, material, and temporal realms, will instead be fulfilled to the Church in the heavenly, spiritual, and eternal realms. The unity of spiritual Israel and the fact that all within that holy nation will be heirs of the same kingdom can be seen in Galatians:

Gal. 3:28-29 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (29) And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Many of flesh and blood Israel during Jesus' ministry erred grievously in assuming that since they were Abraham's seed and the fleshly offspring of Jacob-Israel they would somehow thereby inherit the kingdom of God. Jesus warned them of the magnitude of their error:

Matt. 8:11-12 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. (12) But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

When Jesus issued that solemn warning, the Messianic kingdom hope of flesh and blood Israel was inseparable from their conversion to Christ and spiritual incorporation into His Body, the Church. This writer maintains that this same, solemn principle will be in effect until the last Gentile and Jewish soul is saved.

Then, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all of flesh and blood Israel who are washed in the blood of the Lamb will sit down in the eternal kingdom of Christ with the vast number of blood-washed Gentile saints from around the world, and together they will realize the fulfillment of God's Messianic promises to spiritual Israel, the nation of the kingdom.

The Land Of The Kingdom

"There's a land that is fairer than day, and by faith we can see it afar, and the Father waits over the way, to prepare us a dwelling place there." Who, when singing those familiar words, envisions a land on this earth? No doubt all who sing the verses of the "Sweet By and By" picture in their minds "that beautiful shore" of heaven's land. Why, then, are so many convinced that the land of Jesus' Messianic kingdom will be the land of this earth, when everything within us longs for and looks forward to the heavenly Canaan as the place where we shall "meet and greet our loved ones" and "ever be with the Lord"?

Behold the apparent contradiction between the hearts and the heads of so many earnest Christians who accept the teaching that the saints will first re-inhabit this earth during a thousand year golden age before finally moving into their eternal land: While their heads endorse that teaching, their hearts skip clear beyond it to the heavenly "land that is fairer than day" as the next and final dwelling place of the saints. The writer suggests that the reason for this contradiction is that they are wrong in their heads and right in their hearts, and because, all teaching to the contrary notwithstanding, their hearts realize that heaven, not this earth, will be the next dwelling place of God's people. Consider what land the Bible says that we, as Christians, should look for next:

2 Pet. 3:7,11-13 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. (11) Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, (12) Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (13) Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Should we not see from the above scripture that dissolution, not renovation for a thousand years, is the next thing "in store" for this old world, and that Christians, therefore, should look for their next settlement to be in "the new heaven and new earth"? I say that we should.

Concerning Abraham's reception of an inheritance within the earthly Canaan, we read in Acts 7:5: "And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on.." But what land did Abraham and the patriarchs desire and look forward to as the fulfillment of their divinely promised inheritance? Canaan in this earth? Or, Canaan in the new heaven and earth, the heavenly land? In answer to that, consider the following passage from Hebrews:

Heb. 11:13-16 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (14) For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. (15) And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. (16) But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

It should be clear from the above that Abraham and the patriarchs desired "a better country" than could ever be found in this earth, and that they both sought and looked forward to the "heavenly" Canaan as the land of their promised inheritance. Should we not, therefore, reject a prophetic teaching which points to this earth as, even for a thousand years, the place which the Israel of God shall inherit and inhabit? I say that we should.

Concerning His Messianic kingdom, Christ told Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world," and He revealed to His disciples that His kingdom would be "in the regeneration," the new heaven and new earth. John 18:36; Matt. 19:28

Finally, Heb. 12:26-29 should make it clear that the Messianic kingdom which the saints shall receive from God will be eternal and unmoveable, and therefore it will be located in the heavenly land:

Heb. 12:26-29 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. (27) And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. (28) Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: (29) For our God is a consuming fire.

The City Of The Kingdom

It follows, then, that the capital city of the kingdom is the New Jerusalem. Also, we have scriptural reason to believe that Jesus will never reign in the Jerusalem which now is. The "Jerusalem which now is" has been Divinely cast out. The apostle Paul showed this to be so in Galatians:

Gal. 4:22-31 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. (23) But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. (24) Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. (25) For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. (26) But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. (27) For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. (28) Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. (29) But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. (30) Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. (31) So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

A close examination of the above passage reveals the following:

- (a) The bondwoman, Hagar, typified "Jerusalem which now is," the earthly Jerusalem.
- (b) The freewoman, Sarah, typified "Jerusalem which is above," the heavenly, New Jerusalem.
- (c) The earthly "Jerusalem which now is," as typified by Hagar, has been cast out: "What saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman.."
- (d) Earthly Israel, typified by Hagar's son, Ishmael, has also been cast out as God's nation: "Cast out the bondwoman and her son."

Following the scriptural types as Paul explained them, we can see quite plainly, in the statement: "Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir

with the son of the freewoman," that the only heirs of Jesus' Messianic kingdom will be those who constitute spiritual Israel, as typified by Isaac, while those who constitute only earthly Israel, as typified by Ishmael, "shall not be heir" in that kingdom. Gal. 4:22-31, then, confirms both that spiritual Israel will be the nation of the kingdom, and that New Jerusalem will be the city of the kingdom.

The fact that earthly Jerusalem will not be the capital of the Messianic kingdom is also verified by the following passage from John:

John 4:21-24 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. (22) Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. (23) But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (24) God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

In verse 21 Jesus revealed, in regard to the earthly city, that "the hour cometh" when worship "yet at Jerusalem" would end. Can we not see here, in effect, Christ's prophecy of the casting out of earthly Jerusalem as the center of God-ordained worship, a prophecy which came to pass with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.? Then, in verses 23 and 24 He said that the hour "now is..when they that worship" God "must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Thus, from that hour all true worshippers of God everywhere "must" forsake locational, visible, worship and meet the greater demands of spiritually worshipping God "in" their "spirit," or heart, and "in truth".

While a remnant of believing Israel will be restored to the kingdom, who can demonstrate that the casting out of earthly Jerusalem will ever be revoked? Also, there are solemn admonitions in the book of Hebrews and elsewhere in the New Testament warning especially Jewish Christians not to return to the Mosaic ceremonial law as the basis of their faith and worship. Accordingly, the divine demand that everyone everywhere forsake all locational, visible, rituals in order to worship God in truth from the heart will no doubt continue to the end of time.

Therefore, is not any interpretation of prophecy in error which foresees the re-establishment of earthly Jerusalem as Christ's Messianic capital and the center of a renewed observance of certain rituals of the Mosaic ceremonial law? In the writer's view, the fact of earthly Jerusalem's casting out coupled with the divine demands of spiritual worship makes a spiritual fulfillment of some passages, such as Zech. 14:16-19, seem quite likely.

But we need not depend simply upon negative deductions to establish the fact that New Jerusalem will be the city of Christ's Messianic kingdom. There are positive declarations in the scriptures which should convince us of that truth:

Heb. 11:10 tells us that Abraham ".. looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Concerning the patriarchs, Heb. 11:16 says: "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a

city." The city referred to in these verses, built, made, and prepared by God for these Old Testament saints, is none other than the New Jerusalem.

Heb. 12:22-23 reveals that the New Jerusalem will be the city to which the general assembly of all the perfected just shall come: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

Heb. 13:14 tells us that "...here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." What city? And "to come" from where? Rev. 21:1-2 answers those question: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Speaking in reference to the New Jerusalem, Rev. 22:3 tells us that "the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.." In Isa. 66:1 we read: "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.." Kings reign from their throne, not from their footstool. The throne of Christ is in the heavenly, New Jerusalem. Should we then expect him to reign from the Jerusalem which now is, and which is located in His footstool?

Both the deductive and declarative evidence in the scriptures point convincingly to the New Jerusalem as the City from which Christ shall reign in His Messianic kingdom. At the end of life's pilgrimage, the feet of His servants shall stand within the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, far above and far better than the Jerusalem which now is:

Ps. 122:2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

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Chapter 26

THE KINGDOM CHARACTERISTICS

It Is Spiritual

We might define the Messianic Kingdom as the Kingdom of Christ in its final and eternal state of fulfillment. That eternal state of Christ's kingdom will be brought into existence at the time of His second coming. When thinking of the kingdom of Christ, both now and in its future, eternal state, one should bear in mind that one of the primary characteristics of His kingdom is that it is spiritual. Consider the following in regard to the spiritual essence of the Messianic Kingdom:

(a) It will be absolutely imperative to have a spiritual birth before one can see or enter into the Messianic Kingdom.

John 3:1-3,5 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: (2) The same came to Jesus by night..(3) Jesus answered and said unto him..Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.. (5)..Except a man be born..of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God

(b) It will be necessary to have a spiritual body before one can inherit the Messianic Kingdom.

1 Cor. 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

(c) It will be necessary to have a spiritual appetite in order to enjoy the provisions and pleasures of the Messianic Kingdom.

Rom. 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Fact (a) means that the natural man will never see Christ's kingdom, and also that there will never be a mixture in Christ's kingdom of those who are born again with those who are unregenerate. Jesus' statements to Nicodemus should make this clear to us. But let us examine this truth further.

The sight of Christ's kingdom "cometh not with observation" by the natural man's unregenerate eyes, for "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Luke 17:20; John 3:3 The fleshly "eye hath not seen" Christ's kingdom, and who can demonstrate that any such eye ever shall? 1 Cor. 2:9

It is true that "every eye shall see" Christ at His second coming, and no doubt all will behold Him at the judgment. But, will it be with natural eyes that any thus see Him? Surely all who see Him at the judgment will be in spiritual bodies and see him with eyes different from those we now have.

Will it not be true that any view the wicked have of Christ's Messianic kingdom will be with the spiritual eyes of their damnation bodies and from afar off?: "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Luke 16:23 On the other hand, to those who are born again, it can be said: "Your 'eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold,' within its blissful borders, 'the land that is very far off' from the gates of hell and from the eyes of the wicked." (see Isa 33:17)

Beyond any question about whether the natural man will ever in any way, or from any perspective, see Christ's kingdom, it should be clear to all that there will never be a mixture of regenerate and unregenerate people in that kingdom, for Jesus said: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born..of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5

Fact (b), that all who inherit Christ's kingdom must have spiritual bodies, means that there will never be in the Messianic kingdom a mixture of servants with natural bodies and servants with spiritual bodies.

Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 15:44: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." There is a direct connection between his presentation of this truth in verse 44 with what he wrote in 1 Cor. 15:50: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

The truth presented in Paul's related statements should be abundantly clear to all: People in natural bodies cannot inherit the kingdom of God in its final, Messianic fulfillment. Accordingly, this truth negates the idea of a Messianic kingdom populated by both people with natural bodies and people with spiritual, or glorified, bodies.

The spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, then, prohibits both the vision of it and entrance into it of the natural man, and that same spirituality will make it impossible for those in their natural body to inherit the Messianic kingdom when it arrives in the fullness of its glory.

Fact (c), that all in order to enjoy the provisions and pleasures of the Messianic kingdom one must have a spiritual appetite, will also rule out the unregenerate from ever being part of that kingdom.

The kingdom of Christ does not provide for the satisfaction of carnal appetites. It is not "meat and drink" for unregenerate earthlings, but rather, it provides "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" for those possessed of a spiritual appetite. It will be our spiritual appetite and cravings, rather than the appetites and cravings of the flesh, that will be satisfied at Jesus' table in His kingdom.

In Matt. 5:6 Jesus said: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Filled with what? The spiritual and "peaceable fruit of righteousness." Heb. 12:11 When Jesus told His disciples: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom," I suggest that He was referring to both a spiritual kingdom and spiritual food, such as that just mentioned. Luke 22:29-30

In John 4:32, it was spiritual food that Jesus spoke of when He said: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Even though the Messianic kingdom table will be spread with such a bountiful setting of spiritual delights that it would take a glorified vocabulary to describe them, it is a spiritual menu that the unregenerate "know not of". Because the unregenerate have no knowledge of the spiritual food which will be provided in Christ's kingdom, and have no appetite for such, I suggest that even if it were possible for the unregenerate to enter therein, they would soon starve to death.

In summation regarding the spirituality of the Messianic Kingdom: First, the writer asserts that we should see from the scriptures that the very spiritual essence of Christ's kingdom makes it impossible for unregenerate, natural mankind to see it, enjoy it, and inhabit it. Second, we should

also see that the spiritual essence of Christ's Messianic kingdom will make it impossible for any but those who have spiritual, glorified bodies to inherit it at Jesus second coming. Third, we should see that these factors eliminate the possibility that the Messianic kingdom will ever be populated by a mixed multitude of the regenerate and the unregenerate, or of both those with natural bodies and those with spiritual bodies.

It Is Heavenly

"The Lord..will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.." 2 Tim. 4:18 At least 29 times in the Bible, Jesus referred to God's kingdom as the kingdom of heaven. The Messianic kingdom, then, is His heavenly kingdom. It has nothing to do with the "earthly" kingdoms of this present, evil world.

1 Cor. 15:48 says: "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Here is comparison: The earthy king and those in his kingdom are alike, and the heavenly King and those in His kingdom are alike. But here also is contrast: So vastly different is the earthy kingdom from the heavenly kingdom that never the twain shall meet. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy (Adam in earthy kingdoms), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (ADAM in His Heavenly Messianic kingdom). 1 Cor. 15:49

The heavenly kingdom of Christ and the earthy kingdoms of this world are made up of two entirely different royalties, races, and realms. When Satan offered Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world..and the glory of them," Luke 4:5-6, he was offering Christ earthy kingdoms with earthy glory quite different from, and inferior to, that of His heavenly, celestial kingdom. "The glory of the celestial" kingdom "is one" that is eternal, "and the glory of the terrestrial" kingdoms of this world "is another," that will soon fade and vanish entirely when those kingdoms are "broken to shivers" at Christ's return.

Jesus said: "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36 When, therefore, we read in Rev. 11:15 that "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ," we should understand that the sense in which these kingdoms shall "become" the kingdoms of Christ is not that He will "take over" as the Ruler of earthy kingdoms. "All the kingdoms of this world" belong to the devil, and "the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3:8

No, Christ is not going to take over the kingdoms of this old world. The way these evil kingdoms will "become" the kingdoms of Christ is in the sense that they will become His to judge and totally destroy: Rev. 2:27 "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." The devil tried to get Jesus to receive these kingdoms to rule under himself. Instead He will receive them from the Father to rule with the iron rod of sudden destruction, so that at His coming they will instantly "be broken to shivers"!

The correct interpretation of Bible prophecy concerning what Christ will do with "the kingdoms of this world" when they "become" His is that He will utterly and instantly destroy them, not that He will take them over, clean them up, and then preside over them for a thousand years.

This fact is also demonstrated from Dan. 2:35 "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

Some might say that Dan. 2:35 demonstrates only that Christ will destroy the present world-order at His coming, not that He will destroy both the world-order and the world itself. In answer to that I would draw the reader's attention to the very close similarity between the statement in Dan. 2:35 that "no place was found for them" and the statement in Rev 20:11 that "the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." Not only will the kingdoms of this old world be "carried away" at Christ's coming, the present heaven and earth themselves will "flee away" and then, in the new heaven and new earth of the regeneration, Christ's kingdom will "fill the whole (new) earth."

The consumption and regeneration will precede, not follow, the Messianic kingdom. Isa. 65:17 -- 66:22-24 places the new heavens and new earth at the commencement of Messiah's kingdom. This does not conflict with the account in Rev. 20:15 -- 21:1 which places the new heaven and new earth after the judgment, for St. Paul said that Christ will "Judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom." 2 Tim. 4:1 Christ will consume the earth and raise all to the judgment "at His appearing," then immediately following shall come "His kingdom" in the regenerated new heaven and new earth. Luke 10:30 and 18:30 both reveal that it will be in "the world to come" that Christians will receive eternal life, not in any millennium on this earth. Therefore it would be impossible for Christians to possess eternal life and inhabit this old world in their glorified bodies, because "the world to come" would not have "come".

No, Christ's kingdom is heavenly, and it will only be after the consumption and in the regeneration that His heavenly kingdom will fill the earth. In that eternal state, there will be a glorious spiritual union between God, in the Person of Christ, and redeemed man, and between the new heaven and new earth, constituting one, heavenly, Messianic kingdom.

It Is Holy

Isa. 6:1,3,5 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. (3) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts..(5) Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Christ, the King, is holy. It follows, therefore, that "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God," His kingdom. 1 Cor. 6:9-10 This fact alone should tell us that there will not be a mixture of the righteous with the unrighteous in His Messianic kingdom.

It is as fallacious to make unwarranted distinctions between the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, and the Messianic kingdom, as it is to make the same type of erroneous differences between the day of God, the day of the Lord, and the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

They constitute one and the same thing. The day of the Lord is the day of Christ, and the kingdom of God is the kingdom of Christ, or the Messianic kingdom.

Thus, because Messiah is holy, so also His Messianic kingdom will be holy, forbidding the residence therein of any of the unrighteous. "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of (His) kingdom." Heb. 1:8 Before the commencement of His, new heaven and earth, kingdom He will eternally divide the sheep from the goats. Those who have been made holy will hear him invite: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," and the impenitent unrighteous shall hear His solemn command: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. 25:31-46

In the Matthew passage just cited, the scripture says: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory..Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you..Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. 25:31,34,41 Here we see, at Christ's second coming, an immediate dividing from His sheep, and casting out of His kingdom, of all of the unrighteous!

Beloved, Christ will not allow the unrighteous into His kingdom, for even one second, let alone for a thousand years! "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God," now, nor any millennium or moment of time. 1 Cor. 6:9-10

Paul wrote also to the Galatians: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Gal. 5:19-21

God is holy, and Jesus (Messiah) Christ is holy. Therefore, the millennium and events of Revelation 20 must have their fulfillment before the beginning of His Messianic reign, "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Eph. 5:5 This writer asserts that the period of time encompassed by Revelation 20 should not be interpreted as all, or even part, of the holy, Messianic kingdom.

The binding of satan during that time frame and the little season of loosing, final rebellion and fiery destruction at its close, are easily seen to be synonymous with events during the Church Age and at Christ's return: the Calvary binding of the strong man by Christ, the taking away of the restraining influence of "He Who now letteth," and the final apostasy and fiery destruction of anti-Christ at Armageddon. However, those events bear no resemblance to the fulfilled, Messianic kingdom, whereinto no unholy rebel shall enter and wherein forever none shall "war any more". Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3

Exclusion, not suppression, of the unrighteous will be enforced in the Messianic kingdom. Christ never has sanctioned a mere outward surrender to God while latent rebellion remains in one's heart. This writer maintains that those err who say that He will rule over the world during a millennium while vast numbers bow to Him outwardly while harboring hell's enmity toward Him in their hearts. No, outward yielding and righteousness will not enter His Messianic kingdom, for Jesus said: "I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:20

1 Pet. 1:3-4 tells us that "God and Father..hath begotten us again unto.. an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.." This scripture alone should show us that the Messianic kingdom will include only those who are "begotten again" and who are "undefiled".

Finally, in regard to the holiness of the Messianic kingdom, consider the following passage from the gospel of Matthew:

Matt. 13:47-51 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: (48) Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. (49) So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, (50) And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (51) Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

Here we see: (first) the resurrection of all: "a net..gathered of every kind..they drew to shore;" (second) the judgment of all: "they..sat down;" (third) the severing of all the wicked from among the just: "gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away;" and (fourth) "the kingdom of heaven" and "the furnace of fire" as the opposite places of residence for the righteous and unrighteous respectively.

Then, Jesus concluded that solemn parable with this question: "Have ye understood all these things?" Reader, have all Christians really understood that the holiness of Christ's kingdom does now, and forever shall, exclude the unrighteous? I suggest that if all Christians "understood all these things" in the above parable, none would prophetically interpret a coming Messianic kingdom which included unregenerate, unrighteous residents in that kingdom.

It Is Everlasting

Nowhere in the scriptures is Christ's kingdom said to be anything less than eternal in its duration. How, then, can we scripturally speak of the Messianic kingdom as lasting but for a thousand years? The fact is, as Daniel prophesied long ago, that kingdom will stand forever!: Dan. 2:44 "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Echoing that same truth, Peter wrote to the faithful: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. 1:11

So minuscule is a thousand years verses the actual duration of Christ's kingdom that it pales into nothingness in comparison. There are numerous Bible verses which verify that Christ's kingdom will endure forever. Following is part of that testimony:

Ps. 145:10-13 All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. (11) They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; (12) To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. (13) Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

Dan. 4:3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

Dan. 7:27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

2 Sam. 7:13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

Ps. 45:6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

Isa. 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.

Luke 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Heb. 1:8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. The fact that once the saints inherit Messiah's kingdom, they will remain in possession of that kingdom forever (not just a thousand years) may be seen from Dan. 7:18: "But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."

The spiritual, heavenly, holy, and everlasting characteristics of the Messianic kingdom are all seen to prohibit the concept that it will occur on this earth, include unregenerate and unrighteous people, exist in time, and then conclude after a thousand years.

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Chapter 27 THE KINGDOM TIME

Mark 1:14-15 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, (15) And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

The prophet Daniel had prophesied "that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.." At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the time span of those 69 weeks of years, 483 years, was fulfilled. The kingdom time had come, and Jesus, the Messiah-King, (or Prince) began to proclaim that "the kingdom of God is at hand."

Another time factor involved in Jesus' beginning to preach the kingdom was the ministry of John the Baptist. John's ministry was a pivotal one time-wise. It marked the conclusion of the Era of the law and the prophets, and the commencement of the Era of the kingdom of God: Luke 16:16 "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."

John the Baptist was the last prophet of the Era of the prophets. In Luke 7:28, Jesus seems to have made a distinction between the ministry of those during the Era of the law and the prophets and the ministry of those during the Era of the kingdom of God. While there had been no greater prophet than John during the former Era, even the least of the preachers during the latter Era would have a greater ministry than that of John:

Luke 7:28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Certainly Jesus was not denigrating John nor his ministry. The implication seems to be simply that because of the works of divine grace which would be accomplished by the power of the Holy Ghost during the Era of the kingdom, the least preacher of the kingdom of God would have, in that sense, a greater ministry than that of John.

While John was perhaps the greatest of the prophets, at his imprisonment, the Era of the law and the prophets came to an end. Thus, both the fulfillment of Daniel's 69 weeks and the conclusion of John's ministry mark the beginning of the greater Era of the kingdom of God. (see Mark 1:14-15 above)

There Are But Two Biblical Eras

The Bible does not speak of seven, so-called "dispensations" of time, but rather of two great time periods, or Eras. Perhaps the best terms for these two periods would be:

- (1) The time of the Law and the Prophets
- (2) The time of the Kingdom of God

We might say also that the first was the Era of Moses and the second the Era of Jesus Christ: John 1:17 "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Or, we could term the former to be the Era of Times Past and the latter to be the Era of the Last Days:

Heb. 1:1-2 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.

We Are Now In The Second, and Final Era!

Regardless of what we call the two great eras, it is certain from the scriptures that we are now in the 2nd Era, and it is the last era! There will be no "dispensation" or Era of time following this time, for this is the last time:

1 John 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

1 Pet. 1:20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

Acts 2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

Heb. 9:26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

1 Cor. 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Those who would make a distinction between "last time" and "last times," or between "end of the world" and "the ends of the world" so as to allow the interpretation of another time beyond this time would be stretching the point. A sensible interpretation of the above scriptural testimony is that we are now in the last time, the end of the world. In this last time shall come the anti-Christ. In this last time, Christ was manifested, having appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. In the last days, or last time, the Holy Ghost was outpoured, and the admonitions of the Bible were for us upon whom are come the ends and end of the world.

We Are In The Time Of The Kingdom of God

While we look forward to the consummation of the kingdom of God in all of its eternal fullness, we do not await the time of the kingdom. The time of the kingdom of God is at hand, and has been thus for nearly 2000 years since Jesus first announced that fact. Jesus' proclamation that "the Kingdom of God is at hand" was confirmed by the mighty miracles which He performed during His earthly ministry:

Luke 11:20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

Both in the Great Person and in the Great Power of the King Himself, the Kingdom of God began to be at hand during Jesus' ministry on earth. After Christ's ascension, He baptized His waiting disciples with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Then, as never before, those Spirit-filled witnesses of Christ also began to proclaim the fact that "the Kingdom of God is at hand." Their message was also confirmed many times by Divinely wrought miracles:

Heb. 2:3-4 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; (4) God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

Preaching The Kingdom Continues

Across the centuries, and even to this very hour, God has not suspended the proclamation that "the Kingdom of God is at hand". Contrary to the teaching of some in this century who have taught that Jesus quit offering the kingdom at a point where the Jews nationally rejected the gospel, Christ continued to preach the kingdom to all men individually, and did so even on His way to the cross. Luke 10:1,9; 16:16; 17:20-21; 18:16 The idea that Christ quit offering the kingdom when the Jews rejected it nationally may fit into the prophetic teaching of certain dispensationalists as a contrived method of proving their interpretations, but scriptural evidence shows otherwise.

The gospel of the kingdom was not, and is not, a message to the Jews only. It was not an earthly, nationalistic presentation to the Jews. No, the gospel of the kingdom is a spiritual offer to all men everywhere, offering them salvation and entrance into the spiritual and eternal kingdom of Christ.

Further, the gospel of salvation and the gospel of the kingdom are one and the same gospel. Therefore, to say that Christ has suspended the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom amounts to saying that He has suspended the preaching of the gospel, period. No genuine Christian would condone that teaching.

Far beyond the point at which Jesus supposedly suspended the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, His active propagation of that gospel continued, and still continues to this very hour. Just prior to His crucifixion, in His Olivet Discourse, Christ prophesied that the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom would continue to the very end of the age:

Matt. 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Yes, even beyond His death, resurrection, and ascension, the glorified Christ continues to actively promote the gospel of His kingdom. His prophecy of Mark 9:1 may have been fulfilled at Pentecost:

Mark 9:1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

The outpouring of the Holy Ghost was indeed a coming of the kingdom of God with power! At that divinely appointed time, the 120 became conscious, as never before, just what the kingdom of God was all about -- not about material things and earthly government, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. 14:17

Just prior to Christ's ascension, the disciples inquired of Him about "the kingdom" and His positive response was: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.." Acts 1:8 I note the close connection between their question about receiving an earthly kingdom and His response that they were to instead receive the power of the Holy Ghost. Thus, on Pentecost spiritual Israel received the infilling of the spiritual kingdom of God in the mighty power of the Holy Ghost.

Thenceforth, these Spirit-baptized subjects of the King saw the kingdom of God in all of its spiritual, universal, and eternal dimensions. Their restricted, Jewish-oriented, materialistic, and temporal-only concepts of the kingdom were gone, and they became the King's witnesses unto all nations that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, for all men, everywhere! See the references below:

Acts 1:3,6; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,31; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; 6:9-10; 15:24,50; Gal. 5:5; Eph. 5:5; Col. 1:13; 4:11; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:1,18; Heb. 1:8; 12:28; James 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:11; Rev. 1:9; 12:10; 16:10.

Their Divinely-called successors have been sent forth by their living King to preach the gospel of His kingdom to every generation. Beyond question, Christ will see to it that this eternally vital gospel continues to be preached to the very end of the age. That end, however, is fast approaching, and when it arrives, Christ will forever end the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the eternity bound souls in this world.

Now Is The Accepted Time

What is the time of the kingdom? "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6:2 This time is the last time that men may spiritually enter therein. Those who fail to spiritually enter into the kingdom during this decisive, "last time" will be bodily and eternally shut out at its joyous consummation. On the other hand, the sheep will hear the King say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34

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Chapter 28 THE KINGDOM MYSTERIES

Luke 8:10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

Not Like The Secrets Of A Fraternal Order

The word for "mystery" in the New Testament is "musterion," and is defined by Strong's Concordance as follows: "from a der. of muo (to shut the mouth); a secret or "mystery" (through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites):-- mystery." I do not question the etymological accuracy which Strong set forth in this definition. However, to the writer, this technical definition of the word "mystery" does not accurately convey the scriptural meaning of the word and sounds too much like what one might encounter when joining some secret, fraternal order.

Certainly Jesus' use of parables in teaching about His kingdom was far from being a mysterious initiation rite into a secret clan or fraternal order. Taking a mystery or secret in that sense, He could honestly say: "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing." John 18:20

Scriptural Mysteries

Jesus never made it impossible for sincere seekers of the truth to understand what He said. However, He did openly teach certain things about His kingdom which those who had little regard for the truth were bound to miss. He ordained that only His obedient hearers could come into the true knowledge of what He taught, and that such knowledge remain hidden from those who heard Him indifferently, argumentatively, and disobediently. In this sense, then, Jesus did teach many things mysteriously.

Biblically speaking, a mystery might be defined as a truth which is hidden or veiled by God in such a way that it is perceived only by those who obey the spiritual light which leads to its understanding: John 7:17 "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

Unto those who do God's will to the full measure of their present light, "it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." However, God never casts the pearls of the knowledge of kingdom mysteries before spiritual swine who would do nothing with that knowledge but trample it into the mire of their mental and spiritual filth:

Matt. 13:10-11 "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

The children of God are fed with the knowledge of kingdom mysteries. They eat the corn thereof, so to speak, while spiritual swine see and feed on nothing but the shucks and husks thereof. As far as they know, that's all there is to it, but God's children know that those in the hogpen have missed the real meal. Thus God has designed the way He reveals kingdom mysteries: the obedient children see the real meaning of those realities, but those who willingly walk in darkness miss the real meaning thereof, thinking that there is really nothing to it all.

No doubt Jesus' response to the "woman of Canaan" recorded in Matt. 15:26 was lovingly calculated to draw from her that humility and faith which he then quickly rewarded. His response to her also voiced a principle similar to that being considered: "But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs." The woman, however, had come to Jesus in the humble and believing spirit of one of God's children, and because she did, even though she was a Gentile, her hunger for the healing of her daughter was fed.

"There is no respect of persons with God." Rom. 2:11 He also dispenses the knowledge of kingdom mysteries to His humble, spiritual children, both Jew and Gentile, while those precious truths remain hidden from the understanding of the conceited "wise and prudent" of all races:

Matt. 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Of course, even God's children must "sit up to the table" if they are to perceive all that they should concerning the mysteries of the kingdom. One must "Study to show (himself) approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. 2:15

The Mystery And Mysteries Of The Kingdom

The entire kingdom of God is a mystery: "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God.." Mark 4:11 Most of the world is oblivious to the reality of the very present kingdom of God today. Many have a vague, or distorted, knowledge that such exists, but they are blind to the reality of God's kingdom. Then, there are various "mysteries (plural) of the kingdom" within the one, grand mystery of the kingdom. Luke 8:10

Kingdom Mysteries In The Earthly Language of Prophecy And Parables

We can see from the scriptures that both the mystery and mysteries of the kingdom are couched within the writings of the Messianic prophets and within the parables of Christ. Christ used material figures to illustrate spiritual facts concerning His kingdom. Likewise, within the earthly language of the prophets there is veiled truth which speaks of the spiritual and eternal Messianic kingdom. Thus, those who correctly interpret the mysteries of the kingdom couched within both Christ's parables and the writings of the prophets must see the spiritual realities behind the literal and material language employed therein.

The Apostle Paul's Knowledge Of Kingdom Mysteries

By divine enlightenment, Christ's disciples saw beyond the literal figures of Christ's parables into the spiritual mysteries of the kingdom of God. Likewise, God opened the eyes of the apostle Paul so that he saw beyond the earthly, materialistic language of the prophets into the true, spiritual mysteries of the kingdom.

He saw, that couched within the earthly language of the Messianic prophets there were spiritual, universal, and eternal fulfillments of the kingdom which God had intended from the

beginning, instead of the material, nationalistic, and temporal fulfillments which most of the Jews had expected:

Rom. 16:25-26 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, (26) But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

Eph. 3:1-9 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, (2) If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: (3) How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, (4) Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (5) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (6) That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (7) Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. (8) Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; (9) And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

Once Paul saw into the mystery of the spiritual fulfillments of Messiah's kingdom, his whole concept of the kingdom of God was revolutionized. He who had once been the carnal, warring zealot of a supposed earthly kingdom of God became instead the spiritual warrior and zealous missionary of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. His consuming passion was "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery" of Christ's spiritual kingdom. Paul saw that his nationalistic, Jewish-centered concept of Messiah's kingdom had been wrong, and that instead Christ's kingdom from the beginning was designed as a spiritual and universal fellowship in Christ made up of both Gentile and Jewish believers:

Eph. 1:9-10 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (10) That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Gal. 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Paul's gospel concerning the spiritual, universal kingdom of Israel's Messiah was not well accepted by many who clung fiercely to their earthly, exclusive concepts of that kingdom, and thus he was more than once imprisoned for preaching that truth:

Eph. 6:18-20 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (19) And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, (20) For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Col. 4:3-4 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: (4) That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Contrary to the supposition by some Jews that their Messiah would never die, Paul saw within the kingdom mystery that Christ's death was foreordained before the world began:

Contrary to the supposition by some Jews that their Messiah would never die, Paul saw within the kingdom mystery that Christ's death was foreordained before the world began:

1 Cor. 2:7-8 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: (8) Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Perhaps this was the kingdom mystery which was most repulsive to many Jews. A crucified Messiah was not what they had expected, and it was especially hard for some to admit that the Jews were guilty of the death of the true Messiah. The apostle Peter also showed that Messianic prophecy had been fulfilled when the Jews, through ignorance, had the very King of the Messianic kingdom put to death:

Acts 3:14-15,17-18 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; (15) And killed the Prince of life..(17) And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. (18) But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

Another spiritual mystery which Paul saw into was that Messiah would fulfill the hope of glory in His kingdom by dwelling "in" His servants "even among the Gentiles," and not by being physically with the Jews in earthly Canaan. Who knows how many were grieved at what seemed to them a strange doctrine -- their Messiah living both in and among the Gentiles? How could such a thing fulfill their hope of glory in His long awaited kingdom? It is a mystery of the kingdom which millions of earthly Israel have never seen. Happily, however, many of them during and since the days of the apostles have made that discovery:

Col. 1:25-27 ..I am made a minister..to fulfil the word of God; (26) Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: (27) To whom God would make known..this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Yet another mystery of the kingdom which Paul perceived was that Israel's Messiah is the incarnate God Himself:

1 Tim. 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Paul expected those who had spiritually entered Christ's kingdom to acknowledge this to all around them, even to those Jews who might be hostile to their testimony, and he saw that kingdom mysteries could not be retained in a bad conscience:

Col. 2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.

1 Tim. 3:9 "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."

Paul understood the mystery concerning the citizens of Christ's kingdom, that they were those of the Church, Christ's bride:

Eph. 5:30-32 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (31) For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. (32) This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Unto him also was revealed the mystery of the sudden bodily change which even the living saints must and shall experience at Christ's return before entering into the eternal glory of His kingdom:

1 Cor. 15:50-53 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. (51) Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Knowing the truth of this kingdom mystery alone ought to show us that there will be no unchanged, corruptible earthlings in Christ's kingdom, and therefore His kingdom is "not of this world," nor ever shall be, but instead shall be in the regenerated, New Heaven and New Earth. One wonders how this could be any more clear when the scripture plainly states that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

Perhaps the most personally gratifying mystery of the kingdom which Paul was allowed to see was the mystery of the conversion of Israel's remnant on the day of the Lord which will complete the full number those finally saved as the spiritual "Israel of God":

Rom. 11:25-27 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. (26) And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: (27) For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Far from being boastful of the revelations which Christ gave him concerning kingdom mysteries, Paul knew the paramount importance of having charity first:

1 Cor. 13:1-2 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. (2) And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

Paul also emphasized that the knowledge of the mysteries of Christ's kingdom was a stewardship for which all thus enlightened must give an account concerning their faithfulness therewith:

1 Cor. 4:1-2 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. (2) Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

The Kingdom Truth Of Two Of Christ's Parables

Christ taught a number of kingdom mysteries parabolically, some of which it appears that even His closest disciples did not fully understand until they were filled with the Holy Ghost. Matthew 13:3-50 records seven parabolic, kingdom mysteries. Two of those parables show clearly that the wicked will not enter into the Messianic kingdom, but will instead be cast into the lake of fire:

The Parable of the Tares

Matt. 13:36-41 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. (37) He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; (38) The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; (39) The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. (40) As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. (41) The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. (see also verses 24-30)

The Parable of the Dragnet

Matt. 13:47-50 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: (48) Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. (49) So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, (50) And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

After giving this final kingdom mystery parable, "Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord." Matt. 13:51 Reader, do we really understand the kingdom mystery of these two parables if we interpret that wicked, unregenerate earthlings will someday enter into a thousand year Messianic kingdom? This writer finds it somewhat incredible that fundamental, Bible believing preachers and teachers could make such an

interpretation, and I suggest that those who do so do not understand the full significance of these parables.

1 Cor. 6:9-10 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Kingdom Mysteries Revealed Through The Apostle John

On a more positive note, through the revelation of Jesus Christ which He "signified..by his angel unto his servant John," we can see into the mystery of Christ's personal and present control over His spiritual kingdom, the Church:

Rev. 1:1,20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Christ ever holds the leaders of His Church in His right hand, illuminating and guiding His spiritual kingdom through them. To those who understand this secret, it is no unsolved mystery why the gates of hell have not prevailed against His Church.

Christ also revealed through the apostle John the mystery of the completion of the Church at the last trump in fulfillment of the ancient declarations of the Messianic prophets:

Rev. 10:5-7 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, (6) And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: (7) But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

"The mystery of iniquity doth already work," but that sin, when it is finished, will bring forth eternal death to all who are finally ensnared therein. 2 Thess. 2:7 The mystery of the kingdom of Christ doth already work, but that salvation and that kingdom, when it is finished in this old world, will bring forth eternal life to all who are finally found therein.

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Chapter 29

THE KINGDOM APPEARANCE

1 Pet. 1:8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The King Will Appear

Today, both the King and His kingdom are veiled from human view, but the time is coming when both shall be revealed. Yes, "We shall see the King someday." Now, He is "the King eternal, immortal, invisible..Whom having not seen, ye (His servants in faith) love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Now, "we walk by faith, not by sight." "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Pet. 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:7; 1 Cor. 13:12

Not even our physical death can prevent each of us from seeing Christ at His return: "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Yes, on the day of Christ "every eye shall see Him," and in His eternal Messianic kingdom "His servants shall..see His face." Job 19:26-27; Rev. 1:7; 22:3-4

"The glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" on that day will bring the realization of every true Christian's "blessed hope". Nearly 2000 years ago Christ "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Then He returned "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" as our great High Priest. At His revelation, "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:24,26,28 Consider also the following verses:

1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming..

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

1 Pet. 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ..

1 Pet. 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

1 Tim. 6:14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ..

2 Tim. 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

The statement in Hebrews 9:28 that "unto to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time" is, I fear, often misinterpreted to say that it will only be "unto them that look for Him" that Christ will appear. The statement, however, does not limit Christ's appearance, for when He appears, "every eye shall see Him." What the statement limits is the manner in which He shall appear. Unto to those who look for Him, Christ's appearance shall be "unto salvation," but unto

those who do not love and look for His appearance, He shall appear unto their shame and damnation:

Isa. 66:5 Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

The glorious appearance of Christ at His return will suddenly be complimented with the glorious appearance of His saints who have risen to meet Him in the air.

Col. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Dan. 12:3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Yes, when He shall appear, the saints will "also appear with Him in glory." But, "where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear" in that hour?-1 Pet. 4:18 "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap."-Mal. 3:2 Christ's appearance will bring joy unspeakable to His saints, but multitudes on earth will mourn at His appearing:

Matt. 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The ungodly and the sinner will certainly not appear with Christ in glory, but at His appearing they will appear at the judgment: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."-2 Cor. 5:10 "The Lord Jesus Christ.. shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."-2 Tim. 4:1 On earth, when among Christ's wheat "then appeared the tares also," God's counsel was to leave their separation from among the wheat "until the harvest". But when "the tares also" appear at the judgment, then Christ "will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."-Matt. 13:30

Among many other signs which shall be fulfilled prior to, and pointing to, Christ's appearance seems to be another found in Psalms:

Psalms 102:16 When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

Can we not see from this that when spiritual Zion, the Church, is fully built, then Christ will appear. Jesus said: "upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16:18 Hell shall not, cannot, prevent Christ from completing what He began to build nearly 2000 years ago, and when Zion is completed, then "He shall appear in His glory." Hallelujah!

The Kingdom Will Also Appear

Long ago, Jesus said unto His Own: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2 There is a longing in the heart of Christians first to see the King, but there is also a desire to see His kingdom: "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children." Ps. 90:16 God will someday fulfill the desire of His homesick children to see their home.

But when will Christ's kingdom appear? 2 Tim. 4:1 unites the time of the kingdom's appearance with the time of Christ's Own appearance and the judgment of all: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." Contrary to the doctrine of some, the scriptures do not separate Christ's appearance from our appearance at the judgment by 1000 years. No, when Jesus shall appear, then both the alive and the dead will be brought to appear before Him at the judgment, and following this shall come the glorious appearance of His eternal, Messianic kingdom.

Following the judgment scene and the casting of the wicked into the lake of fire, John saw the kingdom:

Rev. 20:15-21:2 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (21:1) And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. (2) And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

The fact that there is no 1000 year hiatus between Christ's appearance and the appearance of His eternal kingdom is also borne out by the following passage of scripture:

Luke 19:11-27 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. (12) He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. (13) And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. (14) But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. (15) And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. (16) Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. (17) And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. (18) And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. (19) And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

(20) And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: (21) For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. (22) And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: (23) Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the

bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? (24) And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (25) (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) (26) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. (27) But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

The above parable of Christ concerning the appearance of His kingdom is in exact accord with Paul's inspired statement of 2 Tim. 4:1. It shows that when the King appears, then we shall all be brought before Him into judgment to give an account of our stewardship and the deeds done in our body. The parable does not portray a 1000 year period of time following the King's return before that judgment, but rather, the parable pictures an immediate and universal judgment of all at Christ's appearance. Further, the parable does not speak of 1000 years of earthly reign before Christ's eternal kingdom commences, but rather, it speaks of the immediate judgment of all at Christ's appearance, followed by the immediate commencement of His eternal kingdom.

Nowhere in Christ's depiction of what would take place "at His appearing and kingdom" do we see any hint whatsoever that He will "rule over" unregenerate, unrighteous earthlings in His Messianic kingdom. To the contrary, the parable shows that such will be "ruled out" of His kingdom and will suffer the punishment of eternal death in the lake of fire: Luke 19:27 "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." This harmonizes perfectly with Paul's description of what would happen to the wicked when Christ appears:

2 Thess. 1:7-10 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, (8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; (10) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe...in that day.

The only way Christ will rule the wicked at His appearing is with a rod of iron which will shatter them into everlasting destruction:

Psalms 2:1-9 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? (2) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, (3) Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. (4) He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. (5) Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. (6) Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. (7) I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. (8) Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. (9) Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Psalms 2 graphically pictures the raging of the heathen against Christ just before He appears, and then we see that His rulership over all unwise rebels will be such that they will be

immediately and utterly dashed "in pieces like a potter's vessel." His "rod of iron" rulership over the wicked will not be one of mere subjugation. It will, rather, be one of total and everlasting destruction from His presence:

Rev. 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (see also Rev. 12:5)

It is this type of rulership which Jesus promised that the righteous overcomers would share with Him, and not a shared rule over a mixture of righteous and wicked people on this earth for 1000 years:

Rev. 2:26-27 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: (27) And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

Christ has "power over" all flesh, and at His appearing that "power over" all men will not be used to decide their destiny for 1000 years, but rather forever: John 17:2 "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." That same "power over" all flesh will be used like a rod of iron to utterly destroy and to give eternal death to all who have impenitently rebelled against Christ, the King.

The appearance of the King and His kingdom will not be one that brings pleasure to those who would not in this life that He should reign over them. Knowing the awful doom that the appearing of Christ and His kingdom shall bring upon them, their futile cry to the rocks and mountains will be: "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" Rev. 6:16

However, the appearance of the King and His kingdom will to the righteous bring eternal delight and joy. Theirs are the promises of seeing the King in His beauty and of seeing the New Jerusalem of His kingdom in all of its eternal serenity and peace:

Isa. 33:17,20 Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off. (20) Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

* * * * *

Chapter 30

THE KINGDOM BRIDE, NEW JERUSALEM

Rev. 21:9-11 And there came unto me one of the seven angels..., and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. (10) And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending

out of heaven from God, (11) Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

Eph. 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

The Church is the Bride of Christ, and the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom City, is also Christ's Bride. I am sure that the full meaning of this mystery will not be known by the saints below until they enter Christ's presence, and perhaps not until the Marriage of the Lamb on the day of the Lord.

The Apocrypha is certainly not scripture, and the writer does not place its writings at all on the level of God's Word. There is, however, a reference in the Apocrypha which I shall quote next which corresponds with the concept being discussed:

"Suddenly, while I was still speaking to the woman, I saw her face begin to shine; her countenance flashed like lightning...While I wondered what this meant, she suddenly uttered a loud and terrible cry, which shook the earth. I looked up and saw no longer a woman but a complete city, built on massive foundations...Listen to me..while I explain to you the meaning...The woman you saw is Zion.." (The Apocrypha, 2 Esdras 10:25-43)

In the Bible, God's Word, we see that Jerusalem is at once "The City of the Great King" and The Bride, the Lamb's Wife." Matt. 5:35; Rev. 21:9 The scriptures are replete with references to Jerusalem, or Zion, as a woman. Earthly Zion and Israel are typical of "the heavenly Jerusalem" and "church of the firstborn." Heb. 12:22-23 It is indeed a mystery, but God's City is a spiritual woman, and that woman, the heavenly Jerusalem, is Christ's Bride. While perhaps only the dawning of the perfect day will reveal the full significance of this symbolic mystery, by examining the numerous scriptures wherein this likeness is used, we can at least see the shadow of that significance which shall hereafter be clearly revealed. From those scriptures, let us consider the following symbolism concerning the Woman-City Who is Christ's Bride:

Her Original Beauty And Purity

She was created originally, like Eve, with the beauty and purity, which was proper for Christ, the second Adam:

Jer. 6:2 I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman.

As long as Jerusalem despised evil, her purity and faithfulness assured both the protection of her life and the perfection of her beauty:

2 Ki. 19:21 ..The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

Ps. 48:2,12-13 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. (12) Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the

towers thereof. (13) Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces.. Ps. 50:2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

Her Fall Into Sin

Isa. 1:21 How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

Eve's firstborn son, Cain, became a murderer because after the fall murder lodged in man's heart instead of righteousness. The Divine decree to fallen Jerusalem is the decree to fallen mankind, unfaithful and now unfit for union with God:

Jer. 7:29 Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.

Ezekiel 23 paints the picture of fallen Jerusalem vividly, and again it is the portrait of fallen mankind:

Ezek. 23:18-19 So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness: then my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister. (19) Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt.

The account of a constant springing up of numerous sins out of the heart of fallen, stubborn Jerusalem is a commentary on the vile eruptions from within the heart of the entire fallen human race:

Jer. 6:7-8 As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness: violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually is grief and wounds. (8) Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.

Her Desolation And Bondage

Lam. 1:1 How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!

Jer. 8:19 Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? Is not her king in her?

No, her Husband and King was gone, being forced by her sin to abandon her to her foes. Her emptiness and slavery is like that of humanity, once full of the Holy Ghost, but now lonely within and languishing in the chains of sin.

The pitiful picture so vividly painted throughout the book of Lamentations is not simply the portrait of Jerusalem's sorrow, but is the lament of lost mankind, now drinking the bitter cup of consequences resulting from sin:

Lam. 1 (2) She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her..(4) ..she is in bitterness..(6) And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed..(8) Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed.. Lam. 2 (1) How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger!.. (15)..Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?.. (18)..O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest.. (19) Arise, cry out in the night..in the top of every street.

Like sorrowful Zion, many become so weary under the load of sin that they cry out for deliverance.

Jer. 4:31 Zion..bewaileth herself ..spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers.

For such there are words of comfort and hope.

Her Promise Of Salvation

Isa. 1:27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.

There is redemption for those who pass judgment on their sins in Godly sorrow, for though God hates sin, "yet doth He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from him." 2 Sam. 14:14 That means is by the shed blood of Christ, the Lamb of God. His sacrifice avails for all who totally repent of sin while they may:

Isa. 16:1 Send ye the lamb..unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.

We need not suffer the just due and eternal consequence of our sins, because Christ, the Lamb of God has already suffered that punishment for us:

Lam. 4:22 The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion.!

Isa. 62:11 Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh.!

The fallen woman Christ came to save was not alone the spiritually fallen Jews, but rather spiritually fallen humanity as a whole. Thus, we see universal redemption, rather than simply a national salvation in God's promises to Zion:

Zec. 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

This promise was literally fulfilled when, at the close of His earthly ministry, Jesus first rode in honour into Jerusalem, and later, bearing both great reproach and the cross, walked under that load without the gate, died on that cross in our stead, and brought salvation to the entire fallen race. Blessed be His worthy and wonderful Name!

Her Promise Of Restoration

Zec 12:6 ..Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.

Isa. 40:2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

Isa. 65:18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

Micah 4:8 And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.

These glorious promises are, and shall be, fulfilled to the spiritual woman, New Jerusalem, who is Christ's Bride. Who is She? From the above verses we can see that New Jerusalem is those who have been brought "again" to their "own place," that is, the place they should be in their spiritual and eternal relationship with Christ. She is those who have been pardoned of their sins and comforted by the Holy Ghost with the assurance of that fact. She is those who now rejoice in full salvation. Finally, She is those who have entered the kingdom of Christ, Whose dominion shall be both first and forever in the world to come.

Her Cleansing And Promise Of Marriage

Isa. 62:1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

Christ did not rest from His work of redemption until He had provided the means whereby the Bride He loved could be glorious in His holiness, "as a lamp that burneth":

Eph. 5:25,27 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (27) That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Christ urges His prospective Bride not to rest until She is perfectly spotless within and, like the wise virgins, has Her lamp burning brightly in readiness for the Bridegroom and their coming Marriage.

Isa. 62:4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

Here we see an Old Testament prophecy of how Christ will be married to His Church, the New Jerusalem, and how those who were once spiritually desolate shall then be eternally delighted. What a Day that will be! Hallelujah!

Her Marriage To Christ And Eternal Purity

Isa. 52:1 Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

Rev. 19:7-8 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (8) And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Rev. 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The Bride will be those who are spiritually awake at Christ's coming, and who are then clothed in the beautiful, spotless garments of eternal salvation. Then, "in no wise" will it be possible for sin ever again to enter either Her heart, or Her presence. She will be both eternally pure and eternally secure.

Washed in the blood of the Lamb, Christ's Bride is even now "all glorious within," and at the Marriage "She shall be brought unto the King" in Her glorious "raiment". Ps. 45:13-14 As His holy and beautiful Bride is presented to Him, can we not hear the heavenly Bridegroom say to her: "Thou art beautiful, O My love,..comely as Jerusalem." Song of Sol. 6:4

She Is The Mother Of All Of The Saints

Gal. 4:25-26 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. (26) But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Isa. 66:8 ..as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

Should we not see that mystically incorporated in the scriptural language and promises concerning earthly Zion and Jerusalem is the reality of promises which have their fulfillment in the Church, spiritual Zion, spiritual Jerusalem? Christ's Church is "the mother of us all" who have been born again, and She is the New Jerusalem. When She travails spiritually, her spiritual children are born. When Judgment Day comes, the most important thing will be whether or not we have been spiritually born in Zion:

Ps. 87:5 And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.

When it is shown to be recorded in the Lamb's book of life that "this man was born" in Zion, then he will be allowed to remain with Christ forever. On the other hand, when it is shown that "that man" was not "born in her," then among those who are not found written in the book of life, he will be cast into the lake of fire.

Those born in Her, spiritual Zion, "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," and their inheritance as part of the New Jerusalem comes by "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." John 1:13; 1 Pet. 1:23

Defined by the apostle Paul, Hagar typified the earthly, "Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." Gal. 4:25 Ishmael typified the earthly seed of Abraham. Paul says that the earthly Jerusalem and her children (earthly Israel) are "in bondage". They are in bondage to the world, the flesh, and the devil. Furthermore, Paul's figurative declarations make it clear that earthly Jerusalem could never be the capital city of Christ's kingdom, for it has been "cast out". Also, those born only after the flesh will never at anytime or anywhere dwell in His kingdom, for they too have been "cast out":

Gal. 4:30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

Beloved, earlier in this same epistle, Paul warned: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" Gal. 4:9 He argued that it was inconsistent with the spiritual knowledge of God to return to the earthly concept of Israel and Jerusalem with all of the "beggarly elements" involved in that worship.

Paul was concerned that neither Jewish nor Gentile Christians misinterpret the scriptures concerning who God's Jerusalem really is. The earthly city and her children were still in spiritual bondage, and He knew that all must see, and interpret properly, that Messiah's Jerusalem was not the carnal and earthly Jerusalem here below, but rather the spiritual, heavenly Jerusalem which is above.

Indeed, the core of Paul's warning in the entire passage of Galatians 4:19-31 is the danger of falling again into spiritual bondage by returning to an earthly interpretation of Jerusalem and Israel. He knew that if those who had been "born again" into the spiritual Jerusalem and Israel then "turned again" to the materialistic concept of Jerusalem and Israel, they would soon be again in bondage to sin. Worse than that, he sensed that some had thereby already forfeited their New Jerusalem birth:

Gal. 4:19,21,25-26 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you...(21) Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?.. (25) For

this Agar..answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. (26) But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Paul knew that those who remained free from sin must "cast out" the interpretation of earthly Jerusalem as the mother city of God's children, for the true mother City of God's true children is the Jerusalem which is above, New Jerusalem:

Gal. 4:30-31 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. (31) So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Those who are the children of the New Jerusalem should see that beautiful, unfulfilled promises to Zion and Jerusalem will have their fulfillment in the world to come and in the "Jerusalem which is above." This, is "the hope of Israel." Acts 28:20 There, in the heavenly Jerusalem, not in the "Jerusalem which now is," the overcomers shall be rewarded:

Rev. 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem..

There also, the mystery shall be clearly known of how Christ's Bride is, at the same time, Christ's holy City, the New Jerusalem.

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Chapter 31

THE KINGDOM CONSUMMATION

Dan. 9:27 ..for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

1 Cor. 15:25-26,23-25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. (26) The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. (23) ..at his coming. (24) Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

The Hebrew word for "consummation" in Dan. 9:27 above is "kalah," and according to Strong's Hebrew Concordance it can be used to signify either an utter consuming or a completion. At the consummation, there shall come both the consuming of all of Christ's enemies and the completion of His kingdom. The last "living stone" will then be added to His Church, and the last enemy will then be destroyed.

The Certainty And Shortness Of The Consummation

There is both certainty and shortness in regard to the consummation. Unlike one who "began to build, and was not able to finish," Christ "will finish the work, and cut it short in

righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." Luke 14:30; Rom. 9:28 Christians are counseled to "Be patient.. unto the coming of the Lord" because "the Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it," but once the time for the consummation arrives, "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." James 5:7; Heb. 10:37 The "long patience" of Christ's mercy unto salvation will be replaced with His "short work" of righteous judgment "upon the earth".

Perhaps some who have assumed that time will continue for at least a thousand years after Christ's return will be among the millions who are shocked by the sudden conclusion of all things earthly and temporal at the consummation. Peter did not warn that the millennium is "at hand," but rather that "the end of all things is at hand!" 1 Pet. 4:7 Presumptuous souls will not have a millennium, or even a moment, to get right with God after Christ returns. Then, the time of man's probation will suddenly end, because at that point Christ will "cut it short in righteousness."

Christ's Present, Messianic Reign

The Messianic reign of Christ is not a thing which shall begin at His second coming. It began nearly 2000 years ago, at the time of His resurrection:

Eph. 1:18-22 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, (19) And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, (20) Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, (21) Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: (22) And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.

1 Pet. 3:22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Acts 2:32-36 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. (33) Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. (34) For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, (35) Until I make thy foes thy footstool. (36) Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Jesus Christ is Lord. He is King of kings, and He is reigning right now at the Father's right hand, "crowned with glory and honour." Heb. 2:9 Centuries before His first coming, king David prophesied that Christ would sit and reign at God's right hand:

Ps. 110:1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Mark 12:36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The fulfillment of David's prophecy began after Christ's sacrificial death and with His resurrection and ascension to the Father's right hand. The following scriptures provide additional evidence of that fact:

Mark 16:14,19 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. (19) So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

Rom. 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God..

Col. 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Heb. 1:3,8 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (8) But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

Heb. 8:1 We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

Heb. 10:12-13 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; (13) From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

Heb. 12:2,9 Looking unto Jesus..who..is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (9) ..shall we not much rather be in subjection..., and live?

As Christ sits at the right hand of the Father, He is more than our Mediator. He is also our Monarch. Holding the Almighty Sceptre of righteousness, He is now reigning, "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Eph. 1:21 After His resurrection, when Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," He meant what He said. He now rules and reigns Supreme "on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." Matt. 28:18; 1 Pet. 3:22 No thing and no one is outside of His authority and power. "Shall we not much rather be in subjection" to Him now, rather than facing the eternal consequences of defying His rule when our King rises from His throne and rids His kingdom of every rebel forever? Heb. 12:9

The King Will Destroy All Of His Enemies

When Jesus took the Throne, the Father "left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him." Sadly, now we see that many are saying in their heart, "We will not have this man to reign over us." But the day is coming when every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Heb. 2:8; Luke 19:14; Isa. 45:11; Rom. 14:11; Philip. 2:11 When Christ sat down upon His Throne, He did so with the full realization that all of His enemies would be defeated and destroyed. Eight times we read in the scriptures of how He will reign until His enemies (or foes) are made His footstool (put under His feet):

Ps. 110:1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Matt. 22:44 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Mark 12:36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Luke 20:42-43 And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, (43) Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Acts 2:34-35 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, (35) Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

1 Cor. 15:25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Heb. 1:13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

Heb. 10:12-13 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; (13) From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

Why do we see all of this repetition? Certainly not because Christ ever doubted His final triumph, but maybe God put that truth in the Bible 8 times to show us that we should never doubt it!

A comparison of Psalm 110:1 with 110:5 shows us that when Christ arises from His Throne at the Father's right hand and returns to this earth, He will destroy kings at Armageddon in fulfillment of the above 8 scriptures:

Ps. 101:1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Ps. 101:5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

The fact that Christ will continue to sit at the Father's right hand until the post-tribulational time of Armageddon is yet another proof that the rapture will occur after the great tribulation. However, when Christ does arise and return, it will not be simply to vanquish His foes at the

Armageddon battle scene. On that day, throughout God's entire creation, every angel, man, or thing that is the enemy of Christ will be utterly crushed and eternally cast under His feet into the lake of fire.

Death Will Be The Last Enemy Destroyed

Isa. 25:8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

1 Cor. 15:23,26,52,54 ..at His coming... (26) The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.. (52) ..at the last trump.. (54) ..then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

It should be clear from the above that death will be destroyed, or swallowed up in victory, at the time of Christ's coming when the last trump sounds. In fulfillment of Isa. 25:8, at Christ's return He will destroy death and wipe away all tears from the faces of God's children.

But note: Rev. 20:7,14; 21:4 shows that death will be destroyed after the millennium:

Rev. 20:7,14; 21:4 ...when the thousand years are expired..death and hell were cast into the lake of fire...And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death..

1 Corinthians 15 shows that death will be destroyed at Christ's return, but Rev. 20:7,14-21:4 shows that death will be destroyed after the millennium. 1 Cor. 15 shows that all tears will be wiped away in fulfillment of Isa. 25:8 at the last trump on the day of the Lord, while Rev. 20 shows that all tears will be wiped away after the millennium.

How can this be? The answer is simple to this writer: the millennium is Christ's present, spiritual reign with His saints during the Church Age. After the close of this spiritual millennium, Christ will return, the last trump will sound, and death will then be destroyed by being cast into, and swallowed up into, the lake of fire. Then, eternity will follow, not a millennium of time on this earth. (see also Chapter 8)

But there is yet another difficulty in the above scriptures for those who interpret that the millennium will follow Christ's return: The scriptures tell us that death will be the "last" enemy destroyed. Therefore, if an earthly millennium were to follow the destruction of death at Christ's return, it would be impossible for anyone to die during that time, and there could be no enemy of Christ destroyed at the close of the millennium, the last enemy having been slain 1000 years earlier. I suggest that the best way to avoid such absurdities is to interpret the millennium as I have done in the preceding paragraph. Then there appears a beautiful harmony throughout the scriptures concerning these subjects and other aspects of second coming prophecy.

Christ's Rod Of Iron Rule At The Consummation

The saints are now reigning with Christ spiritually: Eph. 1:20; 2:6 "He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places..and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." At the consummation, Christian overcomers will be given power to destroy evil with Christ during His Rod of Iron Rule.

We should, however, have a correct understanding of what this divine Rulership really will be. The Rod of Iron Rule of Christ will be that dominion whereby He will totally destroy His enemies, and not a reign that merely brings His foes into an unwilling and prolonged subjection to Him on this earth. It is clear from the scriptures that this is so:

Ps. 2:8-9 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.. (9) Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Christ's Rod of Iron Rule will not be a lengthy one during which the wicked are forcibly subjugated for 1000 years. Instead, it will be the brief, judgmental Rulership of Christ at His return when His enemies shall be "dashed in pieces" and "shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Prov. 29:1

This is the type of Rulership the saints will share with Him over this wicked world, and not one which will allow evil men to kow-tow for a thousand years and then again rise in awful rebellion at the close of that time. The saints, as it were, will sit on the jury that judges both wicked men and angels, sending them into eternal punishment:

Rev. 2:26-27 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: (27) And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

1 Cor. 6:2-3 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?.. (3) Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

The Rod of Iron Rulership, then, does not "pertain to this life" as a 1000 year extension of time in this world. It is rather a rulership which shall destroy the wicked from this life, judge them for their evil in this life, and then send them into eternal death in the lake of fire. Christ's Rod of Iron Rulership will suddenly shatter His enemies, and with no undue stay of execution they will be forever removed from His presence, "because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" at the consummation. Rom. 9:28

The Presentation Of The Kingdom To The Father

1 Cor. 15:24,27-28 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. (27) For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. (28) And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

This world was placed in subjection to the first Adam and his race:

Gen. 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them..replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion..over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

The world to come was placed in subjection to Christ, the second Adam and His redeemed race:

Heb. 2:5,8 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. (8) Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet...

Again we see that Christ's kingdom is "not of this world," but shall be in "the world to come." The first Adam was told to "subdue" this earth. The second Adam will indeed "subdue all things to Himself," but His Messianic kingdom will be in the New Earth. Philip. 3:21

At the full end of the consummation, when all things are subdued unto Christ, the second Adam, and when His kingdom is completed unto its eternal perfection, He will then present the kingdom to the Father and place Himself and His entire redeemed race in subjection to God. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," and as in Adam all became rebellious against God, even so in Christ shall all bow in subjection to the Father. 1 Cor. 15:22 This act will not remove Christ from His Throne, for He is God as well as Man. This act will, rather, restore fallen man back to his proper and highest place, at the feet of God Himself. Also, this wonderful act will make it possible for the Triune God to fill all and "be all in all" forever.

The Eternal Filling And Joy Of The Consummation

Eph. 4:10 He...ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.

1 Cor. 15:28 ..that God may be all in all.

When God fills all, and becomes All in all, it will take stronger walls than can be found on this earth to contain the glorious shouts of Christ's enraptured saints! Beloved, if the divinely amplified shout of earthly Israel could knock down the walls of Jericho, then it will take the heavenly walls of the New Jerusalem to withstand the shock of the shouts of God's saints in that glad hour! They say, "one Baptism, many fillings," but the saints have never had a filling of the Holy Ghost quite like that one will be. God will fill the vessels of their glorified bodies with more of His Spirit than was ever possible here below, and it will be forever! "Christ in you, the hope of glory," will become Christ in you, the realization of glory! Hallelujah! What a glorious consummation of the kingdom that will be! I plan to be there, don't you?

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SECTION II -- HIS KINGDOM

PART B -- THE GLORY OF HIS KINGDOM

Chapter 32

THE KINGDOM GLORY OF CHRIST

The Sovereignty Of His Glory

Ps. 24:10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.

1 Cor. 2:7-8 But we speak.. the hidden wisdom.. (8) Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

James 2:1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

Jesus Christ is Lord. The Jews failed to recognize this, and "crucified the Lord of glory." Nonetheless, Jesus' Messianic "glory shall be revealed" at His return when He shall be seen "coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24:30 "Every eye shall see Him" thus, including the eyes of those who "pierced Him". Rev. 1:7

The revelation of Christ's Sovereign glory will be universal. "All flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isa. 40:5 On that day, "every tongue (shall) confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philip. 2:11 On that day, men who are unprepared to meet the King of glory "shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." Isa. 2:19

The Spotless Purity Of His Glory

Ex. 15:11 Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

The glory of those who are earthly minded is often vile: "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." Philip. 3:19 In vivid contrast, the glory of Christ is pure and holy. He is only and always "glorious in holiness."

The revelation of His glory will be welcomed only by those who are a part of His "glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Eph. 5:27 When we compare Paul's statement in Ephesians and John's statement in Revelation, we can see that there is an unbreakable connection between the fact of the Church "not having spot or wrinkle" and the fact of the Church "having the glory of God." Rev. 21:11

Long before Christ's first coming, Isaiah "saw His glory, and spake of Him." John 12:41; Isa. 6:1-4 His vision of the awesome majesty and holy glory of the King caused him to feel an immediate woe because of his own uncleanness. This is what a wicked world will feel when Christ is revealed in His Omnipotence and holy glory on the day of the Lord, but their efforts to hide from that fearful manifestation of His power and purity will be totally in vain.

The Starting Point of His Glory

As the Son of God, Christ's glory had no starting point. It was from eternity: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John 17:5 He manifested His glory as the eternal Son both during Old Testament times and during His earthly ministry. For example:

To Abraham: "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran." Acts 7:2

At the marriage in Cana: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory.." John 2:11

At the raising of Lazarus: "Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" John 11:40

To His chosen apostles: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14

At His transfiguration: "But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory.." Luke 9:32

As the Son of man, however, Jesus' Messianic glory did have a starting point. It did not begin during His ministry: "(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" John 7:39 "These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him.." John 12:16

Jesus announced the arrival of the period of time during which He was to be glorified: "And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." John 12:23 He prayed, just before His crucifixion: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee..And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John 17:1,5

As the Son of Man, Jesus' Messianic glory began following His suffering on the cross: "the Spirit..testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 1 Pet. 1:11 We see that His Messianic glory as the Son of Man began with His resurrection: "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.." Rom. 6:4 "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.." Heb. 2:9

The Messianic glory of Jesus, the Son of Man, began when He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father and then "crowned with glory and honour."

The Sameness of His Glory

Nearly 2000 years ago, Christ received "a crown of glory that fadeth not away," and began to "reign in life". That shining crown has never diminished in its radiance, from the moment He put in on, nor will it ever. He is "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." He hasn't changed, and His glory hasn't changed. Instead, He and His glory change all those who are enabled to spiritually behold Him: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Hallelujah! 1 Pet. 5:4; Rom. 5:17; Heb. 13:8; 2 Cor. 3:18

The Sure Revelation of His Glory

As all should, Peter did not doubt the coming revelation of Christ's glory: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." 1 Pet. 5:1

For centuries, God's people have been looking for "...the blessed hope -- the glorious appearing of our great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13 (NIV) Borrowing the words of Judges 5:28, perhaps many of the saints across those years have wondered: "Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?" Being anxious for the deliverance which His coming will bring, perhaps numbers of Christians have voiced in prayer these sentiments: "I am poor and needy.. thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God." Ps. 40:17

Yet Christ admonished: "In your patience possess ye your souls." Luke 21:19 We must neither question the wisdom of the divine delay, nor begin to doubt the certainty of Christ's return: "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heb. 10:37 "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Hab. 2:3

God is never too early and never too late. At the appointed time Christ will suddenly appear in His glory. He Who has tarried long will "make no tarrying" then. He said: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Rev. 22:7 The prophecies of God's Word concerning the return of Christ and the awesome manifestation of His glory will surely come to pass, and once that fulfillment begins, then suddenly all shall be brought to a swift and final conclusion.

"When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." Ps. 102:16 Jesus said: "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16:18 Also, He prophesied: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. 24:14 When the last soul has been saved that shall be saved, and spiritual Zion, Christ's Church, has been built up to its final completeness, then Christ will appear in His glory.

Ours is not to predict the precise moment when that will occur. Instead, ours is to be ready, keep our faith in the prophecies of God's book, and to do His will until He comes: "And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." Luke 19:13

If we are called upon to endure lengthy trials, or even persecutions, while we await Christ's return, we must not bemoan our lot. Peter wrote: "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." At Christ's appearing, every triumphant child of God will "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Pet. 4:13; 1:8

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Chapter 33

THE KINGDOM GLORY (ENSUING AND ETERNAL)

Ps. 145:11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power.

Ps. 73:24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

Ps. 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Luke 24:26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

1 Pet. 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

Now Kingdom Grace -- Next Kingdom Glory

The glory of Christ's kingdom will ensue upon the completion of this age. The present era of kingdom grace will be immediately followed by the eternal era of kingdom glory. During this age Christ will give spiritual grace to enter His kingdom, but in the next age He will give eternal glory to those who shall enter in through the gates of New Jerusalem. Now, He guides us by His counsel into His kingdom here below, but afterward He will receive us into the eternal glory of His kingdom in heaven.

During time, Christ suffered, but next, as our forerunner, He entered into the eternal glory of His kingdom. Repeatedly, we see that following the present time during which God gives us grace to endure earthly sufferings shall come the moment at which the saints are received into the eternal glory of Christ's kingdom. Thus, it is the eternal "glory" of Christ's kingdom "that should follow" this age in our interpretation of what comes next regarding that kingdom.

The Kingdom Glory Eternal, Not Millennial

Ps. 104:31 The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works.

1 Tim. 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Dan. 7:14 And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom..an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away..that which shall not be destroyed.

Christ is "the King of glory." He is coming in great glory on the day of the Lord, and will then "sit upon the throne of His glory" in judgment of all. Matt. 16:27; 24:30; 25:31 After this: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34

But into what kind of kingdom and city will "the King of glory" lead His saints? Will He lead them into a kingdom and city on this earth which will endure but for a millennium, and then pass away and be destroyed? No! He will, instead, lead them into the glory of an eternal kingdom and into the New Jerusalem whose gates and doors are "everlasting":

Ps. 24:7-10 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. (8) Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. (9) Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. (10) Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.

The King of glory is "mighty in battle," and following His complete overthrow of anti-Christ at Armageddon, He will judge all, cast the wicked into the lake of fire, and then lead His saints victoriously into the eternal glory of His kingdom. When "the saints come marching in" behind Him into the capital of His Messianic kingdom, it will be through "everlasting doors," and not through doors which shall be destroyed after a millennium. Selah

1 Pet. 1:24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.

The temporal glory of "the kingdoms of this world" soon withers and falls away. Such was the glory of earthly kingdoms which satan offered to Christ, and which He firmly declined. Jesus refused the glory of man and satan, and instead received the glory of God. Thus, writes Peter to the saints, "when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." 1 Pet. 5:4

1 Pet. 5:10-11 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. (11) To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Should we not see that the "hope of glory" which the suffering saints of this old world shall realize at Christ's return will not be material and temporal and transient? As this writer sees it, Christ is not going to reward His saints with "more of the same" type of transient, earthly kingdom which the world has ever seen, even in a better form. Instead, following their present sufferings,

Christians are called unto the "eternal glory" of Christ and will be settled forever in His everlasting kingdom, never to move again:

2 Sam. 7:10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.

Such, the writer believes, is the true "hope of glory" which the suffering saints shall inherit when the King of glory comes. For further evidence that the glory of Christ's kingdom will be eternal, not millennial, read the following references: Rom. 11:36; Gal. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Pet. 3:18; Jude 1:25; Rev. 1:6; 5:13; and 7:12.

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Chapter 34

THE KINGDOM GLORY (CONSUMING AND PUNISHING)

2 Thess. 1:7-10 ..when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, (8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; (10) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Christ's Glory Never Co-Exists With Evil

It is a mistake to interpret that any of the unrighteous shall, for a thousand years, or even for a moment, enter into the Messianic kingdom glory. Instead, the wicked will be punished with everlasting destruction "from the glory" of Christ's kingdom at His appearing on the day of the Lord.

It can be seen throughout the Bible that God's glory does not co-exist with evil. It is provoked by evil: "For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory." Isa. 3:8 Therefore, we see repeatedly in the scriptures that when God's holy glory comes into the presence of those who are implacably set in their evil, that glory becomes to them a consuming fire and the divine instrument whereby they are destroyed and damned. The destruction of Korah and his followers is an example:

Num. 16:19-21,32-33 And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation. (20) And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, (21) Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. (32) And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. (33) They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.

The Wicked Will Be Consumed By Christ's Glory

As it was in the day of Korah, so shall it be in the day Christ returns in His glory. The wicked will not be allowed to inhabit His kingdom in their hostile insolence toward His divine authority. Instead, His glory will consume them and cause them to be swallowed up into the lake of fire.

Isaiah shows us that the wicked will seek to hide from Christ's glory on the day of the Lord, for they will realize His glory is bringing their death and eternal destruction:

Isa. 2:10,19-21 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty. (19) And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. (20) In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; (21) To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Further, Isa. 10:16 tells us that "under His glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire." Isa. 30:30 says that "the Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire.." Thus, Christ's glory will be both the savour of life unto life for the righteous and the savour of death unto death for all of the wicked.

Christ's Glory Will Consume Anti-Christ And His Armies

According to Heb. 1:3, Christ radiates from His Person the glory and image of God: "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of his person..sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." When He arises and returns, He will destroy anti-Christ with "the brightness of His glory":

2 Thess. 2:8 "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

Isaiah 63 prophesies of that same destruction of anti-Christ and his armies when Christ returns, "glorious in His apparel":

Isa. 63:1-3 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. (2) Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? (3) I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

Taking the battle of Gog and Magog as synonymous with Armageddon, we see in Ezek. 39:21 another prophetic picture of the judgment which shall accompany Christ's appearance in His glory: "And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them."

Also, from Ps. 45:3 we can see that when the King returns, His sword will accompany His glory: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty."

Satan's Final Doom At The Appearance Of Christ's Glory

If the king of Tyrus in Ezekiel 28 is correctly interpreted to be satan, then we may see in Ezekiel 26:20 a prophetic picture of the fact that when Christ appears in His glory, then it will be that satan and all of His followers will descend into the pit of eternal destruction:

Ezek. 26:20 When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit..I shall set glory in the land of the living.

The Testimony Of Christ Himself

In addition to all of the above, we have the testimony of Christ Himself attesting to the fact that God's glory will consume, rather than co-exist with, the wicked at the coming of His Messianic kingdom. Jesus said: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory..Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. 25:31,41 Christ, Who is both our Lord and our God, "is a Consuming Fire" toward all sin and toward all sinners who impenitently dare to defy His authority over their lives.

Penitent Sinners Can Enter Into The Glory Of The Lamb

While Christ demands our obedience as our Lord, He died for us as our Lamb, that we too may receive His eternal salvation and glory. Christ is worthy to receive glory: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power..Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Rev. 4:11; 5:12 Through His shed blood, we too can be made worthy to dwell in the brightness and bliss of Christ's eternal glory. If any man will confess his sin and rebellion in humble, total repentance, then the Lamb of God will "make known" to him "the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy" which are "prepared unto glory." Rom. 9:23

However, on the day of the Lord, they shall not be counted worthy to enter into the glory of His kingdom who have trodden under foot His precious blood and who have done despite unto the Spirit of grace. Instead, they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in His saints..in that day. Heb. 10:29; 2 Thess. 1:9-10

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Chapter 35

THE KINGDOM GLORY (HEIRS AND ALIENS)

Prov. 3:35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

Rom. 9:4 ..to whom pertaineth..the glory..and the service of God, and the promises.

James 2:5 ..Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom..?

Only the spiritually wise are heirs of Christ's glory, and none who are spiritual fools shall inherit His Kingdom. Notice the following characteristics of those who shall inherit Christ's glory and enter into His kingdom at His return:

The Heirs Of Glory Are: In Righteousness And True Holiness

Ex. 15:11 Who is like unto thee, O LORD.., glorious in holiness..

Ex. 29:43 ..the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory."

1 Sam. 4:22 ..The glory is departed from Israel..

Isa. 24:16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous.

Rom. 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

Rom. 8:30 ..whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Philip. 1:11 ..the fruits of righteousness.. are..unto the glory and praise of God.

1 Thess. 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

2 Pet. 1:3 ..His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.

Holiness people should be well aware that the glory of God and the holiness of God are always united. You can't have one without the other. Those called to glory are also called to virtue, and those who enter the glory of Christ's kingdom must be justified, righteous and holy. Those who found in impenitence and impurity at Christ's coming shall be forever "short of the glory of God" outside of His kingdom.

One of two things must always occur when sin comes into the presence of God's glory: either the glory must depart from that sin or that sin must depart from God's glory. At Christ's

coming all sin and all who are unholy shall be forced to depart from His glory into everlasting fire. Indeed, the time is coming when the earth will be filled with the glory of God:

Num. 14:21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

Isa. 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Hab. 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

However, we must remember that God never fills an unclean vessel. At the time the 120 "were all filled with the Holy Ghost," their hearts were also purified. Acts 2:4; 15:9 Therefore, before the earth is filled with the glory of God it will first be purged of all evil and evil inhabitants.

Isa. 24:19-23 shows that the consumption will precede the time "when the Lord of hosts shall reign..before His ancients gloriously." First will come the consumption of this present earth, and then the regenerated earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, will be filled with Christ's glory. Also, in that new earth which is filled with His glory His "people also shall be all righteous" within and without. Isa. 60:21

It is abundantly clear that it is only those who are holy and those who persevere in their righteousness that will enter Jesus' Messianic glory. Jesus said: "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Matt. 16:27 Also, Paul wrote in Romans:

Rom. 2:7-10 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: (8) But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, (9) Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; (10) But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

2 Thessalonians 2:14 tells us that we are called "to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," and Paul said that he endured "all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." 2 Tim. 2:10 Those who are unrighteous, unholy, and who have neither done nor endured anything to obtain Christ's salvation and glory should not expect to enter His kingdom, and shall not. But when He shall appear, then shall come both "songs" of joy and eternal "glory to the righteous." Isa. 24:6

The Heirs Of Glory Are: In The Grace And Faith Of Christ

Ps. 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory..

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Rom. 5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Eph. 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

John 11:40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

1 Pet. 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

The preceding scriptures make it plain that one must have the grace of Christ and a real faith in Him in order to enter His glory at His appearing. Eph. 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith."

The Heirs Of Glory Are: In Spiritual Oneness

John 17:22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.

Philip. 3:21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Col. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

The glory which God has given Christ, He has given only to "them" who are "one" with Him and "one" with their brethren in the Lord. Those who are outside of that oneness will not be heirs of His Messianic glory. Also, Christ in us is our only hope of glory. Those who have not Christ in them have no real hope of entering into His glorious kingdom. Again, one must have a glorified body fashioned like unto His glorious body in order to live in His glory. This too, comes only through spiritual union with Christ, making it utterly impossible for any of the wicked to "appear with Him in glory".

The Heirs Of Glory Are: In The Sufferings Of The Cross

Rom. 8:17,18 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (18) For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

1 Cor. 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

2 Cor. 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Gal. 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

1 Pet. 1:11 ..the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

1 Pet. 4:13-14 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (14) If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you..

1 Pet. 5:1 I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.

"The Lord of glory" was crucified. 1 Cor. 2:8 "The servant is not greater than his Lord." John 13:16 Those who share His glory must first share His cross. First came His sufferings, and then came His glory. So also, we must first endure the cross He has given us before we may enter into His glory.

"I must needs go home by the way of the cross. There's no other way but this. I shall ne'er get sight of the gates of light, if the way of the cross I miss." (J. B. Pounds, The Way Of The Cross Leads Home) It is only "if we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" with Him in His glory. But, so light is our present cross when weighed against the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" we can hereafter inherit, that it is unworthy of comparison with that reward.

None of the princes of this world knew what they were actually doing when they crucified Christ, and none of the impenitent wicked will actually know the joy of "the glory that shall be revealed" to those who are crucified with Christ. Like the cloud which "came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel" as "a cloud and darkness" to the Egyptians, but as a "light by night" to Israel, so the wicked shall know only the dark and destructive side of God's glory, while at the same time spiritual Israel shall experience its blissful illumination and deliverance. Ex. 14:20

The Heirs Of Glory Are: In Christ's Church

Eph. 3:21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Eph. 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church..

Ps. 45:13 The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.

Eph. 1:18 ..that ye may know what is.. riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

Heb. 2:10,12 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (12) Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

Rev. 21:9-11 ..Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. (10) And he.. showed me.. the holy Jerusalem.. (11) Having the glory of God..

Whether we be Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free, all must enter Christ's kingdom glory as part of His Church, for "the glory of His inheritance" is "in the saints" who make up His Bride, the Church. In the Messianic kingdom, it will be the Church, not fleshly Israel, who has the glory of God. Those who fail to obtain "glory in the church by Christ Jesus" will find it in no other place.

Neither shall those who "glory in appearance, and not in heart" dwell in Christ's kingdom, "for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." 2 Cor. 5:12; 1 Sam. 16:7 He is repulsed by those "which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." Matt. 23:27 Therefore, Christ will only share His love with those who are "all glorious within." When He shall appear He will present His Bride to Himself, "a glorious church" within and without, and the Church will be His only Bride. Thus, all other aspirants to His love and glory will be forever banished from His kingdom.

Using a different figure, we see that as the great Captain of our salvation, Christ will bring "many sons to glory" who will sing His praise forever "in the midst of the church". Thus, it will be only those who are born again sons and daughters of God who will be brought to glory, and that glory will be in the midst of Christ's Church. They err, then, who picture any but those in Christ's Church as residents in Christ's kingdom glory.

The Heirs Of Glory Are: In Humility

1 Sam. 2:8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill.. to make them inherit the throne of glory..

Mal. 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

Prov. 25:27 ..for men to search their own glory is not glory.

Mark 9:33-34 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? (34) But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.

Mark 10:37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

John 7:18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.

John 8:50 And I seek not mine own glory..

Heb. 5:5 ..Christ glorified not himself..

1 Cor. 1:29,31 ..no flesh should glory in his presence..he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

1 Cor. 5:6,7 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven..

2 Cor. 11:18 ..many glory after the flesh..

Gal. 5:26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

The preceding scriptures should make it very clear to all of us that none who seek their own glory shall enter into Christ's glory. That honour is reserved for only those who have humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God. Instead of entering into Christ's glory, where their presence would leaven the whole lump with their ugly pride, the proud shall all be eternally purged out of Christ's kingdom.

The Heirs Of Glory Are: In Readiness

Prov. 3:35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

Matt. 25:1-2,10 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. (2) And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. (10) And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

In the final analysis, it will not be those who are wise in their heads, nor wise in their theology or prophecy, but those who are wise in their hearts who shall enter Christ's eternal glory. Those who have the oil of His Spirit in abundant supply within the vessel of their heart, and whose witness to His sanctifying grace is burning bright, shall enter therein. To all the rest, the door shall be forever shut.

It will be the spiritual "heirs of the kingdom," and not the spotted aliens of this world who shall enter Jesus' Messianic kingdom glory. Those who are "alienated from the life of God" at His return, shall be cast into the lake of fire and forever banished from the presence of His glory. Eph. 4:18

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Chapter 36

THE KINGDOM GLORY (MAGNITUDE AND CHANGE)

Ps. 138:5 ...GREAT is the GLORY of the LORD.

Matt. 24:30 ..they shall see the Son of man coming.. with power and GREAT GLORY.

Heb. 7:12 ..there is made of necessity A CHANGE..

2 Cor. 3:18 ..we all..beholding..THE GLORY of the Lord, are CHANGED into the same image from glory to glory..

Philip. 3:21 Who shall CHANGE our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto HIS GLORIOUS BODY..

Heb. 1:10,12 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of THE EARTH; AND THE HEAVENS are the works of thine hands..as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they SHALL BE CHANGED..

Wherever the presence of Christ's glory comes, "there is made of necessity a change." At His first coming, it was necessary to change both the priesthood and the Law: Heb. 7:12 "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." While spiritually beholding the glory of the Lord, there is made of necessity a change in believer's hearts: 2 Cor. 3:18 "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." When Jesus "manifested forth His glory" at the wedding in Cana He changed the water into wine. It was the glory of God that changed Christ's mortal body into "His glorious body": Rom. 6:4 "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.."

Those who have been given "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" should best estimate the magnitude of Christ's glory, and they should better understand the necessity of change occurring whenever His glory is manifested. 2 Cor. 4:6 However, the writer is convinced that many who have a spiritual knowledge of Christ's glory still under-estimate the magnitude of Christ's second-coming glory and do not rightly understand the changes which will become an immediate necessity when that glory is revealed.

The Great Magnitude Of Christ's Second-Coming Glory

Four times the scriptures mention the greatness of Christ's glory, and the last three are all in reference to that glory which shall be manifested at His return: Ps. 138:5; Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:26-"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with GREAT power and GLORY." Luke 21:27-"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and GREAT GLORY." We should not under-estimate THE EXCEEDING MAGNITUDE of that manifestation:

It will be both awesome and overpowering. It will cover the heavens around the entire world:

Hab. 3:3 God came..His glory covered the heavens.

It will strike terror in the hearts of those who are unprepared to meet Him:

Luke 2:9 ..the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Rev. 6:15-16 ..men..hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks..And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!

The wicked around the world will be pushed into destruction by its Almighty force:

Deut. 33:17 His glory is like..the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth..

Christ is this very moment "dwelling in the Light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see.." He is "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person." 1 Tim. 6:16; Heb. 1:3 FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT ENDURE, OR CONTINUE TO LIVE, UNDER THE FULL MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST'S GLORY.

Because of this, Moses was not allowed to see the Lord's face: "And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory...And He said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live...thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen." Ex. 33:18,20,23

Heretofore, all manifestations of Christ's glory have been limited because of the inability of man's flesh to endure the full, unrestrained brilliance of that glory. Even after limited manifestations of Christ's glory to him, "the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance." 1 Cor. 3:7 Among those who are unprepared to meet Him, then, "who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth" in all of His omnipotent, overwhelming radiance? Mal 3:2 None!

Even partial manifestations of Christ's glory have prevented the approach of flesh and blood and prostrated those who came into that presence: Ex. 40:35-"And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because..the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 1 Ki. 8:11-"So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD." 2 Chr. 5:14-"So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God." 2 Chr. 7:2-"And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house."

Saul of Tarsus was both prostrated and blinded by the magnitude and brilliance of Christ's glory on the Damascus road: Acts 26:13,14 "At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from

heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Acts 22:11 "And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus."

Later, when Paul mentioned to the Corinthians the "eternal weight of glory," and to the Colossians the "glorious power" of Christ, he knew well of that which he wrote. He had been utterly prostrated and humbled into the dust by that "weight of glory" and "glorious power". 2 Cor. 4:17; Col. 1:11

Christ's Glory Will Slay The Wicked At His Appearing

Should not many cease to under-estimate the magnitude and power of Christ's second-coming glory? Wicked men will not be simply subdued by Christ's glory. They will be slain by His glory!: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thess. 2:8

All of the wicked will be felled and consumed by the fiery radiance of Him Who is "the brightness" of God's glory: "For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many." Isa. 66:16 "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Mal. 4:1

Flesh And Blood Residents In Christ's Glory Impossible

Christ's glory will make it utterly impossible for wicked flesh and blood to even survive His coming, let alone exist with Him in on this earth in a supposed servile surrender for a thousand years. Indeed, were Christ to sit upon a throne in the earthly Jerusalem in all of the radiance of "His glorious body," no flesh and blood would even be able to look upon Him and still live. This fact eliminates the possibility of an earthly Messianic reign which is supposed to contain both glorified and flesh and blood servants of Christ.

At Christ's return, even the glorified saints "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament" and "as the stars"! Beloved, there are stars in our universe countless numbers of times greater than our sun. Yet scientists are now concerned about too much radiation reaching the earth through an opening in the shielding ozone layer above our planet. How, then, would the strongest flesh and blood person be able to endure the radiance of the smallest of Christ's glorified saints, not to mention the blazing splendor of Him Who is "the Sun of Righteousness"?! Dan. 12:3; Mal. 4:2

While the writer realizes that all things are possible with God, He asserts that the true, Biblical description of the population of the Messianic kingdom does not include a mixture of glorified beings and flesh and blood beings. However, this conclusion is not based upon the perceived incongruity, incompatibility, and impossibility of such a mixture, but is based rather upon the preponderance and weight of scriptural evidence which shows that such an interpretation of the kingdom is mistaken.

The Great Changes Made By Christ's Second-Coming Glory

We should understand that "of necessity" great changes will be wrought by His glory when Christ appears:

Our Bodies Will Be Changed

The bodies of Christians will be changed. Because the natural bodies of God's saints could not endure the glory of His kingdom, all will receive a new, glorified, spiritual body at His appearing:

1 Cor. 15:44,50-52 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (50) Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. (51) Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Philip. 3:20-21 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: (21) Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

The bodies of all will be changed when Christ appears. However, it will be "to every seed his own body." Those who are "wheat" will be given bodies like Christ's, but those who are "some other grain" will be given damnation bodies:

1 Cor. 15:37-38 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: (38) But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

The Universe Will Be Changed

Heb. 1:6,10-12 And again, when he bringeth in (or, when He bringeth in again) the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. (10) And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: (11) They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; (12) And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

When will this universal change occur? At the time "again, when he bringeth in the Firstbegotten into the world," or when God "brings again" His Son into the world -- in other words, at Christ's second coming. This too negates the possibility of the Messianic kingdom being on this present earth. Christ will utterly change the universe through His glory when He comes

again. The cosmic chaos and consumption of this present universe at the time of Christ's second coming will precede the time when He shall reign "gloriously" in the new heaven and new earth:

Isa. 24:23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

This writer asserts that all beings and all things will be changed and brought into their eternal state at the commencement of Jesus' Messianic reign with His saints. Jesus said that "the throne of His glory" would be "in the regeneration," or new creation. Matt. 19:28 "Having the glory of God" is a radiant honour which no city on this earth could contain. Christ will reign on "the throne of His glory" in the City which shall have that glory, New Jerusalem. Rev. 21:11 The prophecy of Psalm 87:3 shall there have its fulfillment: "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah." There too, shall come bright realization of Isa. 60:1-2: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee."

Those who were impenitently earthy, sensual, and devilish shall forever dwell outside of "the regeneration" in the "gross darkness" of eternal damnation while the glory of the Lord is forever seen upon the New Jerusalem.

The prospect of God's glory is upward, and not gravitated to this earth. 1 Tim. 3:16 tells us that Christ was "received up into glory." Paul wrote that "the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." 1 Cor. 15:40 Conditionally, the devil offered Jesus "all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them." Matt. 4:8 Christ wasn't interested in either the condition or position of the glory Satan offered Him. Jesus' kingdom is not now, nor ever shall be, of this world. The glory of Christ's kingdom is celestial, not terrestrial. Therefore, this writer asserts that the Messianic kingdom will be in the spiritually elevated "world to come" where heaven and earth will be united into one eternal, glorious union and kingdom.

In Isa. 60:13 we read: "I will make the place of my feet glorious." Even the ground of Jesus' Messianic Kingdom will be glorified. In that changed and glorious new heaven and new earth realm, the following prayer of Christ will be answered: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.." John 17:24

In Conclusion

We should not under-estimate the GREAT MAGNITUDE of Christ's second-coming GLORY.

We should understand the GREAT CHANGES which shall occur when the zenith of that immeasurable brilliance shines forth.

The Psalmist wrote: "O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth." Ps. 80:1 When He does shine forth: " Then shall the

righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matt. 13:43

"In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people, And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment.." Isa. 28:5-6 The chaff will all be driven away, and the children will rejoice in Jesus' beauty and glory. For those who have suffered and labored long, "His rest shall be glorious." Isa. 11:10 Also, we won't lack company in glory. Besides the unmerited, yet glorious fellowship with the Father and the Son in the Holy Ghost, the saints of all ages will be there: "And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry..and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small." Jer. 30:19 "What a day, glorious day, that will be!" Hallelujah!

Beloved, God has from the beginning intended something far better for us than any kingdom or city on this earth could contain: "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary." Jer. 17:12 In the New Jerusalem, Zech. 2:5 shall also be fulfilled: "For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Rev. 21:23

Yes, Christ's place for His kingdom will be "in the regeneration." There it shall be known: "Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place." 1 Chr. 16:27 Christ will "Let the saints be joyful in glory" forever. Ps. 149:5

Is not the magnitude of Christ's coming glory too often under-estimated? Do we really understand the awesome, and yet marvelous, changes which shall occur when "the glory of the LORD shall be revealed."? Isa. 40:5 Perhaps in this regard, Paul's prayer for the Ephesian Church would be fitting for us all:

Eph. 1:15-18 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, (16) Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; (17) That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: (18) The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

I conclude with the benediction of Jude 24-25: Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, (25) To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

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SECTION III -- THE APPENDICES

Appendix A PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING

Christ Was Made Perfect Through Suffering

Heb. 2:10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

While Christ did not enjoy suffering, He savoured doing the will of the Father, "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." He first "endured the cross" in order to obtain "the joy that was set before Him" beyond that suffering. Luke 9:51; Heb. 12:2

The Servant Is Not Greater Than His Lord

John 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

Christ "suffered for us, leaving us an example" of how all of His lesser servants must "follow His steps" and be made perfect through their God-ordained suffering, whatever that includes. 1 Pet. 2:21

Old Testament Saints Were Made Perfect Through Suffering

Heb. 11:35-40 ..others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: (36) And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: (37) They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (38) (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. (39) And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: (40) God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

New Testament Saints Were Made Perfect Through Suffering

John the Baptist was beheaded:

Matt. 14:8-10 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. (9) And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. (10) And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

Thus, John was made perfect through suffering, and like the wheat of his prophecy, he will be gathered among the triumphant into Christ's garner, while no doubt "the chaff" who had him beheaded will be driven away into the "unquenchable fire" of eternal punishment. Matt. 3:12

The apostle James died by the sword of Herod: Acts 12:1-2 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. (2) And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. Peter evidently died by crucifixion:

John 21:18-19 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. (19) This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

The thought here seems to be that Christ was going to the cross and Peter was to follow him to the same death later. Apparently, in the soon anticipation of the fulfillment Christ's prophecy, Peter later wrote: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." 2 Pet. 1:14 It would appear that Peter knew that he must soon die in the manner which Christ prophesied, by crucifixion.

Paul was evidently beheaded, and he admonished Timothy:

2 Tim. 4:5-7 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions..For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

Notice that he said "I am ready to be offered" and not "I am ready to be raptured." He was prepared to go whatever way Christ ordained, but he was made perfect through suffering, and not through escape from suffering.

John went through tribulation:

Rev. 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.."

Although apparently he was not martyred, I see no evidence that he expected the Church to escape the great tribulation. The fact that he spoke of himself as a "companion" of those "in tribulation" seems to verify that he expected Christians to go through the great tribulation. His presence on Patmos was the result of persecution, and he too was made perfect through suffering.

Early Church Saints Were Made Perfect Through Suffering

The bloody persecutions which befell the Church under the Roman rulers during the first three centuries is well documented. Many early Christians "fought with beasts" to entertain the emperor and the merciless crowds at Rome, and gained their crown by way of the Coliseum. 1 Cor. 15:32 The brave Christian martyrs of those times were not raptured out of the hands of Nero, Domitian, and Diocletian, but were, rather, made perfect through suffering.

Shall There Be Laodicean Savouring? Or Suffering?

Before Pentecost, unsanctified Peter protested to Christ concerning His impending suffering on the cross, saying: "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Christ replied: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Matt.16:22-23 It is the savouring of men to escape their cross, but it is the savouring of Christ to endure suffering in God's will and thereby "obtain a better resurrection." From the account of the Laodicean Church in Rev. 3:14-22 we can see that the savouring of men will be prevalent in the professed Church of this period, and that savouring includes the desire to escape, rather than to endure, suffering for Jesus' sake.

One pertinent question for each Christian in this Laodicean period of the Church is: "Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize, and sailed through bloody seas?" (Isaac Watts)

Shall the Laodicean Church be granted the fulfillment of the savouring of men to escape the cross, and be conveniently raptured away from that final paroxysm of persecution and suffering known as the great tribulation?

There Shall Be Laodicean Suffering Before Final Perfection

Listen to Christ's counsel to that Church:

Rev. 3:18,21 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire.. (21) To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Of those Old Testament saints who "were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection," it was said that they "received not the promise" that "they without us should not be made perfect." They suffered in order to obtain the promise of "a better resurrection," but still they received not the fulfillment of that promise, and will not until the Christians of the last day Church are also made perfect.

My point is this: as they suffered greatly in order to obtain the promise of a better resurrection and rapture, so must the Laodicean Church also suffer before being made perfect with them in the resurrection and rapture of the overcomers following the final, great tribulation.

Throughout the ages, those "of whom the world was not worthy" have been made perfect through suffering, rather than through escape from suffering, and this writer asserts that this will hold true until after the great tribulation. Then, all of the saints of all of the ages shall obtain the promise of the better resurrection, be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and rise triumphantly together to meet the Lord in the air. Then, those of whom this world was not worthy will soon take up their abode in the New Jerusalem of the world to come, "God having provided some better thing for us" than this old world has to offer. Hallelujah! Heb. 11:40

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Appendix B

THE EARLY CHURCH TRIBULATION BELIEF

Did early Christians believe that the Church would escape the Tribulation, or did they believe and teach that the Church would pass through the Tribulation?

According to Robert Gundry in his book "The Church and The Tribulation," the early Church generally held posttribulational views until into the fourth century. He wrote: "...the possibility of a pretribulational rapture seems never to have occurred to anyone in the early Church." In support of these assertions, let us consider the following quotations from early Christian writers:

From "The Epistle of Barnabas," chapter iv. entitled "Antichrist Is At Hand: Let us Therefore Avoid Jewish Errors":

"Let us not give loose reins to our soul, that it should have power to run with sinners and the wicked, lest we become like them. The final stumblingblock approaches...And the prophet also speaks thus: 'Ten kingdoms shall reign upon the earth, and a little king shall rise up after them, who shall subdue under one three of the kings.' In like manner Daniel says concerning the same, 'And I beheld the fourth beast, wicked and powerful, and more savage than all the beasts of the earth, and how from it sprang up ten horns, and out of them a little budding horn, and how it subdued under one three of the great horns.'

Ye ought therefore to understand. And this also I further beg of you, as being one of you, and loving you both individually and collectively more than my own soul, to take heed now to yourselves.. Now, being desirous to write many things to you, not as your teacher, but as becometh one who loves you, I have taken care not to fail to write to you from what I myself possess, with a view to your purification. We take earnest heed in these last days; for the whole time of your faith will profit you nothing, unless now in this wicked time we also withstand coming sources of danger, as becometh sons of God. That the Black One may find no means of entrance, let us flee from every vanity, let us utterly hate the works of the way of wickedness."

Quite obviously, this was an exhortation which warned early Christians of the coming of anti-Christ and their need for purity and preparation so as not to fall when this "final stumblingblock" to their faith appeared. This, of course, shows that Barnabas was expecting Christ's Church to pass through the tribulation during the reign of "the Black One"

From "Dialogue With Trypho," by Justin Martyr perhaps about A.D. 114 to 165, Chapter CX:

"O unreasoning men! understanding not what has been proved by all these passages, that two advents of Christ have been announced: the one, in which He is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonoured, and crucified; but the other, in which He shall come from heaven with glory, when the man of apostasy, who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians.."

Here again, the early Christian writer expected the Church to be on earth at the time anti-Christ ventured to "do unlawful deeds on earth against..the Christians."

From "The Pastor (Shepherd) Of Hermas," The Second Vision, perhaps A.D. 160:

"Stand stedfast, therefore, ye who work righteousness, and doubt not that your passage may be with the holy angels. Happy ye who endure the great tribulation that is coming on.."

From "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," Chapter xli:

"Watch for your life's sake. Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ye ready, for ye know not the hour in which our Lord cometh. But often shall ye come together seeking the things which are befitting to your souls: for the whole time of your faith will not profit you, if ye be not made perfect in the last time. For in the last days false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate; for when lawlessness increaseth, they shall hate and shall persecute and betray one another, and then shall appear the world deceiver as Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands, and he shall do iniquitous things which have never yet come to pass since the beginning. Then shall the creation of men come into the fire of trial, and many shall be made to stumble and shall perish; but they that endure in their faith shall be saved from under the curse itself.."

Once again, here is an exhortation for Christians to be "perfect" in preparation for the time when "the world deceiver as Son of God" would appear. There is no mention of escape from that time, but instead Christians are exhorted to "endure in their faith" unto their final salvation.

From "Against Heresies," by Irenaeus, V, 26, 1; V 30, 4, perhaps A.D. 120 to 202:

"And they (ten kings) shall..give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight.."
"But he (John) indicates the number of the name (anti-Christ, 666) now, that when this man comes we may avoid him, being aware of who he is.."

From "Treatise On Christ And Antichrist," by Hippolytus, perhaps about A.D. 150 to 239:

"Now, concerning the tribulation of the persecution which is to fall upon the Church from the adversary, John also speaks thus: 'And I saw a great and wondrous sign in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars..And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath the place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days..And the dragon..saw and persecuted the woman..And to the woman were given two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.' That refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church.."

Who could honestly question the belief which is set forth in the above quotation? This excerpt shows clearly that Hippolytus expected the Church to suffer persecution under anti-Christ during the 3 1/2 years of the great tribulation.

From "On The Resurrection Of The Flesh," by Tertullian, Chapter XXV:

"In the Revelation of John, again, the order of these times is spread out to view, which 'the souls of the martyrs' are taught to wait for beneath the altar, whilst they earnestly pray to be avenged and judged: (taught, I say, to wait), in order that the world may first drink to the dregs the plagues that await it out of the vials of the angels..and that the beast Antichrist with his false prophet may wage war on the Church of God.."

Tertullian did not anticipate a convenient rapture away from martyrdom for the Church during the time when Antichrist would "wage war on the Church of God," but rather He anticipated that Christians would remain on earth until the world had first drunk "the dregs of the plagues that await it" with the pouring out of the vials at the close of the great tribulation.

From "Treatise XI, 13, by Cyprian:

"Who, then, does not with all his powers labour to attain to such a glory..that he may at once rejoice with Christ, that after earthly tortures and punishments he may receive divine rewards?..In persecutions, earth is shut up, but heaven is opened; Antichrist is threatening, but Christ is protecting; death is brought in, but immortality follows.."

Cyprian foresaw that "death" would be "brought in" for Christians when "Antichrist is threatening," but that "after earthly tortures..immortality follows" for those who persevere with all their powers through those sufferings.

In Conclusion

Apparently, the early Church in general expected a post-tribulational rapture and deliverance from their sufferings. They anticipated for Christians, a final time of testing, persecution, and martyrdom under the hand of anti-Christ, and then deliverance for the Church at Christ's return.

While the Bible must be the basis for our second coming doctrine, the passages quoted above from the writings of early Christians is favorable evidence in support of the interpretation that the Church will pass through the great tribulation. If those who most closely followed the apostles believed and taught that the Church would suffer persecution and martyrdom during the reign of the man of sin, then should we not carefully examine the current widely held view that the Church will be conveniently removed from the earth before that time of suffering begins?

See Appendix C for a discussion about the doctrinal origin of a pre-tribulation rapture.

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Appendix C

THE ORIGIN OF PRE-TRIB TEACHING

Apparently, the doctrine of a pre-tribulation rapture of the saints was never taught during the first 1800 years of the existence of the Church. David MacPherson, director of the Heart of America Bible Society did research into the origin of this doctrine, and the following information is taken mostly from his findings:

A Scottish girl name Margaret MacDonald claimed that, while she was living in Port Glasgow, Scotland in the spring of 1830, she had a revelation that Christians would be raptured before the Tribulation. This information is recorded in a book by Robert Norton, entitled "The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets in the Catholic Apostolic Church." (London, 1861)

Margaret MacDonald's revelation appears to be the origin of the pre-tribulation rapture teaching which heretofore was unknown in the Church for some 1800 years. Her own statement in Norton's book is said to cover three pages and to contain most of the major tenets of modern, pre-Trib teaching on the subject.

The Irvingite movement is said to have begun in the early 1800s, and Edward Irving, the leader of that group, had a part in some of the first propagation of the pre-Trib doctrine. He had been a minister of the Church of Scotland, but was expelled in 1830 after having written a booklet in which he asserted that Christ's human nature was sinful. His Irvingite group seems to have been known for their speaking in tongues and receiving supposedly inspired messages through prophets and prophetesses.

At a home meeting on April 30, 1831 a woman who later joined Irving's group gave forth a personal revelation which apparently echoed the earlier revelation of Margaret MacDonald. At any rate, Irving accepted the pre-Trib rapture concept which sprang from Margaret MacDonald's revelation and began to teach it.

It is said that Charles H. Spurgeon and George Mueller opposed this teaching. Nonetheless, the doctrine began to take root. It was taught at some prophetic meetings in Ireland attended by Plymouth Brethren organizer, John Darby, who adopted the belief. Darby's conversion to the doctrine may have come more directly from the Margaret MacDonald source, but Irving's teaching also influenced him. Irving and his teaching had an impact on other influential men as well, including C. I. Scofield, whose Bible popularized the pre-Trib doctrine.

According to David MacPherson, there is no historical evidence to show that anyone in the Church before 1830 ever believed in a split-event Second Coming or a rapture before the tribulation, and, he attributes the origin of the pre-Tribulation rapture doctrine to the revelation Margaret MacDonald claimed to have in that year. (See MacPherson's writings, "The Amazing Pre-Trib Origin," and "Why I Believe the Church Will Pass Through the Tribulation")

While this writer realizes that Divine revelation does indeed sometimes revive a truth which has been earlier known and lost by the Church, I also believe that all extra-Biblical

revelations should be weighed and scrutinized in the light of the scriptures, and especially when those revelations come from questionable sources.

The writer does not speak in tongues, as apparently the Irvingites did, and the writer does not adhere to the doctrine of eternal security which C. I. Scofield also taught in his Bible. These differences, of course, do not in themselves constitute a sound reason for rejecting any of their second coming doctrine. However, I do tend to question teachings which are put forth by those with whom I greatly differ in other fundamental areas. Nonetheless, in the final analysis, we should base our judgment of any doctrine upon the inerrant authority of God's Word.

Throughout the main body of this book, I have endeavored to demonstrate, from the Scriptures, the basis of the prophetic interpretations I have put forth. I leave the reader to judge for himself, or herself, as to the importance and relevance of the above historical information about the origin of the pre-Tribulation rapture teaching.

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Appendix D

THE ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY

Being Certain About What We Don't Know

I recently heard a quotation from Will Rogers which was close to the following: "It isn't what people don't know that's the problem. It's what they know for sure that isn't so."

Too often, an air of absolute certainty is manifested by prophetic interpreters. Too many, perhaps, are 100 percent sure that Christ's return is imminent while others are equally confident that various signs must be first fulfilled. However, it is not our professed certainty about the imminence or delay of Christ's return that demands our watchfulness, but rather it is our uncertainty in this regard.

At least three times in the gospels we find Jesus' admonition to "watch" coupled with the reason being because we "know not": Matt. 24:42; Mark 13:33,35. Every honest student of prophecy must admit to uncertainty about either the way or the day of fulfillment for various Second Coming prophecies.

All God-given prophecy will have an actual, genuine fulfillment at the appointed time. However, there is more than one way in which prophecy is fulfilled. It may be fulfilled materially, spiritually, or doubly (both materially and spiritually). Also, the day of a prophetic fulfillment may be in the past, present, or future. Apparently, God has purposely couched some Second Coming prophecy in language which veils from our minds an absolute certainty regarding the precise manner and time of its fulfillment. Be that as it may, the fact is no man is certain that Christ's return is either imminent or contingent upon the prior fulfillment of other prophecy.

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded." Rom. 3:27 Paul also wrote: "And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." 1 Cor. 8:2 One thing we really ought to know regarding Second Coming prophecy is that there are things we do not know.

We dare not boast of a certainty that Christ's return will be delayed: "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming..the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of." Matt. 24:48,50

On the other hand, none should boast of a certainty that Christ's Second Coming is imminent: "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13:33

Christ warned all, including those who think His coming will be delayed and those who think it is imminent: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:44 Again, it is not our certainty, but our uncertainty in regard to either the delay or the imminence of Christ's return which demands our watchfulness.

The Possibility Of Post-Tribulational Imminence

The writer leans toward the futuristic interpretation of Daniel's 70th week, and views the return of Christ and rapture of the saints as post-tribulational occurrences, so described consistently throughout the prophetic Scriptures. However, as strange as it may strike some, I also believe there is a possibility that the fulfillment of these dramatic events could happen today without violating those same Scriptures.

I suggest that there will be more Messianic prophecy fulfilled in the eternal estate than pre-millennarians imagine, and that there may be more Messianic prophecy already fulfilled in the Church age than any of us imagine.

There is a preterit interpretation of Daniel's 70th week which merits the serious consideration of prophetic students. Dr. Adam Clarke was one of those who interpret that Daniel's 70th week has already been historically fulfilled. He saw the confirmation of the covenant mentioned in Dan. 9:27 as the confirmation of the New Covenant: "This confirmation of the covenant must take in the ministry of John the Baptist with that of the Lord, comprehending the term of seven years, during the whole of which he might be said to confirm or ratify the new covenant with mankind...These seven years, added to the four hundred eighty three, complete the four hundred and ninety years..so that the whole of this prophecy..has been fulfilled to the very letter." (Clarke's Commentary, Vol IV, page 602)

Clarke interpreted "the prince that shall come" of Dan. 9:26 thus: "By the 'prince' Titus, the son of Vespasian, is plainly intended; and 'the people of that prince' are no other than the Romans, who, according to the prophecy, destroyed the sanctuary, hakkodesh, the holy place or temple, and, as a flood, swept away all.." (ibid. page 603)

In explanation of the cosmic signs which Jesus said would come "immediately after the tribulation of those days," Clarke quoted Lightfoot's interpretation of Matt. 24:29 as follows: "The

Jewish heaven shall perish, and the sun and moon of its glory and happiness shall be darkened -- brought to nothing.."

Clarke himself also saw in these cosmic signs a prophetic description of the complete destruction and dissolution of the Jewish state: "In prophetic language, great commotions upon earth are often represented under the notion of commotions and changes in the heavens...This general mode of describing these judgments leaves no room to doubt the propriety of its application in the present case." (Clarke's Commentary, Vol V, pages 232)

Again, while I lean toward the futuristic interpretation of the 70th week of Daniel, it also seems to this writer that Clarke's preterit interpretation of that week is within the realm of possibility. Further, it also appears possible that much of the book of Revelation has already been historically and spiritually fulfilled during the Church Age.

In Volume VI, page 1026, of Clarke's Commentary, the learned author wrote: "We have already observed that the beast is the Latin kingdom or empire; therefore, if this observation be correct, the Greek words signifying the Latin kingdom must have this number. (the number 666) The most concise method of expressing this among the Greeks was as follows.." Clarke then gave the Greek for "The Latin Kingdom" and displayed in his commentary a diagram showing how the numeric total for those letters was 666.

If the pre-Second Coming events in the book of Revelation and Daniel's 70th week have already been fulfilled, then Christ could come today in complete harmony with the multitude of scriptures which describe His return as a post-tribulational occurrence.

The Conclusion

In Ps. 74:9 we find these words: "We see not our signs..neither is there among us any that knoweth how long." The most adept prophetic scholar might at times, by human miscalculation, fail to see the past or present fulfillment of a sign, for now we "see through a glass darkly." None among us can predict with certainty "how long" it will be 'ere Christ returns.

This writer looks for the Second Coming of Christ and the rapture of the saints to be post-tribulational, but I also believe that these dramatic events could, at the same time, be imminent and could occur today. I leave the reader to his or her own conclusions in this regard. Whatever the case, our part is not to be certain in our minds concerning the imminence or delay of Christ's return, but rather it is to be ready in our hearts for His appearing, "that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at his coming." John 2:28

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THE END