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AS I SEE IT

By Duane V. Maxey

A Collection of 20 Articles
And Items On Various Topics

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CONTENTS

General Introduction

- 01 -- The Second-Coming Prophetic Scheme -- As I See It
- 02 -- Five Deductions From First John 3:2
- 03 -- The Israel Of God Shall Dwell Forever Alone
- 04 -- Christ Shall Remain In Heaven Until...
- 05 -- The World -- Out Of Whack And Back
- 06 -- The Consumption Determined Upon The Whole Earth
- 07 -- Heaven And Earth Shall Pass Away At Christ's Return
- 08 -- Margaret MacDonald And The Interesting Pre-Trib Origin
- 09 -- The Increasing Knowledge That Shall Forever Perish
- 10 -- Five Strange Things Christ Came To Do
- 11 -- We Are Not Islands Unto Ourselves
- 12 -- The Fish Had Bones -- Some Thoughts To Digest
- 13 -- No Remission Without Repentance
- 14 -- This Is That Generation
- 15 -- Never Before
- 16 -- If -- For The Child Of God
- 17 -- You're Gettin' Older If...
- 18 -- When It Is Time To Jump To A Conclusion
- 19 -- Losing One's First Love By Hating Sin To A Fault
- 20 -- Why Some Are Shirkers And Not Workers

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The reader will find "Introductions" to various articles in this collection, but I would like to herewith introduce the publication as a whole. It consists of 20 articles and items -- some articles along with some other quite brief items. The first 8 articles present some of my prophetic views and thoughts; the last 12 are a potpourri of articles and items on various subjects.

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01 -- THE SECOND-COMING PROPHETIC SCHEME -- AS I SEE IT

INTRODUCTION

"A man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still." It is an old saying, but still very true today. In presenting this article, I do not expect to persuade large numbers thereby to see things as do I. If you want to believe otherwise, you will. If you feel compelled to believe otherwise, you may. This article is simply an attempt on my part to present concisely the same views that I have more largely detailed in my book, "His Appearing and His Kingdom."

You can do three things with this article: (1) Ignore it; (2) Read it and disagree; or (3) Read it and agree with it in part or in whole. One thing you cannot do with it:-- debate its contents with me. So, please do not write me in detail, or even briefly, regarding why and how you and I don't see eye to eye on this subject. It is quite peripheral to the main line -- Second Blessing Holiness -- and I prefer to express my views on the subject without raising "a tempest in a tea-pot" over them.

Why raise the subject at all, then? Because it is what I believe, and to be honest, I do hope to convince some to accept these views -- but not at the expense of debate and alienation that will hinder the main purpose of Holiness Data Ministry. If you simply cannot refrain from making some dissenting remark, please make it nothing more than a simple statement of the fact that you disagree, coupled with, I hope, your affirmation of continued love for me and support of HDM. -- DVM

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I. WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE? -- THE ONLY SAFE GAUGE OF INTERPRETATION

Let me begin by stating that neither the late-discovery nor the antiquity of a prophetic interpretation disproves or proves it. Because an interpretation is hit upon in later centuries does not disprove it, and because an interpretation (such as Pre-Millennialism) dates back to antiquity does not prove its validity. Some of the most precious holiness truth was re-discovered by the Moravians and the Wesleys in a late century, and some of the most pernicious errors (among them Pantheism and Anti-nomianism) date back to the very earliest centuries of the Church. The one -- the only -- test for any doctrine is: "What saith the Scriptures?"

For that reason, I fear not to disagree with Pre-Tribulationism that was not heard of in the Church until 1830 when it was supposedly discovered by Margaret McDonald in Scotland, nor do I scruple to disagree with Pre-Millennialism though its roots date back to the earliest centuries. I do not perceive the former as false because it was supposedly revealed in 1830, nor do I accept the latter as true because it dates back to antiquity. I once worked with a devout, but deceived Mormon man, and the reason he gave me for not abandoning Mormonism was, in effect: It was good enough for my ancestors, and it is good enough for me!

Such prejudiced reasoning is sure to lead one astray. Every doctrine, including Pre-Tribulationism and Wesleyanism must stand or fall when measured by one criterion only -- the Word of God; and Pre-Millennialism or Amillennialism must stand or fall when examined by that one and only correct measuring stick.

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II. MY ABANDONMENT OF PRE-TRIBULATIONISM AS UNSCRIPTURAL

For years, I was taught, read, and preached the Pre-Tribulationist, Pre-Millennial scheme of Second Coming prophecy -- but deep down inside there were questions in my mind about the validity of these teachings, things which appeared to me as honestly irreconcilable with some quite plain statements in the Bible. So, in about 1974, I decided to study into these matters for myself and embarked upon some immediate and concentrated study which to begin with lasted perhaps 3-6 months and involved comparing Scripture with Scripture, as well as delving into a number of books at a Seminary Library or two in Portland, Oregon, where I was then pastoring.

Since I have presented my views extensively in my book, "His Appearing and His Kingdom," hdm0124, I will not go into detail here, but rather present quite concisely the steps and results in my arrival at my present views on the subject. Please do not take it that the brief statements made in this short article constitute the whole, or even the greatest part of my reasons for adopting the views which I now hold. For the much more detailed account, please read hdm0124, "His Appearing and His Kingdom," that appears on the HDM CD.

(1) THE FOUR SERIES OF SEVENS IN REVELATION ARE NOT END TO END -- One of the first conclusions at which I arrived, before later discovering that another student of eschatology had hit upon the same thing, is that the four series of sevens in Revelation -- viz. The 7 Churches, The 7 Seals, The 7 Trumpets, and the 7 Vials -- should not be interpreted as in a consecutive, chronological order.

We live the weeks of our lives one after the other:-- days 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 are repeatedly preceded and followed by another such, end to end series thus: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 -- 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 -- 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 -- 1-2-3-4-5-6-7. Thus, it is only natural that when we read the four series of 7s in the Book of Revelation one after another, we are inclined to take them as in their chronological sequence: First, The 7 Churches -- Second, The 7 Seals -- Third, The 7 Trumpets -- and Fourth, The 7 Vials.

However, it struck me, in reading Revelation that the 7th in each of these 4 series all had a commonality to them -- things strikingly similar to those things occurring in each of the other 7s. It was then, after studying this fact that I hit upon an interpretation of these that I had never read, nor heard, before:-- i. e., that the 7th in each of these series spoke of the exact same time, but that the 1st of each of the series began at progressively different times, roughly thus [please bear in mind that the placement of these numbers may be altered in your email.]:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7 -- CHURCHES
1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7 -- SEALS
1---2---3---4---5---6---7 -- TRUMPETS
1-2-3-4-5-6-7 -- VIALS

Thus, as I perceive the correct interpretation of the 4 series of 7s in Revelation, each has a different time of beginning (the 7 Churches spanning from the beginning of the Church Age to the Day of the Lord), but each series has a common 7th, ending at the same time (on the Day of the Lord). See in the graphics folder of the HDM CD hdm0124b.jpg.

For a number of reasons, I interpret that the Church shall pass through the 7-year Tribulation, rather than be wafted off to heaven, spared from its sufferings and martyrdoms; and thus, the time of the 7th Church extends through the Tribulation into The Day of the Lord, and the 7th Seal, 7th Trumpet, and 7th Vial also usher in The Day of the Lord.

Another important discovery I made is that the cosmic signs frequently mentioned in both Old and New Testament prophecy DIVIDE the Tribulation from the following Day of the Lord, thus: THE 7-YEAR TRIBULATION -- THE COSMIC SIGNS -- THE DAY OF THE LORD. Therefore, it is erroneous to say that the Tribulation is part of The Day of the Lord. See in the graphics folder, hdm0124a.jpg -- and note the sequence given by Christ in Matthew 24:29-30 -- "Immediately [1. AFTER THE TRIBULATION] of those days [2. SHALL THE SUN BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON SHALL NOT GIVE HER LIGHT, AND THE STARS SHALL FALL FROM HEAVEN... [3. THEN... THEY SHALL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY."

A number of other discoveries also played a great part in my abandonment of Pre-Tribulationism, among them being that there is absolutely nothing in the meaning of the Greek words Parousia, Apokalupsis, and Epiphany to support the interpretation that the Parousia refers to a Secret Rapture and that Apokalupsis and Epiphany refer to the Revelation of Christ, supposed to take place 7 years after the Secret Parousia. Indeed, all three of these Greek words are used interchangeably, so much so that any honest student of eschatology (with no prejudiced ax to grind) must conclude that the Parousia, Apokalupsis, and Epiphany all speak of the one and only Return of Christ -- at which time the saints will be resurrected and raptured to meet Christ in the air, at which same time also the August Person of Christ will be Revealed (apokalupsis) to all, in the blazing splendor of His outshining Epiphany!

Furthermore, it is clear from an honest study of all passages where Parousia, Apokalupsis, and Epiphany are used, that CHRISTIANS SHALL NOT BE RAPTURED UNTIL THE TIME WHEN ALL THREE OF THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE -- Christ's Parousia (Coming), His

Apokalupsis (Revelation), and His Epiphany (Outshining Glory) being merely different aspects of the same awesome event -- Christ's Second Coming. Taken straightforwardly, this is what the entire New Testament sets forth, and it is only when one has adopted the supposed revelation of a Split-Second-Coming -- the Rapture 7 years before the Revelation -- that one is forced to make a distinction between the time of the Parousia and the time of the Revelation and Epiphany, which obviously occur at the same time, as different expressions of the one, the same, and the only Second Coming of Christ.

As I see it, some folks need to re-read what Jesus said in John 14:3 -- "I will come AGAIN." He did not say, "I will come AGAIN AND AGAIN." He meant what he said. He was never guilty of duplicity. Furthermore, the straightforward, unmuddled and unaltered chronology of Christ for Second Coming events as set forth in Matthew 25-26 places the Tribulation First, The Cosmic Signs Next, The Second Coming and Rapture next, The Marriage Supper Next, The General Judgment immediately after this, and finally the Eternal Rewards of the Righteous and of the Wicked. Did Jesus relate these out of order? I trow not! His Olivet Discourse is a simple and straightforward setting forth of Second Coming events in the exact order in which they shall occur -- and THE RAPTURE FOLLOWS (DOES NOT PRECEDE) THE TRIBULATION!

Revelation 19:10 declares that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," and I believe that in His Olivet Discourse He set forth the succession of events at His Second Coming in such a simple and straightforward manner, that even a child (unprejudiced by other teaching) can trace them in their unaltered and proper order.

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III. MY ABANDONMENT OF PRE-MILLENNIALISM

My abandonment of Pre-Millennialism did not come until about 10 years after I had abandoned Pre-Triblational teachings, and there were a number of Scriptures that led me to do this. Once again, I refer the student who wishes to examine all of this more thoroughly to Part II of "His Appearing and His Kingdom," hdm0124.

A REAL EYE-OPENER TO ME -- As I studied the matter of Pre-Millennialism, which interprets that THE RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS shall precede by 1000 years THE RESURRECTION OF THE WICKED -- I came upon a statement of Jesus that knocks that interpretation in the head so strongly that it should make any honest believer in Pre-Millennialism sit up and take notice!

Matthew 26:57 -- "And THEY THAT HAD LAID HOLD ON JESUS LED HIM AWAY TO CAIAPHAS the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.... 62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. 64 JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM, [TO THE WICKED CAIAPHAS] Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, HEREAFTER SHALL YE SEE THE SON OF MAN sitting on the right hand of power, and COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN."

ANSWER ME THIS: -- As Pre-Millennialists teach, IF THE WICKED CAIAPHAS IS RESURRECTED 1000 YEARS AFTER THE RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS AT CHRIST'S SECOND COMING IN THE CLOUDS -- HOW COULD CAIAPHAS POSSIBLY SEE CHRIST COMING IN THE CLOUDS?????? -- THAT COMING HAVING OCCURRED 1000 YEARS PRIOR TO CAIAPHAS' RESURRECTION??????

None who believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and in the infallible testimony of Christ, could possibly imagine that Christ slipped here, and said something prophetically that could not possibly occur. But, one who clings to the idea of the resurrection of the wicked 1000 years after the resurrection of the righteous is forced to reconcile Jesus' statement here in some way -- perhaps in one of the following ways:

(1) When Jesus told the wicked Caiaphas that he would see Him "coming in the clouds of heaven" he was referring to some other "coming in the clouds" rather than to His "coming in the clouds" at the time of His Second Coming -- possible, perhaps, but I think that the validity of such an interpretation is highly unlikely! -- Or --

(2) When Jesus told Caiaphas that he would see Him "coming in the clouds of heaven," Christ was recognizing Caiaphas as a deceived, but righteous man, who would be resurrected with the righteous at the time of His Second "coming in the clouds of heaven." This, I believe, is even less likely to be so! -- Or --

(3) When Jesus told Caiaphas that he would see Him "coming in the clouds of heaven," Christ was foreseeing the fact that even though Caiaphas was wicked at that time, he would later before his death be converted, and thus would be resurrected with the righteous and with them see Christ "coming in the clouds of heaven" -- another possibility which I think to be very unlikely!

MY OWN CONCLUSIONS RELATIVE TO JESUS' STATEMENT IN MATTHEW 26:64 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(1) Jesus knew exactly what He was saying, and made no slip.

(2) Jesus did not foresee in any case that Caiaphas would be resurrected among the Just. Instead, Jesus was warning this very religious, but wicked man, that at the time of His Return Caiaphas would be resurrected among the wicked, all of whom shall see Christ "coming in the clouds of heaven," much to their shock and chagrin!

(3) Jesus' statement clearly reveals that the resurrection of the wicked will follow on the heels of the resurrection and rapture of the righteous so quickly that the wicked, too, will see Christ's August presence as He is "coming in the clouds" -- thus negating all possibility of 1000 years separating the resurrection of the righteous from that of the wicked.

(4) AS I SEE IT THEN, REVELATION 20:5, ALONG WITH THE WHOLE OF REVELATION 20 MUST BE INTERPRETED SO AS TO CORRESPOND WITH JESUS' OWN WORDS. Indeed, when Revelation 20 is interpreted so that the completion of the 1000 years,

rather than their commencement, occurs at the Return of Christ, there can be seen a beautiful harmony, not only with Jesus' statement in Matthew 26:64, but a beautiful harmony as well with all of the rest of both O. T. and N. T. Second Coming Prophecy! [SEE HDM0124.TXT AND CHARTS HDM0124AJPG -- HDM0124LJPG in support of my view of the Millennium as Synonymous with The Church Age, both concluding on The Day of the Lord, and followed immediately by the Judgment of All and the Reward of All -- in Eternity.]

The most convincing thing to most Pre-Millennialists of the supposed validity of this ancient teaching is that taken literally, Revelation 20 seems to demand that the 1000 years shall FOLLOW the Return of Christ and the Resurrection of the Just. I allow that the Resurrection of the Just shall precede that of the Wicked, but not that the time between these two resurrections is separated by a 1000 year period of time following Christ's return. Make Revelation 20 bow to the vast majority of other prophetic statements in the Bible (including that of Jesus in Matthew 26:64), and we can see the Millennium as taking place in the Church Age, during which time the Righteous are spiritually resurrected and then bodily resurrected at its close when Christ Returns, and their resurrection is immediately followed by the resurrection of the wicked, in such rapid succession that wicked, old Caiaphas will see Jesus "coming in the clouds."

(5) JESUS' STATEMENT IN MATTHEW 26:64 HARMONIZES WITH HIS STATEMENT IN JOHN 5:28-29 WHICH REVEALS ONE GENERAL TIME OF RESURRECTION UNTO TWO DIFFERENT DESTINIES.

Read closely John 5:28-29 [caps and bracketed comments mine] "Marvel not at this: for the HOUR [NOT MILLENNIUM] is coming, in the which ALL [BOTH THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED] that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 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."

Jesus does not here speak of the resurrection of the wicked following that of the righteous by 1000 years! He speaks, rather of the resurrection of ALL as taking place in an HOUR! Yes, the Bible does say in 2 Peter 3:8 that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years," but nowhere do we find AN HOUR SPOKEN OF AS EQUAL TO 1000 YEARS!

Does not candor and honest interpretation here demand the interpretation that ALL are going to be resurrected in an AWESOME HOUR -- THAT HOUR BEING THE HOUR OF CHRIST'S RETURN?!! The resurrection of the Wicked will follow so quickly that of the Righteous that all of the Wicked, including Caiaphas will see Jesus "coming in the clouds of heaven." THIS IS THE WAY I SEE IT!

* * *

III. ETERNITY -- NOT 1007 MORE YEARS ON THIS EARTH -- FOLLOWS CHRIST'S RETURN

With Pre-Tribulationism and Pre-Millennialism laid aside as erroneous, even though multitudes have, and still do, believe in them, a number of what I consider to be palpable

absurdities and contradictions are all swept aside, and the purity, integrity, and eternity of Christ's Messianic Kingdom are both clarified and magnified.

Amillennialism (I prefer to call my views "The Millennium in the Church Age) eliminates all of the following:

(1) The idea of a Second Chance for those who miss the Rapture.

(2) The idea of a Second Chance for people living in an extension of 1000 more years on this present earth (supposedly partially and temporarily patched up).

(3) The idea of people being saved during the Millennium By Sight (the visible sight of the Glorified Christ and His Saints and Angels), while all others who were ever saved before them were saved and walked "by faith and not by sight."

(4) The idea of Christ having 3 Kingdoms: First, a Spiritual Kingdom now, made up of only those really born again and sanctified wholly; Second, an Earthly Kingdom populated by both glorified and holy saints, angels, and Christ, along with flesh and blood citizens who are compelled to obey, though unregenerate, unsanctified, and unhappy with their King!; and Third, a Heavenly Kingdom, made up once again of only the regenerate and purified saints with Christ and His Holy angels. **THE VERY IDEA OF SUCH AN INTERIM KINGDOM STRIKES ME AS NOT ONLY ABSURD, BUT ALSO AS UNEQUAL AND UNSCRIPTURAL!** In Ezekiel 18:29, God asked of Israel, "are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?" As I see it, the idea of an earthly Messianic Kingdom for 1000 years with the muddled and unequal mixtures taught by its advocates would bring about a violation of both the equity of God and the integrity of numerous Scriptures!

(5) Finally, **DOING AWAY WITH THE NOTION OF CHRIST'S MESSIANIC KINGDOM EVER BEING LOCATED ON THIS EARTH ELIMINATES THE CONTRADICTION OF A NUMBER OF SCRIPTURES THAT DENY SUCH A CONCEPT -- among them, the following:**

PAUL'S DECLARATION THAT EARTHLY JERUSALEM HAS BEEN CAST OUT! -- In Galatians 4:22-30 -- (A) Paul likens SARAH AND ISAAC TO HEAVENLY JERUSALEM AND SPIRITUAL ISRAEL, and (B) he likens HAGAR AND ISHAMEL TO EARTHLY JERUSALEM AND FLESH AND BLOOD ISRAEL.

Now get this! -- HE GOES ON TO SAY THAT EARTHLY JERUSALEM AND FLESH AND BLOOD ISRAEL ARE "CAST OUT"!!! -- Gal. 4:30 "Nevertheless what saith the scripture? **CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN [= CAST OUT EARTHLY JERUSALEM, THE JERUSALEM THAT NOW IS] -- AND HER SON [= CAST OUT FLESH AND BLOOD ISRAEL AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD]: for the son of the bondwoman SHALL NOT BE HEIR with the son of the freewoman."**

Yes indeed, just as it is prophesied in Zech. 14:4, Christ's feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, but as I see it this Divine "touch-down" shall occur just before the collapse of the entire

universe, and Christ's THRONE SHALL NOT BE ANYWHERE, ANYTIME IN THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD, FOR EVEN ONE DAY, LET ALONE FOR 1000 YEARS!

Why? Because EARTHLY JERUSALEM HAS BEEN ETERNALLY CAST OUT! and because KINGS SIT ON THEIR THRONE TO REIGN, AND NOT ON THEIR FOOTSTOOL.

What earthly monarch have you ever seen sitting on his footstool to reign!!! Think you, then, that THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS IS GOING TO SIT ON HIS FOOTSTOOL TO REIGN FOR 1 SECOND, LET ALONE FOR 1000 YEARS IN SUCH AN UNDIGNIFIED POSITION!!

What am I talking about? Answer: This Scripture: Isa. 66:1 "Thus saith the Lord, The HEAVEN IS MY THRONE, and the EARTH IS MY FOOTSTOOL: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?"

Should we not see that it is preposterous to imagine that the King of Kings is going to sit here on earth, His footstool, while reigning in his Messianic Kingdom!!! -- and especially in "a house built for Him by human hands!" -- even if it were to be renovated by His own miraculous touch. NO FRIENDS -- THE KING IS GOING TO SIT ON HIS THRONE -- IN HEAVEN -- IN THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.

It seems to me that the palpable absurdities and unScriptural contradictions of Pre-Tribulationism and Pre-Millennialism are so numerous that any honest, Spirit-inspired, Bible-Believing Christian must reject them! Is it not far more consistent with good exegesis to place a spiritual, but non-literal interpretation on Revelation 20 so as to reconcile it with the overwhelming preponderance of Scriptures telling us that at Christ's Return ALL shall be resurrected in that awesome Hour, Time shall end, the Judgment shall occur, and Eternity shall begin, none having a second chance, and each going into his or her Divinely sentenced Eternal Abode? I THINK IT IS!

FINALLY -- IN THEIR HEART OF HEARTS, PRE-TRIBULATIONISTS AND PRE-MILLENNIALISTS DON'T REALLY BELIEVE THEY ARE GOING TO THE EARTHLY JERUSALEM WHEN THEY DIE!

Listen to Pre-Millennial Saints Sing: "I am going to a City, where the roses never fade!" -- not, "I am going to the Earthly Jerusalem for 1000 years"! The very hope, the very songs, the very testimonies, of both living and dying saints are all focused on THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM -- AND RIGHTLY SO!

Throughout the New Testament, we see that the inheritance and the goal of Christians has nothing to do with this earth, either before or after the Return of Christ. HERE THE CHRISTIAN HAS "NO CONTINUING CITY" BUT SEEKS "ONE TO COME" (Heb 13:14).

It is written of Abraham that "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," and of those who follow in his footsteps it is written: "God is not ashamed to

be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:10, 16). What? and Where? is that PREPARED CITY? -- YOU KNOW:-- IT IS NEW JERUSALEM -- IN HEAVEN!

DO YOU THINK that after all God's Word has recorded and promised regarding the ushering of His People into the Heavenly Jerusalem, THAT CHRIST IS GOING TO BRING HIS SAINTS INTO AN EARTHLY CITY FOR EVEN 1 DAY? -- LET ALONE FOR 365,000 DAYS OF A CONTINUATION OF THIS PRESENT WORLD!!!!??? Abraham looked for the New Jerusalem! Is Christ going to drag him back to the earthly Jerusalem for 1000 years!! -- I trow not!

THE GREAT SHAKING AT CHRIST'S RETURN "WHEN THE STARS BEGIN TO FALL" is not going to RESTRUCTURE this old world for 1000 years, it is going to REMOVE IT FOREVER AS NOW CONSTITUTED!

IT IS THUS WRITTEN: "Now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 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. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:26-29).

As I see it, the Great Shaking that ushers in The Day of the Lord at Jesus' Return shall remove this world and be followed in quick succession after the Judgment by the saints' reception and entrance into Christ's Eternal "KINGDOM THAT CANNOT BE MOVED." Conversely, and also in quick succession following the Judgment, sinners shall also be placed in an abode THAT CANNOT BE MOVED -- not a place of eternal felicity, however, but that awful place of eternal punishment.

As I see it, the glorified saints will no more spend 1000 years on this earth before THEY go to heaven than will condemned sinners spend 1000 years in a mythical purgatory before THEY go to heaven! NOBODY IS GOING ANYWHERE TEMPORARILY AFTER CHRIST'S RETURN -- EXCEPT TO THE JUDGMENT. At the Return of Christ, All shall be resurrected, All shall be brought into Judgment, and THEN EVERYONE SHALL GO "TO HIS LONG HOME" (Ecclesiastes 12:5) -- NEVER TO DEPART FROM THENCE -- NO, NOT AFTER 1000 YEARS, NOR EVEN AFTER ONE MILLION THOUSAND YEARS!

Were Edgar Allen Poe's mythical raven to be perched above the locked door of dark damnation, his answer to every pleading inquiry about when that door shall be once more opened would forever be -- NEVERMORE!

Were the joyous saint, after a million years in glory to inquire, "When shall it all END?" likewise, the answer would forever be -- NEVERMORE!

"I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the beginning" (1 Chronicles 17:9). This Scripture shall have its endless fulfillment to

the Church, Spiritual Israel, in the ETERNAL MESSIANIC KINGDOM OF CHRIST -- WORLD WITHOUT END!

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02 -- FIVE DEDUCTIONS FROM FIRST JOHN 3:2

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."

INTRODUCTION

"Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." Even though in the Incarnate Christ, "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16), much about His coming Revelation and the great "Change" that shall take place in the bodies of those resurrected at His Return remains veiled behind a cloak of mystery. We can compare Scripture with Scripture and endeavor to make some intelligent deductions from them, but absolute certainty about many "things to come" shall remain unattainable until they are revealed on The Day of the Lord.

Candidly, therefore, I must admit that some of my Deductions in this article are speculative, and may be erroneous. If even the great apostle Paul, after having unspeakable things revealed to him in to the third heaven, yet had to confess that he "saw through a glass darkly" and still had to admit, "now I know in part" (1 Cor. 13:9, 12), then it is certain that no inquisitive student of the Bible today is going to see all clearly and know all perfectly about those future things that are Divinely veiled until the God-ordained time of their revelation.

At best, we can but peek and ponder, and try to make some sensible deductions. Yours may differ from mine, and they may be more accurate than mine, but having long pondered this subject, I now set forth some of my own Deductions. I shall not call them all Conclusions, for some of my thoughts on this subject are not at all "set in concrete," and I reserve the right to change my mind if I ever come to believe that this or that Deduction is wrong.

I will say that if one's deductions on this subject are lucid and correct, they probably will correspond with many other correct interpretations of Second Coming Prophecy and those things that shall be revealed on the Day of Christ.

Now, with this introduction and explanation, I shall set forth some of my own Deductions relative to 1 John 3:2, and particularly to that portion of the verse which says, "... we SHALL SEE Him as he IS."

* * *

DEDUCTION 01 -- NOBODY HAS YET SEEN CHRIST AS HE "IS" -- Yes, in the Person of Jesus, "God was manifest in the flesh" during Christ's earthly ministry, and so much so that He could truthfully proclaim, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Furthermore, Christ was seen repeatedly during 40 days on earth after His resurrection, and in one instance he stated: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39).

Thus, during His flesh and blood life, and even following His resurrection and at His ascension, Christ was seen. But, it is my deduction that EVEN DURING HIS POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES, NONE WHO SAW HIM -- SAW HIM AS HE "IS" -- "BECAUSE THAT JESUS WAS NOT YET GLORIFIED" (John 7:39) into the full effulgence of His unveiled glory "AS HE IS," as He has been since his Ascension, and as He ever shall be henceforth forevermore!

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DEDUCTION 02 -- GOD IS INVISIBLE FOR A REASON -- Jesus Himself indicated that His incarnate manifestation of God in the flesh did not mean "that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father" (John 6:46). The manifestation of God in the Man Christ Jesus was not the full, unveiled revelation of the invisible God.

While "the invisible things of Him... are clearly seen .. from the creation of the world" (Rom. 1:20) so that all are "without excuse" for disbelieving in God's existence, no man has ever seen God but the God-Man, Christ Jesus. Hebrews 11:27 tells us that by faith Moses "forsook Egypt" and "endured, as seeing him who is invisible," but even Moses was not allowed to ever look upon the face of God.

When Moses besought the Lord, requesting, "show me Thy Glory" (Exo. 33:18), God's reply was: "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exo. 33:20). You know the rest of the story: Moses was given but a glimpse of God's back, and after the effulgent glory from even that little back-side glimpse "when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him" (Exo. 34:30).

Yes, Christ Jesus is "the Image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), and during His Incarnate Life on earth, during his Post-Resurrection Appearances, and at His Ascension, it is true that He was seen -- but, I still maintain that in none of those times did He manifest the full, unveiled effulgence of Himself as He NOW IS, "because that Jesus was not yet glorified" into that fullness of His glory until He disappeared from human view into Heaven.

Even after seeing and handling his beloved "God, manifest in the flesh," the apostle John twice declares: "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12). Thus, even after every earthly appearance from Christ's birth to His ascension, no human being ever saw the invisible God -- and none yet has ever SEEN JESUS AS HE "IS" -- while He sits at the right hand of the Father as "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God," to Whom "be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim. 1:17). The martyr Stephen's view of Him might be considered to be an exception to this, but more likely it was a vision only, and similar to that which many saints have had of Christ across the centuries. To this very hour, "no man hath seen God at any time," and, there is a reason why no man has ever yet seen Jesus as He IS, which takes me to my next Deduction.

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DEDUCTION 03 -- NO MAN HAS SEEN JESUS AS HE "IS" BECAUSE NO MAN COULD THUS SEE HIM AND STILL LIVE! -- When God told Moses, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exo. 33:20), He stated the case exactly as it is regarding any human being seeing Jesus as He IS -- no flesh and blood human being could look upon the unshielded, unveiled, and blazing splendor of His GLORY and survive that vision!

In order to knock him down off of his high-horse of pride and humble him into the dust of utter repentance, Christ manifested a bit of his glory to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road. After his conversion Paul testified: "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" (Acts 26:13). You know the result: Saul was cast to the ground, blinded for several days, and seems to have suffered from poor eyesight the rest of his life.

From His birth to the moment at which "a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9), every manifestation of Christ was veiled -- was a manifestation of God as Man in the flesh -- but NEVER AGAIN WILL CHRIST BE MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH WITH HIS GLORY VEILED -- NEVER AGAIN WILL IT BE POSSIBLE FOR FLESH AND BLOOD HUMAN BEINGS TO VIEW HIM AND STILL LIVE! Did not Paul say as much when he told those who had known Christ on earth, "yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Cor. 5:16). This leads me to the next Deduction.

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DEDUCTION 04 -- THEREFORE, NON-GLORIFIED, FLESH AND BLOOD HUMAN BEINGS WILL NEVER AT ANY TIME, ANYWHERE, DWELL IN CHRIST'S MESSIANIC KINGDOM!

When Paul wrote: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption... but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:50-51), I believe He negated all possibility of a supposed Messianic Kingdom of Christ on this earth for 1000 years that is populated with flesh and blood human beings, along with glorified saints, angels, and the unveiled splendor of GOD'S GLORY IN CHRIST "AS HE IS"!

During Old Testament times, once "when the priests were come out of the holy place," a manifestation of Christ's glory in the form of a "cloud filled the house of the Lord," and so powerful was even that cloudy manifestation "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" (1 Kings 8:10-11).

If God's own ministers were knocked down during O.T. times by Christ's cloudy glory, and an impenitent Saul of Tarsus was blinded by one little beam of Jesus' Glory "as He IS," HOW IN THIS WORLD DO SOME FOLKS THINK THAT WICKED AND HOSTILE ENEMIES OF CHRIST ARE GOING TO SURVIVE THE UNSHIELDED SPLendor OF HIS GLORY "AS HE

IS" AT HIS SECOND COMING -- AND LIVE IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS BLAZING GLORY FOR 1000 YEARS!???

"As He IS," Christ is "the BRIGHTNESS of His [GOD'S] GLORY" (Heb. 1:3), and when "all the tribes of the earth... shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and GREAT GLORY" (Mat. 24:30), the wicked among them "the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall DESTROY WITH THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS COMING" (2 Thess. 2:8).

Revelation 1:7 says that Christ "cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him," but that unveiled manifestation of the GREAT GLORY OF JESUS AS HE IS at the Last Trump is going to do four things: (1) Snuff out all flesh and blood life on earth; (2) Raise all of the Dead, and (3) "Change" all of the saints into their glorified bodies, made capable of seeing, joining Christ in the air, and dwelling with Him forever; and (d) "Change" all of the wicked into their damnation bodies, capable of seeing Christ "as He IS," and facing Him at the Judgment.

It is my belief that all unconverted flesh and blood people will perish at the manifestation of Christ "as He IS" when He Returns, and I think that this is borne out in the following Scripture:

"Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil" (Isa. 33:14-15).

This Scripture used to puzzle me: it sounded like it was saying that Christians were going to be the ones who were going to dwell in the "everlasting burnings" of the Lake of Fire. In fact, it says quite the opposite. I think that the NIV brings out the true meaning of this verse better, and in reading it below, bear in mind that the KJV of Hebrews 12:29 declares: "For our God is a consuming fire." Now, with this in mind, read the following from the NIV translation of Isaiah 33:14-15:

"Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?" [In other words, Who can dwell in the blazing splendor of Christ's Glory? -- Answer:] He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil."

DO YOU GET THE PICTURE?: -- ONLY THOSE WHO ARE RIGHT WITH GOD ARE GOING TO DWELL IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST "AS HE IS" -- "A CONSUMING FIRE" -- AT AND AFTER HIS RETURN!!!

As I see it, friends, the correct interpretation of the consequences of all seeing Jesus "as He IS" at the time of His Second Coming Revelation is: NONE OF THE WICKED WILL FOR ONE DAY, LET ALONE ONE THOUSAND YEARS, DWELL IN THE PRESENCE OF HIM WHO IS "A CONSUMING FIRE"! The lives of all of the flesh and blood wicked will be snuffed out at His Return; then all of the wicked will be resurrected immediately following the resurrection and

rapture of the saints and all of the wicked will then be given "changed," damnation bodies capable of seeing and facing Him at the Judgment, but they shall not dwell with Him one second! -- anytime, anywhere!!!

THEY ONLY SHALL DWELL WITH JESUS, THE "CONSUMING FIRE" AS HE IS, WHO ARE RIGHTEOUS AND CHANGED INTO HIS LIKENESS: 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." GLORIFIED SAINTS, AND NONE OTHER, SHALL DWELL WITH CHRIST IN HIS ETERNAL, MESSIANIC KINGDOM, WORLD WITHOUT END!

The Glory of Christ "as He IS" will be only one of two things at His Revelation: (1) "A Consuming Fire" to the lost, landing them after the Judgment into the Lake of Fire, or (2) After the Judgment, "An Illuminating Light" to the saved in the Holy City: "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).

On earth, after His Peniel Experience, Jacob said: "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen. 32:30). On this occasion, no doubt the glory of Christ was veiled, but, along with Jacob, those who have been victorious at their Spiritual Peniel, shall "see HIM FACE TO FACE" in all of his Glory "as He IS," and still live -- yea, live forever in His presence! "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8) -- spiritually now, and then face to face, forever! Perfect, and perfected Job shall be among them, and his claim: "though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:26), shall have its fulfillment in his glorified body.

Conversely, Balaam's prophecy in 24:17 will apparently be fulfilled in quite the opposite way: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh.." When Balaam sees Jesus "as He IS," it will not be with the result of bringing him "nigh" into the saving presence of Him Who is "A Consuming Fire," but rather, it will result in his being brought to the Judgment and then cast eternally into the Lake of Fire.

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DEDUCTION 05 -- THE SPIRITUAL "BODY THAT SHALL BE" WILL BE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE FLESH AND BLOOD HUMAN BODY

In the following verses, Paul dealt with the question of what kind of body the dead will have when they are resurrected:

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? 1 Cor 15:36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: 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: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body" (1 Cor. 15:35-38).

Now, I could be wrong here, but I DOUBT THAT JESUS HAS EVER BEEN SEEN IN THE FORM OF "THAT BODY THAT SHALL BE" SEEN AS HIS AT HIS RETURN. It seems to me that John's statement, "we shall see Him as He IS," may also infer that none have ever seen the shape and substance of Jesus' spiritual body. It was necessary for Him to appear after his resurrection in the same shape and form he had during His earthly ministry, because if He had not done so none would have recognized and believed that it was He.

At His Return, all will see Him "as He IS" in his spiritual body, and His saints will be made "like him," but just what form or shape the spiritual body shall have, we know not now. John said, "it DOETH NOT YET APPEAR what we shall be," and this intrigues me. The body that is "resurrected" from a "bare grain" that is sown is larger, and different in shape, but has within it more "grains" like that from which it sprang. Whatever shape "that body that shall be" has, we can be sure that at least the "changed" bodies of all will be very different from flesh and blood bodies, and different in some striking ways -- both for good to the saved and for ill to the lost.

The spiritual nature of the "grain" that is sown at physical death will determine what kind of "changed" body is received at the resurrection: "it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body" (1 Cor 15:38). No doubt the damnation body of the lost will be similar to that of lost Lucifer, while the body of the saved will be like that of the Savior.

To the saints, Paul wrote: "As we have borne the image of the earthy [First Adam], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [Second Adam]. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor 15:49-51).

In Isaiah 64:4, the prophet spoke of "the mystery of Godliness" long before Christ came: "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him."

In 1 Corinthians 2:9, Paul echoed Isaiah's remarks: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," and he added in the next verse: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."

It is clear, however, that Paul was not thereby declaring that everything about the future has been revealed by the Spirit, for 11 chapters later, in 1 Cor 13:12, he wrote: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Are my views right on all of these things? Time will not tell, but Eternity shall! In the meantime, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5), but let none insist that all others agree with his or her views on things which are now seen only "through a glass darkly."

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03 -- THE ISRAEL OF GOD SHALL DWELL FOREVER ALONE

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" (Gal. 6:15-16).

"For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, THE PEOPLE SHALL DWELL ALONE, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23:9).

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CONTENTS

A -- Jesus-Israel, Who "Will Rule As God"

B -- The Kingdom Taken From Earthly, Flesh-And-Blood Israel

C -- The Kingdom Given To Spiritual Israel, "The Israel Of God."

D -- Most Of The Jews Were Angered At The "Foolish Nation" -- Spiritual Israel

E -- Nevertheless, A Remnant Joined Spiritual Israel

F -- A Final Remnant Of Believing Jews Will Also Join Spiritual Israel

G -- The Israel Of God In The Eternal, Messianic Kingdom

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A -- JESUS-ISRAEL, WHO "WILL RULE AS GOD"

In an article titled, "The Hidden Significance of the Name Israel" (Article 21 of hdm0123, my publication, "Articles of Faith"), I endeavored to show my readers that ISRAEL, THE DIVINE PERSON, IS NONE OTHER THAN JESUS, THE SON OF GOD. I refer the reader of this article first to that article as foundational to this article. Jacob-Israel had 12 sons from whom sprang the earthly nation; Israel. Jesus-Israel had 12 apostles (excluding Judas and including Paul) from whom sprang Spiritual Israel, "the Israel of God." The very meaning of the name Israel, "He will rule as God," indicates that it was God's Eternal purpose that Jesus-Israel "rule as God," and I assert that it was always God's Eternal purpose that the "Israel of God," i. e., Spiritual Israel, be that nation to whom, and through whom, the glowing and golden promises shall be fulfilled in Christ's Everlasting Messianic Kingdom.

"The Kingdom is the Lord's" (Psa. 22:28) -- it belongs to Jesus-Israel, and in a very real sense it never did belong to anyone but HIM. When the unsanctified disciples asked Jesus before His Ascension, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" ironically, THEY WERE TALKING TO ISRAEL HIMSELF, TO WHOM THE KINGDOM BELONGS! He never gave His Kingdom to anyone, nor does it need to be "restored" to Him. However, the Day of the Lord fast approaches when the "at the name of Jesus every knee sh[all] bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue sh[all] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11). HE LIVES! -- and "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Romans 14:11). The Assembled Universe at the Judgment shall acknowledge Jesus-Israel as the rightful and eternal

Owner and Ruler of THE KINGDOM, and "in His times He shall show, WHO IS the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15)!

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B -- THE KINGDOM TAKEN FROM EARTHLY, FLESH-AND-BLOOD ISRAEL

In another sense, the Kingdom belongs to "the Israel of God" -- God's nation, and the Scripture is clear that God's chosen nation is NOT Israel in the flesh. Jesus said to the Jews in Matthew 21:43 "Therefore say I unto you, THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHALL BE TAKEN FROM YOU..." -- AND IT WAS TAKEN FROM THEM! -- or Jesus prophesied falsely -- but you know that He spoke the truth -- IT WAS TAKEN FROM THEM! -- and two of the reasons why The Kingdom was taken from the Jews are:

FIRST, BECAUSE THEY REJECTED JESUS-ISRAEL AS THEIR KING:-- something foreshadowed by 1 Samuel 8:6-7 "But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." More specifically, earthly Israel rejected their King when they crucified Christ, loudly proclaiming, as it were, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14), and when they literally "cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him." After that outcry, "Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King?" -- to which "The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15).

SECOND, BECAUSE THEY BROUGHT NOT FORTH THE FRUITS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD:-- "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and GIVEN TO A NATION BRINGING FORTH THE FRUITS THEREOF" (Matt. 21:42-43).

The first fruit Jesus sought from earthly Israel was repentance, and because most of the Jews failed to bring forth that fruit, their National Tree was cut down in 70 A.D. with the siege and destruction of Jerusalem under the Roman General, Titus: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" (Luke 13:5-7).

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C -- THE KINGDOM GIVEN TO SPIRITUAL ISRAEL, "THE ISRAEL OF GOD."

"... Before the foundation of the world," God ordained that His Nation "should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4) -- holy both inwardly and outwardly -- "a nation bringing forth the fruits" of His Spirit. IT WAS NEVER GOD'S INTENTION THAT FLESH AND

BLOOD ISRAEL HAVE THE KINGDOM WITHOUT THOSE FRUITS -- and none shall EVER be part of "the Israel of God" without having and bringing forth those fruits! "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" (Rom 2:28-29).

Therefore, Micah's prophecy in Micah 4:8 shall have its fulfillment, not to flesh and blood Israel, but to Spiritual Israel, "the Israel of God": "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."

In awful pride, the Jews of Jesus' day rejected the lowly Nazarene. He did not fit their picture of a Regal Royalty capable of leading them out from under the galling yoke of Rome and into the world-wide prominence they envisioned to be theirs in the Messianic Kingdom! Caught up in that same spirit, Jesus' own brothers said to Him: "For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world" (John 7:4).

But while the Jews looked for an Highly Visible King and Kingdom, Jesus hid Himself from the lime-light "and when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21). While the Jews looked Him over from head to foot, incredulously, for some outwardly visible sign that He was their Messiah, for some ocular proof that the Kingdom of God had come nigh unto them, Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot SEE the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Seeing and hearing nothing but that which aroused their contempt for Jesus, most of the Jews rejected Him, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

The Kingdom was given to those born of His Spirit, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, AN HOLY NATION, a peculiar people; that" showed "forth the praises of Him Who" had called them "out of darkness into His marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but" who were "now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but" who now had "obtained mercy" (1 Pet 2:9-10).

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D -- MOST OF THE JEWS WERE ANGERED AT THE "FOOLISH NATION" -- SPIRITUAL ISRAEL, THE CHURCH

In the sight of the Jews, the Gentiles were looked upon as "foolish" and ignorant souls, deprived of the favor of God shown by God to earthly Israel, unless as proselytes they joined the Jewish worship. But many years before Christ came, Moses prophesied of how God would provoke the Jews to anger with "a foolish nation" -- i. e., a nation formed from both humble Jews and Gentiles: Deuteronomy 32:21 "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God;

they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation."

It is exceedingly clear that the "foolish nation" that would anger the Jews is none other than Spiritual Israel, otherwise called The Church and "the Israel of God". St. Paul made this clear in Romans 10:19-20 when he wrote: "Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me."

In Rom. 10:20 directly above, Paul refers to the prophecy in Isaiah 55:3-5 -- "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him [The Greater David, Christ Jesus] for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee."

Declaring in John 10:16, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice," Jesus has been doing just that for nearly 2,000 years now -- "calling a nation that He knew not" as "His Own" earthly people. And, instead of giving the Kingdom of God to those proud Jewish Ecclesiastics and Pharisees who looked for a Messiah who would break off the yoke of Rome, and elevate earthly Israel into "the first dominion" of world-wide prominence and dominance spoken of in Micah, God gave the Kingdom to those who were looked upon as "foolish"!

Thus it was, that Paul wrote to that "foolish nation," the Church: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor 1:26). First, we see a proud Saul of Tarsus, MAD AT that "foolish nation" -- going about to destroy it -- and then after his conversion we see the humble Paul GLAD WITH that "foolish nation" -- going about to spread its borders and increase its citizenship as much as possible!

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E -- NEVERTHELESS, A REMNANT JOINED SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

In taking the Kingdom from earthly Israel, God was not casting away "His people which he foreknew" (Rom. 11:2). Why? Once again:-- because "before the foundation of the world," God foreknew that His Nation was to be Spiritual Israel -- those born of His Spirit. Therefore, in casting away that greater part of earthly Israel who did not bring forth the fruits foreordained to be brought forth by His people, He was but fulfilling His eternal purpose.

Further describing what took place after most of earthly Israel rejected Christ, Paul wrote: "But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and

gainsaying people. 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. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then AT THIS PRESENT TIME ALSO THERE IS A REMNANT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE" (Rom 10:21--11:5).

What Paul is saying here is: From before the time that the earth was, God ordained that His Nation be made up of those who were elected thereto by obtaining the grace of God through Christ, and -- at that present time there was "a remnant" of the Jews (including himself) who were part of "the Israel of God" by reason of having obtained the fruits of God's Grace through faith in Christ Jesus.

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F -- A FINAL REMNANT OF BELIEVING JEWS WILL ALSO JOIN SPIRITUAL ISRAEL ON THE DAY OF THE LORD.

Across the centuries, numbers of Jews have been born again, thus joining "the Israel of God," but it is a mistake to say that nationally GOD IS DONE WITH THE JEWS. In reference to a final ingathering of Jews into the Spiritual "Israel of God" on the Day of the Lord, Paul wrote:

"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. 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?" (Rom. 11:11-15).

I believe that a correct interpretation of the prophecies surrounding this dramatic conversion and regeneration of a final remnant of Jews into Spiritual Israel is: IT SHALL OCCUR DIRECTLY BEFORE THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD! -- THEIR RECEPTION INTO THE KINGDOM SHALL BE FOLLOWED BY "LIFE FROM THE DEAD" -- OR -- THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

As I see it, just before Christ's Revelation at the close of the Great Tribulation, out of great mourning and anguish that final remnant shall repent, believe and be born again: Isaiah 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."

Thus also, I believe that this finally converted remnant from among flesh and blood Israel shall be caught up with the dead in Christ to meet Him in the air at His Revelation, along with all of the rest who are alive and "remain unto the coming of the Lord."

When "the fulness of the Gentiles is come in," and when that "life from the dead" Rapture occurs, the entire "Israel of God" shall be totally assembled "unto a perfect man" -- a perfect body of Christ -- "And so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:25-26).

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G -- THE ISRAEL OF GOD IN THE ETERNAL, MESSIANIC KINGDOM

"The Israel of God" shall be ETERNALLY BLESSED:

BLESSED AS THEY ENTER THE PEARLY GATES:-- Isaiah 26:2 "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."

BLESSED AND REJOICING WITH REALIZED HOPE: -- Psalms 106:5 "That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.

BLESSED BEYOND ALL WORDS TO DESCRIBE:-- Psalms 33:12 "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

BLESSED ALONE, WITH NO OTHER NATION IN THE KINGDOM:-- "For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, THE PEOPLE SHALL DWELL ALONE, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23:9).

Friends, Jesus-Israel "will rule as God" ALONE -- and Spiritual Israel shall dwell ALONE with God, the Holy Angels, AND NONE OTHERS!

In Acts 19:29 we read of Ephesus, how "the whole city was filled with confusion," but -- be ye sure of this: "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33), and there is not going to be a mixed muddle of sinners with saints, glorified people with flesh and blood people, and devils turned loose in Christ's Messianic Kingdom! -- no confusion in The Holy City.

The City in which Christ shall reign is The Holy City, New Jerusalem, and only there shall He sit upon His Throne -- no "mixed multitude" -- no muddled masses -- no confusion -- only HE AND HIS HOLY NATION, SPIRITUAL ISRAEL -- DWELLING ALONE with none but holy company -- NOT FOR 1,000 YEARS -- BUT FOREVER!

Some might want to take the NIV version of Num. 23:9, which reads: "From the rocky peaks I see them, from the heights I view them. I see a people who live apart and do not consider themselves one of the nations."

Here is some mighty good Bible for those who want to preach Christian isolation in this world, but as I see it, Numbers 23:9 shall have its fulfillment when the glorified, Spiritual Israel dwells forever ALONE WITH GOD -- ALL ELSE FOREVER FORBIDDEN!

Then also, Micah 4:7 shall have its final and fullest fulfillment: "And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion [New Jerusalem] from henceforth, even for ever."

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04 -- CHRIST SHALL REMAIN IN HEAVEN UNTIL...

CONTENTS

Scripture Reading

- A -- Christ Shall Remain In Heaven Until Time Of "The Restitution Of All Things"
- B -- Christ Shall Remain In Heaven Until His Revelation
- C -- Christ Shall Remain In Heaven Until The Last Trump Sounds
- D -- Cutting The Gordian Knots Of PreTribulationism And PreMillennialism
- E -- In Conclusion

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SCRIPTURE READING:

"Whom the heaven must receive UNTIL THE TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (KJV Acts 3:21).

"He must remain in heaven UNTIL THE TIME COMES FOR GOD TO RESTORE EVERYTHING, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets" (NIV Acts 3:21).

"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" (Rev. 21:1-5).

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A -- CHRIST SHALL REMAIN IN HEAVEN UNTIL TIME OF "THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS"

In Mark 16:19 "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." There was a precise time of Christ's Ascension into heaven -- a fact that no fundamental Christian would dispute, but all should take note: THE SCRIPTURE IS ALSO VERY CLEAR THAT CHRIST SHALL REMAIN IN HEAVEN "UNTIL THE TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS," or as put by the NIV: "UNTIL THE TIME COMES FOR GOD TO RESTORE EVERYTHING."

Thus, we should understand that Christ will not leave heaven until the time arrives for the "restitution" or "reconstitution" of all things. According to Strong's Concordance, the Greek word for "restitution" in Acts 3:21 is "apokatastasis" and means "reconstitution: -- restitution".

The English word "reconstitute" has a number of synonyms: "rebuild, reclaim, recompose, recondition, reconstruct, recover, rehabilitate, rejuvenate, reorganize, restore. Thus, obviously, the time of the restitution, or reconstitution, of all things will be the time when "all things are made new."

As I see it, CHRIST SHALL REMAIN IN HEAVEN UNTIL THE TIME WHEN "ALL THINGS ARE MADE NEW" -- until the time when all things are reconstituted into their new and eternal state -- until the time spoken of in Rev. 21:1-5 when Jesus said, "Behold, I make all things new."

THIS ELIMINATES A PARTIAL RESTORATION FOR 1000 YEARS! -- When Christ Returns, "all things shall be made new" -- and new forever! At his Second Coming, Jesus is not going to do a little patch-up job on this world that will last but a thousand years and be followed by its fiery destruction, renovation, and final "reconstitution". No, friends, ALL THINGS WILL BE MADE NEW FOREVER! -- "reconstituted" into "a better and enduring substance" (Heb. 10:34), that will never pass away!

Furthermore, who can show that this complete "restitution-reconstitution" of all things shall transpire over a 1000 year period of time! If Christ created the entire universe in 6 days, do you think he is going to take 1000 years to recreate it!? Don't you believe in "instantaneous" works of grace? God does not need, nor will he take, 1000 years to "make all things new"! He of Whom it is said concerning the present creation, "he spake, and it was done" (Psa. 33:9), is going to "make all things new" with the same instantaneousness he uses to spiritually create new creatures in Christ Jesus! In the twinkling of an eye at His Return, "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" (2 Pet. 3:10). And then, "POOF," all things shall be "made new" in that same twinkling of an eye. In fact, long ago, both the Lake of Fire and the Holy City were created by the One who has "prepared a place" for both the evil and the righteous. At His return, in quite short order all shall be reconstituted -- the General Judgment shall take place, and all shall be set in order -- all evil beings and things being separated from God into the Lake of Fire forever, and all righteous beings and things being brought into His Presence forever with a newness that shall never wax old.

I see nothing in the Bible, rightly interpreted, supporting the idea that following Christ's Return, things are going to drag on for 1000 years in a protracted, half-way, patched up state prior to the complete "restitution-reconstitution" of all things! Nay, Paul said in Romans 9:28 "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because A SHORT WORK WILL THE LORD MAKE UPON THE EARTH." -- MUCH, MUCH SHORTER, I ASSERT, THAN PREMILLENNIALISTS IMAGINE!

PreMillennialists teach that "all things shall be made new" AFTER the millennium. They are right! -- but, since Christ shall remain in heaven until the time when all things are made new, then obviously, we must interpret that the millennium shall have taken place BEFORE Christ Returns. In hdm0124, "His Appearing and His Kingdom," I have gone into detail to show how that the 1000 years of Revelation 20 can be scripturally interpreted as synonymous with that long, indefinite-in-length, period of time known as The Church Age, which ENDS at the Return of Christ. "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" (1 Corinthians 15:24) -- the restitution and reconstitution of all things having been accomplished.

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B -- CHRIST SHALL REMAIN IN HEAVEN UNTIL HIS REVELATION

In Acts 1:9 we read another account of Christ's reception into heaven: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him OUT OF THEIR SIGHT." Christ Jesus is He "Whom the heavens must receive," hidden and out of sight, "until the time of His awesome Revelation, when "He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.." (Rev. 1:7).

All Pre-Tribulationists agree that the Revelation shall occur AFTER the Tribulation, but they staunchly maintain (in accordance with the 1830 vision of Scotch Lassie, Margaret McDonald) that Christians will see Jesus at a Secret Rapture 7 years earlier -- the glorifying grace of God having been brought to them 7 years prior to the Revelation.

However, there is absolutely NOTHING in the Bible, nor in the Greek meaning of the words Parousia, Epiphany, and Apokalupsis (Revelation) to support this claim. In fact, there is much Biblical evidence showing that the supposed Pre-Trib Rapture is unScriptural. Consider just one of many such verses:

1 Peter 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."

Note: Peter here clearly states that there is a "grace that is to be brought" to Christians "at the Revelation (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ." I assert that the "grace" Christians are to receive "at the Revelation" is the "grace of glorification" which Pre-Tribulationists erroneously claim will be received by them 7 years before the Revelation! Many other Old and New Testament scriptures show that Christians shall pass through, not escape from, the 7-year Tribulation, and that they are

to "hope to the end" that is coming "at the Revelation," at which time they shall receive the long-promised "grace" of glorification.

Christ does not picture His Return as Secret. Indeed, He warns against believing in a Secret Second Coming: Matthew 24:26 "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." Again, in Luke: 17:22-24, we read:

"The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For AS THE LIGHTNING, THAT LIGHTENETH OUT OF THE ONE PART UNDER HEAVEN, SHINETH UNTO THE OTHER PART UNDER HEAVEN; SO SHALL ALSO THE SON OF MAN BE IN HIS DAY."

Reader: Lightning appears in a flash! It is often accompanied by a loud clap of thunder, and sometimes, like Jesus described above, it illumines the entire sky from east to west! -- THERE IS NOTHING SECRET ABOUT A BOLT OR FLASH OF LIGHTNING! This is the way Jesus described His Return. It will be a Single-Stage, Sudden, and Earth-Shocking event, but there will be nothing secret about it! -- "every eye" around the entire globe "shall see Him" at His Revelation, and it will be then that Christians receive the grace of glorification that is to be brought unto them; whereupon, they shall rise to meet Him in the air. Then, "the Indignation" shall be poured out upon the wicked, and it is THIS that the Church shall escape -- not the Tribulation.

To reiterate in closing this point: a heavenly "cloud received Him out of their sight" as the awestruck disciples watched Christ's Ascension. "The heavens must receive" Him (i. e. retain Him), thus hidden from human view until the time of the Reconstitution of all things, and that time of making all things new shall occur directly after His Revelation -- at the close of the 7-year Tribulation.

I refer my readers once again to hdm0124, "His Appearing and His Kingdom," where I endeavor to show that while I believe that the Tribulation is an event that is yet to take place, there are ways in which most of its occurrences may have already had their fulfillment spiritually and historically. Therefore, I believe that the Last Trump may sound at any moment! Christ could return today! But in no case do I see Second Coming prophecy including a 1000-year extension of time on this earth following Christ's Second Advent. This takes me to my next point:

* * *

C -- CHRIST SHALL REMAIN IN HEAVEN UNTIL THE LAST TRUMP SOUNDS

"And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 And sware 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... 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. 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 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. (Rev. 10:5-7; 11:15-18).

The 7th Trumpet (synonymous with "the Last Trump") shall sound at the close of the 7-year Tribulation, and it shall be when this Last Trump sounds that Christ's Revelation shall occur. This is proven by Jesus' own recitation of the order of events at His Second Coming:

"**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: 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. 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).

A little uncomplicated and straightforward examination of the above scriptures shows the following:

- (a) Christ's Return and Revelation shall occur **AFTER** the Tribulation.
- (b) The Last Trump shall sound at Christ's Return-Revelation
- (c) The Rapture or "Gathering Together Of His Elect" shall also follow the Tribulation.
- (d) The Resurrection and Judgment of all of the Dead shall occur immediately after Christ's Return-Revelation.
- (e) **TIME SHALL END WHEN THE LAST TRUMP SOUNDS!**

Now, dear reader, let me ask you this question:-- **IF TIME ENDS WHEN THE 7TH TRUMP, THE LAST TRUMP, SOUNDS -- HOW COULD THERE POSSIBLY BE 1,000 MORE YEARS OF TIME FOLLOWING THAT LAST TRUMP!?** -- AND -- **IF THE LAST TRUMP SOUNDS AT CHRIST'S RETURN, SHOULD WE NOT SEE THAT THERE WILL BE NO MILLENNIUM ON THIS EARTH FOLLOWING CHRIST'S RETURN?!** My answer is a resounding "YES" -- **WE SHOULD SEE THAT TIME ENDS WITH CHRIST'S RETURN!** -- negating all possibility of an earthly millennium of time following His Second Coming!

* * *

D -- CUTTING THE GORDIAN KNOTS OF PRETRIBULATIONISM AND PREMILLENNIALISM

"According to ancient legend, Gordius was a poor peasant who became king of Phrygia in Asia Minor. In response to the prophecy of an oracle, as the first man coming into the city in a wagon and approaching the public square and the temple of Zeus, he had been declared king. In gratitude, Gordius dedicated his wagon to the god Zeus. It was placed in the grove of the temple, and the pole of the wagon was tied to the yoke with a very intricate knot that defied untying. No one could untie it. With the passing of time, the saying developed that whoever was successful in untying the knot would be ruler of all of Asia. The story goes that in 333 B.C. Alexander the Great came through in his conquest of the world. Faced with the disturbing difficulty of being unable to untie the Gordian knot, he took his sword and with one decisive stroke cut through it. This is the origin of the expression "cut the Gordian knot," and it is used to describe a situation where a perplexing (and seemingly insurmountable) problem is solved by a quick and decisive action."

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(a) The Gordian Knot of PreTribulationism

As I see it, the "Gordian Knot" of PreTribulationism is the matter of "Imminence". PreTribulationists feel duty-bound to insist that Christ's Coming and the Rapture of the Saints is certainly "imminent" -- impending, about to occur, and without question nothing yet unfulfilled preventing their occurrence. Thus, as they see it, an interpretation of prophecy that places the Rapture after the Tribulation must be false, because it destroys the possibility of an imminent Rapture.

But as I see it, The Sword of the Spirit cuts directly through this erroneous, but Gordian Knot in this way: A careful study of Second Coming prophecy reveals that **IT IS NOT CERTAINTY ABOUT IMMINENCE** that is taught by the Bible, but rather **IT IS UNCERTAINTY REGARDING THE EXACT TIME OF CHRIST'S RETURN**:

Matthew 24:42 "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

Mark 13:33-35 "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning."

A Pre-Tribulationist errs if declares that he knows that the Coming of Christ and the Rapture are Imminent. He knows no such thing!

A Mid-Tribulationist, or Post-Tribulationist (such as I) errs if he declares that he knows that the coming of Christ and the Rapture are not Imminent. He knows no such thing.

Well, how could you be uncertain that the coming of Christ is NOT imminent and still believe in a Post-Tribulation Return and Rapture?

Answer: Easily, for in the first place I believe that enough of Second Coming prophecy may have already been fulfilled spiritually and historically to make Christ's Imminent Return and an Imminent Rapture possible -- and -- in the second place I believe that my interpretations could be mistaken. Thus, while I am certain that I believe as I do, I am not certain that I could not be mistaken and I am not certain that Jesus will not come at any moment.

If students of prophecy are totally honest, they must admit that they may be mistaken in their views, and they must allow that Jesus might come much sooner or much later than they think! The fact is, no man is certain that Christ will Delay His Return beyond the present moment, and no man is certain that His Return and the Rapture are Imminent! Therefore, it is just as erroneous to insist that Post-Tribulationism is wrong because it destroys the an Imminent Coming of Christ and Rapture of the Church as it is to declare that Christ could not possibly come today because the anti-Christ has not yet appeared.

Again -- IT IS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE TIME OF CHRIST'S RETURN, NOT CERTAINTY THAT CHRIST'S COMING AND THE RAPTURE ARE IMMINENT, THAT THE BIBLE TEACHES. To admit this may be a bit humbling, but to be honest, one must.

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(b) The Gordian Knot of PreMillennialism

As I see it, the "Gordian Knot" that has PreMillennialists tied up within their interpretation is that they feel duty-bound to interpret Revelation 20 literally, and as taking place following Christ's return. But, as I see it, this bound-up approach to interpreting Revelation 20 gives birth to more problems than it solves, raises more questions than it answers, contradicts many scriptures that cannot be reconciled with such an interpretation, and leaves many who accept it bewildered about how such things could possibly be.

How is it possible that 1,000 years shall follow that 7th Trump (the Last Trump) when it is said that with the sounding of that Trumpet "time shall be no longer"? It does little good to follow the NIV interpretation here: "there shall be delay no longer," for the things that are not delayed are the resurrection and judgment of all of the dead, and not the delay of an additional 1,000 years of earthly time!

How is it possible that unregenerate sinners could enter into Christ's supposed Messianic Kingdom of God after He said in John 3:5, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."?

How is it possible that some PreMillennialists believe that flesh and blood people will be able to live 1,000 years in the presence of Him Who is "The Brightness of God's Glory" -- a glory that is "above the brightness of the sun" -- and a glory that shall destroy the wicked "with the brightness of His coming" (Heb. 1:3, Acts 26:13, 2 Thess. 2:8)? If God put the Sun millions of

miles from earth so that we can benefit by from its distanced brightness without being slain by a close proximity to its fiery heat, how will flesh and blood sinners dwell here on earth with "The Sun of Righteousness" whose brightness is "above the brightness of the sun"!? Indeed, how could the earth itself, as now constituted, exist under the blazing splendor of a brightness above that of our distant Sun?

How is it possible that during a supposed earthly Millennium Old Testament Jewish rituals and practices will be re-instated, a-la-the-literal interpretation of Zechariah 14, when the New Testament, and especially the book of Hebrews, make it exceedingly clear that these things are done away in Christ?

How is it possible that earthly Jerusalem shall ever be Christ's capital city when Paul made it very clear in Galatians 4 that Hagar (earthly Jerusalem) is forever cast out!?

How is that the King of Kings could possibly sit on His Footstool (Earth) to reign instead of sitting on His Throne (Heaven) to reign when no earthly monarch would sit on his footstool instead of on his throne to reign? See both Isaiah 66:1 and Acts 7:49.

How is it that Christ would allow in His supposed 1,000-year Messianic Kingdom an outward obeisance from unregenerate, impenitent who hate him, when the Bible says in 1 Cor. 6:9 "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?"

How is it that PreMillennialists can insist upon an interim Kingdom of God lasting 1,000 years when the Word of God tells us in Isaiah 9:7, "Of the increase of His [Christ's] government and peace there shall be no end," and when Luke 1:33 declares of Jesus that "he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."?

How is it possible that saints who "looked for a city whose builder and maker is God," and who sang, "I am going to a City where the roses never fade," shall be first dragged back instead for 1,000 years into the earthly Jerusalem?

Ad Infinitum... The Gordian Knot of PreMillennialism raises more questions and presents more quandaries than it answers and solves. As I read the Bible, there is not only far too much in the PreMillennial teaching that contradicts sound reasoning, but far too much as well that contradicts hundreds of scriptures for me to accept it -- ancient as is its origin.

As I see it, the way to use "The Sword of The Spirit" to cut the Gordian Knot of PreMillennialism is to place a genuine, scriptural, but non-literal interpretation on Revelation 20. Those who care to examine my own effort so to do can read it in hdm0124, "His Appearing and His Kingdom." Those who wish to disagree with any or all of my eschatological views may do that also. Nevertheless, it is hoped that these articles will at least stir up some students of prophecy to do some honest, objective study into the subject, without being bound by Gordian Knots tied with Denominational Ropes on these subjects.

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E -- IN CONCLUSION

Too many, I think, fear losing their ecclesiastical head on the denominational chopping block if they do not accept, statedly declare their adherence to, and echo, the prophetic belief of their Church. Often, perhaps, Candor and Courage bow before, and kow-tow to, Compliance and Camaraderie. Just before his beheading, when asked by the executioner if his head was lying comfortably, Sir Walter Raleigh replied with the following sentiment, if not exact words: "It matters not which way the head lies if the heart is lying right."

In the final analysis, it matters not which way your head lies concerning prophetic interpretation, so long as your heart is right. And, I suppose that often it may be wise not to needlessly "rock the boat" by adopting different prophetic views than those insisted upon by one's denomination. But, must expedience always tie expansion of one's heart and mind into a neat little knot of denominational dogma! It seem sad to me that there is not more room in holiness denominations for a diversity of opinion on these subjects. It also seems sad to me that many today have apparently swallowed Pre-Triublatinal and PreMillennial teachings, "hook, line, and sinker," without question, and without ever once approaching the subject objectively, free from prejudice and bias, free from the fear of ostracism, and with a determination to discover for themselves what they really do personally and honestly believe about Second Coming Prophecy. Hopefully the reader is not numbered among such. Selah.

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05 -- THE WORLD -- OUT OF WHACK AND BACK

SCRIPTURES AND INTRODUCTION

Psa 82:5 "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARTH ARE OUT OF COURSE" (Hebrew word "mowt" which includes the meaning of having "slipped" -- having "slidden" or been "shaken, moved, carried, or cast off course").

1 Chr. 16:30 "...THE WORLD also SHALL BE STABLE, THAT IT BE NOT MOVED ("mowt" -- that it be not "slipped" or "slidden, shaken, moved, carried, or cast off course").

It should be clear from the above Scriptures that Psalm 82:5 speaks of the present, deplorable condition of the world resulting from the Fall of accountable creatures and the curse of God, and that 1 Chronicles 16:30 tells of the state of the world after its Divine renovation and restoration as the "New World" or "The World To Come."

In the following discussion, I shall not attempt to explain WHY the world is now "out of course" or "out of whack," but only the FACT that it is so, and WHEN and HOW it shall be brought "back" from being "out of whack." I address my remarks to Bible believers, and not to those whose sin-darkened minds refuse to accept the facts of Divine Revelation on these matters. The highminded theories of scientists, evolutionists, and environmentalists to the contrary

notwithstanding, the chaos in our cosmos IS the consequence of sin against God by accountable angels and men, and only the Living God can and shall restore order in His Creation.

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I. THE OBVIOUS FACT THAT THIS WORLD IS "OUT OF WHACK"

There are many words and expressions in the English language that accurately describe the incongruous state of things in this sin-cursed world:

A. -- RELATIVE TO MELODY AND HARMONY, things are off-key, inharmonious, dissonant, discordant, harsh, and as irritable to the ear as the screeching of chalk down a blackboard! In this regard, things are rapidly getting much worse! When I was a lad, 55 years ago, even the secular songs had melody and harmony in them -- today, even much of the pseudo, so-called, Christian music has in it more acidic, discordant screeching than it does of melody and harmony that is sweet to the ear. It is a toss-up which will send more chills down one's spine and force one to cover his ears today:-- the screeching of chalk down a blackboard or the sour, ear-drum-irritating sounds of today's acid-rock, so-called, "music". Such dissonant sounds are grating reminders of how horribly "out of harmony" with God the world now is!

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B. -- RELATIVE TO PROPER PITCH AND VOLUME, things are ear-piercing, too loud, banging, booming, thundering, and deafening. Never before, has the world more needed to heed the following admonitions: "BE STILL, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalms 46:10). "Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous" (Psalms 31:18). And never before has there been such a desperate need for God to "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Peter 2:15). The high-pitched, high-volume decibels of the devil today are doing something far worse than deafening people physically, they are also deafening people spiritually, and many of those devilish decibels are emanating from pseudo-Christian musicians. Some of these deceived "music-makers?" of Satan are so deaf to the Spirit of God that their renditions of "Blessed Quietness" would be better titled "Blasted Quietness"! How wonderful that some day, Jesus will say, "Peace, BE STILL," and forever banish such vile volumes from the airwaves of Heaven!

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C. -- RELATIVE TO PROPER ALIGNMENT, things are bent, crooked, askew, awry, and out of alignment. God is a God of symmetry, straightness, and alignment. You can be sure that nothing will be askew in the New Jerusalem. If there are such in the Holy City, no pictures will be hanging crooked on the walls. The city will be four-square, and perfectly square, without being off even one one-millionth in its alignment anywhere in its structure. Now, we must put up with much that is awry, for absolute precision is impossible to both men and machines in this world. When viewed in God's transit and placed against God's square, the most precise alignments in this world

are still at least "a tad bit off." If you want to dwell in an abode where nothing ever needs to be straightened and where nothing is ever askew, then you must make it into the City Four-square.

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D. -- RELATIVE TO PERFECT LEVEL, things in this world are often more than "half a bubble off," slanted, sloping, and off-level. According to Ps. 82:5 above, the very foundations of our world are "out of course," or "out of level." Apparently it was when the Curse fell on creation that the earth was tilted on its axis, and since that time, nothing in the world has been perfectly "on the level" with no sloping up or down in the slightest degree. I dare say that if it were possible for man to create his most perfect plane in a vacuum, God could place His own perfectly round ball-bearing on the very center of that plane and it would eventually run toward one end or the other. And, probably most of us have either lived in, been in, or perhaps even built, structures where a marble would run down the slope of our supposedly level floor! In more ways and places than one, things in this world are far more than "half a bubble off"!

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E. -- RELATIVE TO PERFECT UPRIGHTNESS, things in this world are slanted, tilted, leaning, sagging, and out of plumb. The entire sphere of this earth is tilted on its axis, and physically or materially, there is nothing perfectly perpendicular on this planet. If you consider God's Word much, you must conclude that He has an Up, a Down, a Left, and a Right, and I believe that all such directions are relative to a fixed point determined by the Creator. Further, things in this Universe and on this Earth were thrown "out of plumb" by the Curse. Hang God's plumb-line beside the most perfectly perpendicular structure man has made, and it will be "out of plumb". You'll have to live in the New Heaven and the New Earth if you want things to be perfectly plumb in your eternal abode.

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F. -- RELATIVE TO PROPER CONDITION, things in our world are out of kilter, out of repair, decrepit, run-down, and ruined. In their best possible condition, things in this world are really "out of condition" and will soon be run-down and ruined. The proud columns and castles of earlier centuries in Europe now lying in ruins, and the wrecking yards across our nation, are mute, but vivid witnesses to the fact that nothing stays in good condition materially in this world.

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G. -- RELATIVE TO PROPER SHAPE, things are bent, bulged, bloated, shrunk, warped, twisted, malformed, deformed, asymmetrical, and out of shape. I was born with one ear that has a flat spot on its top curve. I am, and always have been, asymmetrical -- but not always so badly "out of shape" as I am now physically! God loves, and demands, perfection in shape -- DID YOU KNOW THAT? Read Leviticus 21:18 regarding who could not serve in the Aaronic Priesthood: "For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous..."

That tells me something: My physically misshapen brother who was also born horribly retarded will have a perfectly shaped body in heaven. In that glory world, there will be no hydrocephalics -- children with heads like watermelons that are longer than the rest of their entire body! In this world, both human beings and animals are often born horribly misshapen! -- and the bodies of some of the rest of us have, since birth, been warped, twisted, bent, shrunk, bloated, or otherwise deformed by various causes.

One old saint looked in the mirror and was disappointed to see that with the loss of teeth his chin had moved up and his nose had gone down! And when he looked in the mirror and saw his eyes, he said, "I couldn't hardly think it -- they looked like two burnt holes in a blanket!" But the Lord cheered him saying: "Now don't you worry, and don't you fret -- for what you saw in the glass, you'll soon forget!"

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H. -- RELATIVE TO CORRECT VISION AND PERFECT LIGHT, things in this world are blurred, distorted, enlarged, diminished, shaded, obscured, and hidden. These aberrations are due in part to the imperfections in the human eyes, humanly constructed aids to vision, and due in part to the fact that there is no perfect light in this world. All earthly light is refracted, impeded, and clouded in some way. This latter, however, is no doubt for our own good. 1 John 1:5 tells us: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all," but so perfect and brilliant is the Divine LIGHT, that no flesh and blood human being could even survive its splendor! The only Human Being now capable of dwelling in that PERFECT LIGHT is the Glorified Christ: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see..." (1 Timothy 6:16).

One reason why "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 15:50), is because the overwhelming brilliance of the Divine Light and Glory of Christ would (and will) instantly slay any flesh and blood human being! This is one of the many reasons I do not believe that the Kingdom of Christ shall ever take place in a millennium on THIS earth. If during Old Testament times the partially revealed glory of Christ was so staggering "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" (1 Kings 8:11), HOW IN THIS WORLD do you think that "unchanged" flesh and blood human beings could possibly live and dwell "IN THE LIGHT WHICH NO MAN CAN APPROACH UNTO" when all men, without any restraint of His splendor "SEE HIM AS HE IS" at His Return!

It is going to take glorified bodies to dwell in the presence of Christ in His Kingdom! -- and only the damnation bodies of the wicked will endure His sight temporarily at the Judgment -- all flesh and blood bodies having been "changed" (for the better or for the worse) at Christ's Return. The whole idea of a supposed Kingdom of Christ on THIS earth populated with an incongruous mixture of flesh-and-blood human beings along with glorified saints and along with the UNRESTRAINED LIGHT AND GLORY OF CHRIST, not only strikes me as absurd, but also as very, very unScriptural. Revelation Chapter 20, then, must be interpreted so as to be in accord with all of the rest of the Bible, including both prophetic and non-prophetic truths, and I believe that such an exegesis precludes a millennial reign of Christ on THIS earth after His Return.

St. John told us twice: "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12). And "unchanged" flesh-and-blood human beings are not going to be dwelling on earth or anywhere "IN THE LIGHT WHICH NO MAN CAN APPROACH UNTO." Furthermore, we can be sure that Job's statement, "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:26), shall have its fulfillment in his "glorified flesh," and not in that same body that was destroyed by the worms. Likewise, Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God," shall have its fulfillment when the pure in heart are also "changed" into bodies capable of both enduring and enjoying forever the brilliance "THE LIGHT WHICH NO [EARTHLY] MAN CAN APPROACH UNTO."

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I. -- RELATIVE TO PERFECT ADJUSTMENT, things in our world and universe are out of joint, disjointed, dislocated, out of place, out of their element, disconnected, disjointed, mismatched, ill-fitted, misfitted, incongruous, clashing, incompatible, inappropriate, and maladjusted. Lucifer became the first misfit. When by pride he supposed he fit a larger place and refused to fill his proper place, he no longer fit ANY place in heaven, and God prepared for him the ONLY place where he does fit -- the Lake of Fire. Since Lucifer's forced departure with his deceived cohorts, there have never been any more misfits in heaven -- nor shall there ever be again. Earth is a place of many misfits, but when eternity dawns, all shall be forever fit into their proper place. The final ADJUSTMENT at the Judgment will place all in Hell who fit there, and in Heaven, the whole glorified Body of Christ, "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part," shall eternally and joyously contribute to "the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16).

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J. -- RELATIVE TO PROPER FUNCTIONING, things as they now exist are out of whack, dysfunctional, not hitting on all cylinders, and have slipped a cog. As the result of the devil's doings everything in the material and physical universe is running wrong. It was he who "threw the monkey-wrench into the works," causing both men and matter to become dysfunctional, and it's going to take Someone wiser than psychiatrists and would-be, world-savior environmentalists to fix things! The engine of the universe is going to do more than "throw a rod," the entire mechanism is about to fly into a jillion pieces with a loud bang! -- and no bunch of smug, little "shade-tree mechanics" is going to even prevent it -- let alone fix it!

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K. -- RELATIVE TO PEACE, things universally are restless, disturbed, troubled, unsettled, tumultuous, contentious, hostile, conflictive, and warring. Such has been the inevitable development when "The Prince of Peace" was rejected and nailed to the Cross. To the very end, deceived men will pursue and fancy that at last peace on earth has been achieved. But, said the apostle Paul, "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 Thessalonians 5:3). Lasting peace in Israel, or anywhere else on earth before the Return of Christ? Forget it! It's going to get worse,

much worse -- for "the end is not yet" and the horrors already seen are only "the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:6-8).

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L. -- RELATIVE TO LOVE, things are inordinate, perverted, unnatural, without natural affection, unkind, unloving, hateful, malicious, and murderous. With wild abandon, both men and women have given themselves over to the most vile, sensual, and selfish indulgences -- and calling them "love"! The very word "love" itself has become so sullied that one must be careful how it is used, lest a vile connotation be attached to it. Gay used to be a perfectly innocuous word, but because of its adoption by the vile perverts now proudly parading themselves throughout the world, one must be careful in using the word. The same thing applies to the word "love". To many, "love" is the illicit engagement in some selfish, immoral, unnatural, and perverted act, instead of the pure, unselfish, God-inspired, and humanly-uplifting and soul-ennobling affection that constitutes true love. There is a vast difference between real love and fleshly lust, but that distinction is not clearly seen by millions today.

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N. -- RELATIVE TO TIMING, things today are off-beat, out of step, out of time, too fast, too slow, too early, or too late. Timing is something far more important than to be of interest only to those who are juggling balls, jumping rope, beating a drum, marching on parade, or playing a game. Being out of time can cost one his job, his health, his life, and his soul. Jesus rued the fate of Jerusalem prior to its fall in 70 AD., saying, "... they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:44). When the curse fell on creation, the timing of the universe was thrown off. For millennia now, the timing of the earth around the sun has run like clock-work, but as the end nears more and more things are going to mess up this clock-work, until just before the Day of Christ, "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" (Isaiah 24:20). Only when the New Heaven and New Earth appear, shall perfect timing be restored in God's creation.

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O. -- RELATIVE TO SEVERAL OTHER THINGS VERY BRIEFLY: -- RELATIVE TO LAW AND ORDER, things are now anarchical, disordered, out of order, disarranged, badly messed up, and chaotic. RELATIVE TO MENTAL SOUNDNESS AND SANITY, things are confused, deranged, unbalanced, demented, and just plain crazy. RELATIVE TO NORMALCY, things are weird, abnormal, odd, eccentric, off the wall, and bizarre. RELATIVE TO HEALTH, things are unhealthy, ill, sick, diseased, afflicted, plagued, suffering, and fatal. RELATIVE TO MORALITY, things are debauched, debased, defiled, filthy, immoral and amoral. RELATIVE TO SPIRITUAL LIFE, things are degenerate, declining, dying, and dead. RELATIVE TO PROPER DIRECTION, things are deviant, off course, out of course, and disoriented.

The list could be continued ad infinitum. Let me just sum up by saying: "It's a crazy world -- things are badly "out of whack"! One need not be a pessimist, but merely a clear-thinking and

perceptive realist, to see that our world is rapidly approaching -- if not already in -- a state that is far worse than that of the proverbial situation where "the inmates have taken over the asylum"!

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II. OUT OF WHACK -- WHEN AND HOW BROUGHT BACK

Regarding WHEN Christ shall set the Universe back "in course," however, let me begin by presenting the words to an old Negro Spiritual titled, "My Lord, What a Morning." It begins with the Refrain. [If I thought you could, or might be able to, receive attachments, I have attached the MIDI with this article, which you can play as you read the words below:

Refrain:

My Lord, what a morning.
My Lord, what a morning;
Oh, my Lord, what a morning,
When the stars begin to fall.

Verse 1

You'll hear the trumpet sound,
To wake the nations underground,
Looking to my God's right hand,
When the stars begin to fall.

Refrain:

* * *

Verse 2

You'll hear the sinners cry,
To wake the nations underground,
Looking to my God's right hand,
When the stars begin to fall.

Refrain:

* * *

You'll hear the Christians shout,
To wake the nations underground,
Looking to my God's right hand,
When the stars begin to fall.

Refrain:

* *

As I understand the Word, the time when "...THE WORLD also SHALL BE STABLE, THAT IT BE NOT MOVED" shall first be preceded by the chaos in the universe "When The Stars Begin To Fall." Please see my book on the HDM CD, "His Appearing and His Kingdom," hdm0124, for a detailed explanation of how the cosmic chaos, repeatedly described in prophecy, divides the 7 year Tribulation Period from the Day of the Lord. The order is this: THE TRIBULATION -- THE COSMIC CHAOS -- THE DAY OF THE LORD. To put it a bit differently, First the Tribulation -- Next The Cosmic Chaos -- Followed By The Return of Christ on the Day of the Lord. Here are Jesus' own words verifying these three distinctions -- caps, brackets, and numbering mine:

"Immediately [1. AFTER THE TRIBULATION] of those days [2. 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: [3. 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" (Matthew 24:29-30).

"When The Stars Begin To Fall," the universe and world as now constituted shall collapse and depart with the loudest noise ever heard. Creation did not BEGIN with the "Big Bang" but it shall END (as it now exists) with a "Big Bang"! Then shall begin the Day of Christ; all of the dead shall be raised; the saints shall rise to meet the Christ in the air, and ALL shall be ushered into the General Judgment:

"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" (Matthew 25:32-33).

Two observations here:

(1) THIS SHALL NOT BE A JUDGMENT OF "NATIONS" EN MASSE, BUT OF "NATIONS" AS INDIVIDUALS. When Jesus said in Matthew 28:19-20 "Go ye therefore, and TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: TEACHING THEM to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," PLEASE NOTE: CHRIST COMMANDED THEM TO TEACH AND BAPTIZE INDIVIDUALS -- NOT NATIONS EN MASSE! He did not advocate gathering all nations together into one huge masse to teach them as a unit or to baptize them as a unit -- but as individuals! And, IN MATTHEW 28:19-20 while we have all nations gathered en masse, THE NATIONS WILL BE JUDGED INDIVIDUALLY -- ONE PERSON AT A TIME and separated into two great groups of THE SAVED and THE DAMNED! The Judgment of Matthew 28:19-20 is none other than the same General Judgment spoken of in Rev. 20:11. None should question or doubt this!

(2) THE REWARDS OF THIS JUDGMENT ARE ETERNAL -- People with prophetic interpretations to defend confuse both the identity and consequences of this Great General Judgment seen in Matthew 25:32-46. Leave off this tinkering with truth and you can easily see that THINGS ARE FOREVER WRAPPED UP AT THE CONCLUSION OF THIS JUDGMENT. It is

not a Judgment that ushers in another millennium on this earth, but rather a Judgment that ushers in Eternity!

Hear Christ's Eternal Sentence to the Goats (individuals) on His Left, and to the Sheep (individuals) on His Right:-- "These [the Damned, the Individual Goats on His Left] shall go away into EVERLASTING punishment: but the righteous [the Saved, the Individual Sheep on His Right] into LIFE ETERNAL" (Matthew 25:46).

Away with this nonsense that asserts that the Judgment of Matthew 25 is not the General and Final Judgment of ALL! At the conclusion of the Judgment as described in Matthew 25, the Goats are sent into "everlasting punishment" which compares exactly to the fate of the wicked at the conclusion of The Great White Throne Judgment, who are "cast into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:15).

When after that Judgment of Matthew 25 Jesus says to his individual Sheep, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mat. 25:34), He is inviting them into that Eternal Kingdom which is described immediately after the Great White Throne Judgment as the reward of those whose names are written in the Book of Life: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.."

"THE WORLD -- OUT OF WHACK AND BACK" with its renovation and transformation into "THE NEW EARTH" -- immediately following the General Judgment described in both Matthew 25 and Revelation 20.

As I understand the Word, God is not going to be passing out Second Chances to the Lost after a Secret Rapture and during 1000 long years on this "old earth". He isn't going to do a partial fix on things as they now are -- a fix that will last only 1000 more years. He isn't going to create an absurd kingdom mixed with flesh and blood and glorified, populated with saved and lost, and let people be saved "by sight" during 1000 years when all who ever got saved before them were saved and sanctified "by faith"! No! -- 1000 times No! -- not 1000 years Yes!

There will be no second chances during 7 years, no saved by sighters during 1000 more years, and no mingling of sinners and saints in Christ's Messianic Kingdom! When the Trumpet blows folks -- it will not be like a "two minute warning" at some worldly sports event! -- giving folks 1,000 more years before the final "buzzer"! No sir! When the seventh angel "shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be [and shall be] FINISHED" ... and there shall be "TIME NO LONGER"! PERIOD! (Rev. 10:6-7).

It shall only be when TIME ENDS FOREVER that Christ's Messianic Kingdom with His Saints shall begin -- and that in the "New Heavens and New Earth". EveryONE that was "out of whack" spiritually when the Trumpet blew shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, and EveryONE and EveryTHING that had been "out of whack" but that is redeemed at that time shall be brought "back" and/or into a state of eternal perfection -- NOT FOR 1000 YEARS, BUT FOREVER AND EVER:

Isaiah 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. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

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

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06 -- THE CONSUMPTION DETERMINED UPON THE WHOLE EARTH

"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... 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" (Isa. 28:5-6, 22).

* * *

INTRODUCTION

The prophetic overtones in Isaiah 28 are unmistakable, and the events mentioned in the above verses are futuristic -- they shall have their greatest and final fulfillment in connection with those "things to come" at the Second Advent of Christ. Many O. T. prophecies have had an earlier fulfillment relative to things closer to, or contemporary with the prophet, while at the same time those prophecies shall have a later, greater, and final fulfillment at the time of Christ's Return. It seems clear to me that the events mentioned in the above text shall have their greater and final fulfillment in connection with the Second Coming -- as the universal CONSUMPTION YET TO BEFALL THE WHOLE EARTH.

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A -- THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE DETERMINED CONSUMPTION

According to Strong's Concordance, the Hebrew word for "consumption" in the above verse is: "kalah, kaw-law"; from H3615;" meaning: "a completion; adv. completely; also destruction:-- altogether, (be, utterly) consume (-d), consummation (-ption), was determined, (full, utter) end, riddance.

In other scriptures, it is clear that THE NATURE of the determined "Consumption" shall be FIERY: "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). "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" (Nah. 1:5).

At the same time, it is clear that the EXTENT of the determined "Consumption" shall be UNIVERSAL -- a burning up of "the whole earth" along with making a "full, utter, end, and riddance" of the wicked from the earth.

The Determined Consumption will burn up the earth and universe as they now exist and remove from them all evil beings -- including men and devils: "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" (2 Pet. 3:10).

* * *

B -- THE PERSON WHO SHALL DO THE CONSUMING

It is Christ Who shall do the consuming. Thrice in the Scriptures, He is denoted as "A CONSUMING FIRE": In Deuteronomy 4:24, Moses told Israel, "For THE LORD THY God IS A CONSUMING FIRE, even a jealous God. Again, in Deuteronomy 9:3 we read: "Understand therefore this day, that THE LORD THY GOD IS He which goeth over before thee; as A CONSUMING FIRE..." Hebrews 12:28-29 describes Him likewise: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE."

A search of the KJV of my QuickVerse computer Bible of "consum*" -- which locates every place in the Bible where are located the words "consume, consummation, and consumption" totals 165 instances in 156 verses -- nearly all of which refer to a consuming by God! He Who is the compassionate Father and Friend of His people is also "A CONSUMING FIRE" to wickedness and to everything and everyone corrupted by the devil. Thus, it shall not be natural laws gone awry that brings about the Consumption of this universe and its evil inhabitants; the Consumption shall be the result of the "determined" act of Christ. They are utterly deceived and blind who think that they can be the "environmental saviors" of this world. Christ has purposed to burn it up and then make it new. The hearts of such deluded environmentalists will be "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" as the Consumption is seen approaching, but they shall not prevent it, "for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:26) and "the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10) by Him Who is "The Consuming Fire."

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C -- THE DAY IN WHICH THE UNIVERSAL CONSUMPTION SHALL OCCUR

It is exceedingly clear that the Universal Consumption shall occur on THE DAY OF THE LORD.

"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. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 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? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:10-13).

The Day of the Lord follows fast on the heels of the 7-year Tribulation, and Daniel 7:25-27 also locates the consumption directly after the Tribulation: "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out 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. BUT THE JUDGMENT SHALL SIT, and they shall take away his dominion, TO CONSUME AND TO DESTROY IT UNTO THE END. 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."

The Consumption of "this present evil world," the kingdom of anti-Christ, and the dissolution of the universe shall occur -- not 1,000 years AFTER the close of the Tribulation, but quite immediately after the Tribulation:

"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: 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" (Matt. 24:29-30).

The Cosmic Chaos ushering in the Day of The Lord "immediately after the tribulation" shall be culminated, after the resurrection and rapture of the saints, by THE CONSUMPTION OF THE UNIVERSE AS IT NOW EXISTS. Therefore, no millennium of time on this earth could possibly follow Christ's Return.

Immediately following Christ's Revelation and the Rapture of the saints, shall come "the CONSUMMATION [KALAH = CONSUMPTION], and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Dan. 9:27) -- "and 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."

While it is true that the apostle Peter says "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years," it is not a viable interpretation to assert that the Consumption shall occur at the end of a 1,000-Year Day of the Lord following the Tribulation. Note the context in which Peter makes that observation:

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that ONE DAY IS WITH THE LORD AS A THOUSAND YEARS, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 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. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Pet. 3:8-11). Peter speaks of the 1,000-year-day as preceding --

not as being -- The Day of the Lord! He exhorts Christians to be patient for the coming of "the day of the Lord" even if it took 1,000 years. He does not tell them that The Day of the Lord will consist of 1,000 additional years of time in this world.

Probably even the great apostle Peter did not realize how long Christ would tarry before Returning. The Lord has now tarried nearly 2,000 years! -- but, make no mistake about it, when The Day of the Lord does finally COME, Christ is not going to dally around for 1,000 more years before He brings about the determined Consumption! Nay! "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth."

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D -- WHO SHALL SURVIVE THE CONSUMPTION?

Malachi 3:2 -- "But 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."

So BRIGHT and so HOT shall be the vehemence of His GLORY and His WRATH at His Return that "the Lord shall consume" the wicked "with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy" all of His enemies "with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. 2:8)

When "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" (Malachi 4:1).

Deuteronomy 32:22 reveals God's purpose for this present, evil world: "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains."

WHO IS GOING TO LIVE IN THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM WITH HIM WHO IS "A CONSUMING FIRE"? Let none be deceived here: -- only those who are right with God at Christ's Return! This is proven with extreme clarity in Isaiah 33:14-17:

"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. WHO AMONG US SHALL DWELL WITH THE DEVOURING FIRE? WHO AMONG US SHALL DWELL WITH EVERLASTING BURNINGS? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."

CHRIST IS "THE DEVOURING FIRE" mentioned in Isaiah 33:14! Read the NIV translation of this verse: "The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "WHO OF US CAN DWELL WITH THE CONSUMING FIRE? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?"

It shall be utterly impossible for wicked sinners and unregenerate people, who do nothing more than submit to an outward kow-tow to Christ, to survive His Coming, let alone dwell with Him for 1,000 years!

A final Remnant of Israel shall survive the Consumption, but only because directly before Christ's Revelation they have repented and been born again: Isaiah 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."

Lamentations 3:22 declares: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." Let me ask you something: DO YOU THINK GOD'S MERCIES SHALL BE EXTENDED TO A WICKED WORLD "AFTER" HIS SECOND COMING? By no means shall this occur! The Day of the Lord is none other than "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5)!

Now, Christians are exhorted to "Be patient therefore, brethren, UNTO THE COMING 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. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for THE COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: BEHOLD, THE JUDGE STANDETH BEFORE THE DOOR." (James 5:7-9).

Friend, can you not see that God's Mercy to a wicked world shall extend only "UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD"??? There will be no souls saved after His Return! -- no supposed millennial people to whom mercy and salvation "by sight" shall be granted AFTER THE COMING OF THE LORD! Mark this down indelibly in your mind: GOD'S MERCY SHALL EXTEND ONLY UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD -- and not 1 second beyond that! For this reason also, the supposed millennial kingdom simply cannot be.

At Christ's Return, the wicked shall be consumed by Him Who is "A Consuming Fire," but the righteous "shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" (Isa. 33:17). Let me tell you something folks, God is going to take His people to a "land that is very far off" from this old world! He isn't going to set them back down on this present world for 1,000 years after His Return! No! After the Judgment they shall go immediately into the Holy City in the New Heavens and New Earth -- forever!

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E -- AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH AND LOT

"In the days of Noah" (1 Peter 3:20), only 8 survived the watery flood of God's wrath, and all of the rest were "taken away." In the determined Consumption at Christ's Return, "with an overrunning flood [of Fire] he will make an utter end of the place" where wicked men have dwelt, and destroying all of them along with that flood as well (Nah. 1:8).

In the days of Lot, "The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven" (Gen. 19:24); forewarning "Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city" (Gen. 19:15).

You know the consequence: Sodom and Gomorrah were utterly consumed! -- and this is only a tiny little foreshadow of what shall occur at Christ's Return. In Luke 17:28, Jesus said that His Return would be "as it was in the days of Lot." None of those upon whom judgment fell survived, and even thus shall it be at Jesus' Wrathful Return -- ABSOLUTELY NONE OF THE WICKED SHALL SURVIVE!

In Luke 17:26-27 Jesus said, "And as it was in the days of Noe, so 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."

Do you get the picture? Those taken into the ark typify the saved and raptured Church, and immediately following that rapture Christ shall "DESTROY THEM ALL" who are not taken into the ark.

The vast difference between the typical events of the Flood and the destruction of Sodom is that with the Return of Christ the destruction shall be literally UNIVERSAL. Except the Judgment, nothing shall follow his Second Coming but The New Heavens and New Earth for Christ and his preserved race, and eternal damnation for the lost in Hell.

Repeatedly, throughout both the Old and New Testament, we see the Universal Consumption of the wicked and the dissolution of the Universe occurring at the Time of Christ's Return. This is one more reason why, as I see it, Revelation 20 can only be correctly interpreted as CONCLUDING AT THE RETURN OF CHRIST, AND NOT BEGINNING WITH HIS RETURN.

Therefore, I interpret Rev. 20:9 as another description of The Consumption -- the battle of Gog and Magog being identical to the battle of Armageddon, occurring at the time of Christ's Return: "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."

I conclude with this observation: We must either take the Olivet Discourse as "out of chronological order" in relating the events at Jesus' Second Coming, or we must interpret the book of Revelation as not relating those same events in chronological sequence. If we take Jesus' relation of the order of events in His Olivet Discourse as in true chronological order, then there appears throughout the Bible a beautiful harmony and simplicity regarding the order of Second Coming events. But, if we insist that it is Revelation that must be taken in chronological order, then comes a real maze of confusion that opens a Pandora's Box of Biblical contradictions, quandaries, and impossibilities -- particularly regarding a supposed millennium AFTER Christ's Return.

Good Biblical exegesis demands that the lesser bow to the greater -- If, as I see it, the Pre-Millennial interpretation of Revelation 20 (one chapter in the Bible) places it in contradiction

to the overwhelming majority of the rest of Biblical Testimony on the subject, then I think that we not only may, but must, look for a different interpretation of Revelation 20 that harmonizes it with the rest of the Bible on the subject. Please see my book, hdm0124, "His Appearing and His Kingdom," Chapters 7 and 8 for my own interpretations of the book of Revelation and of Revelation 20 -- interpretations that place **THE CONSUMPTION AT CHRIST'S RETURN, AND NOT 1,000 YEARS LATER.**

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07 -- HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY AT CHRIST'S RETURN

The purpose of this article shall be to present Scriptural proofs showing that the time when this present earth and universe shall pass away will be at the time of Christ's return, and not 1000 years later. First, please study carefully the verses below -- especially the portions that I have put in caps.

"**HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY:** but my words shall not pass away. **BUT OF THAT DAY AND THAT HOUR KNOWETH NO MAN,** no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13:31-33).

"Verily I say unto you, **THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS, TILL ALL THESE THINGS BE FULFILLED. HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY,** but my words shall not pass away. **BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR KNOWETH NO MAN,** no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:34-36).

[In passing, before embarking on the main focus of this treatise, I would note that if the heavens and earth pass away **AFTER** a supposed Millennium, it would be possible to pinpoint quite accurately **THE DAY** in which their dissolution occurred. But Christ says here that no man knows the day and hour that this shall occur.]

No Pre-Trib, Pre-Mil student of prophecy would deny that the unknown time to which Jesus refers in the above scriptures is **THE TIME OF HIS RETURN.** What they would deny is that when Jesus said "Heaven and earth shall pass away" He is connecting that passing away of heaven and earth with the time of His Return. What I assert is this: When Jesus made reference to the passing away of the present Heaven and Earth when speaking of His Return, it was because **THAT IS WHEN THIS HEAVENS AND THIS EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY -- AT THE TIME OF HIS RETURN, AND NOT 1000 YEARS LATER!**

Pre-Mil interpreters would insist: "No! when Jesus mentioned that "Heaven and earth shall pass away" in the same breath with His remarks about His Return, He was not saying that this great event would occur at His Return; He was only emphasizing that **HIS WORDS SHALL ALL COME TO PASS, AND EVENTUALLY -- 1,000 YEARS LATER -- THIS HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY.**"

However, besides the above verses, there is more in the Bible supporting the interpretation that I have placed upon them -- Scriptures that place the time of this world's demise AT THE TIME OF CHRIST'S RETURN -- Scriptures that demonstrate the impossibility of that demise taking place 1,000 years later.

Consider the following:

"For the earnest expectation of the creature [this creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature [this creation] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because THE creature [CREATION] ITSELF ALSO SHALL BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that THE WHOLE CREATION GROANETH AND TRAVAILETH IN PAIN TOGETHER UNTIL NOW. 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" (Rom. 8:19-23).

Reader, I hope you see the importance of the above passage in connection with the subject at hand: THE TIME AT WHICH THE PRESENT HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY AND THEN BE TRANSFORMED INTO THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH SHALL BE -- NOW PLEASE GET THIS -- SHALL BE AT THE TIME THE SAINTS ARE GLORIFIED!!!

What Pre-Trib, Pre-Millennialist would deny that the saints' bodies shall be redeemed, i. e., be glorified, at the time of Christ's Return?! -- NONE WOULD DENY THIS!

But, here Paul connects the time at which the creation "ITSELF ALSO SHALL BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION" with the exact same time when the saints are brought "into the glorious liberty of the children of God," -- AND IRREFUTABLY, THAT TIME SHALL BE AT THE TIME OF CHRIST'S RETURN -- NOT 1,000 YEARS LATER.

Shall the saints be glorified 1,000 years after Christ's Return? NO, A THOUSAND TIMES MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS, NO! The saints will receive the redemption of their body at the time of Christ's return, and that is the same time at which this present heaven and earth shall pass away and be resurrected into the "better and enduring substance" of the New Heavens and the New Earth.

But yet further, consider the following:

Matthew 24:39 "And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Here, without question, Jesus is speaking of what shall occur at His Return. Noah and the 7 with him in the ark were the only ones who survived the Flood, and that universal Judgment "took them ALL away" who were not in the ark. Likewise, when Christ Returns, only those who are in Christ Jesus shall survive -- ALL others shall be TAKEN AWAY.

Nahum 1:5-8 describes what shall occur when the blazing glory of Christ appears at His Revelation -- a glory multiplied millions of times brighter and hotter than the Sun: "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.** 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. The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. But **WITH AN OVERRUNNING FLOOD HE WILL MAKE AN UTTER END OF THE PLACE THEREOF,** and darkness shall pursue his enemies."

The immeasurable, vehement magnitude of Christ's glory and wrath at the time of His Second Coming has been immensely underestimated!!! There will be no millennium on this present earth following Christ's Return because this world shall be "burned at His presence" along with all of the wicked who shall be destroyed "with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. 2:8)! But, even if the present universe did survive, the picture is clear: there would be none to live on it except the righteous who survived the "overrunning flood" of God's fiery wrath.

Read Malachi's description of The Day of Christ's Return:

The Day when Christ "makes up his Jewels" -- the day when He Returns, He shall spare His Children, "as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." A clear distinction shall be made "between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." And, **THE DAY OF CHRIST'S RETURN** -- the day when His Children are glorified like Jewels -- "**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. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.." (Mal. 3:17--4:2).

Jesus referred to the passing away of this heaven and this earth in connection with His Return on purpose, because **THAT IS WHEN IT SHALL OCCUR.** He did not get things out of chronological order in His Olivet Discourse. That close connection between His Return and the passing away of this heaven and earth is seen in Mat 24:29-30, along with 33-34: "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: 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... **HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY,** but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Matthew 24 pictures the events connected with His Return, which include the passing away of this present heaven and earth; Matthew 25 describes the General Judgment. Quite clearly, the order of events shall be: Christ's Return, the Resurrection, Transformation and Rapture of the Righteous, the Fiery Destruction of the wicked, the Dissolution of the Universe that now is, the Judgment of all at the Great White Throne Judgment, then the appearance of the New Heavens and New Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness -- **IN RAPID SUCCESSION -- NOT WITH 1,000 YEARS OF TIME** between any of these events.

Notice John the Revelator's description in 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" [this last phrase meaning:-- the present heaven and earth were nowhere to be found].

When Christ Returns, "the earth and the heavens shall flee away before His face" -- then, the wicked, having been raised, shall be brought to Judgment: Rev 20:12 "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."

Then, rapidly following the Judgment we read in Rev. 21:1 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away."

In confirmation of my assertion that the Bible teaches that this present heavens and earth shall pass away at Christ's Return, and not 1,000 years later, I also present the following:

In John 18:36, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world..."

Search as you may, neither Jesus, nor the entire Bible, speak of more than 2 different worlds:-- nothing is said about 3 different worlds: this world, the millennial world, and the world to come. Please read the following:

Matthew 12:32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in THIS WORLD, neither in THE WORLD TO COME.

Ephesians 1:21 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."

Mark 10:30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now IN THIS TIME, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and IN THE WORLD TO COME eternal life.

Luke 18:30 Who shall not receive manifold more IN THIS PRESENT TIME, and IN THE WORLD TO COME life everlasting.

1 Timothy 4:8 "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of THE LIFE THAT NOW IS, and of THAT WHICH IS TO COME."

Unless one has a prophetic "ax to grind," it should be clear that both Jesus and the Bible speak of only 2 Worlds in which the Christian shall live, and only 2 Lives for them: This world, and the Eternal, New World to Come, and This Life, and that Eternal Life to come.

Colossians 3:2 tells the Christian: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Is it any wonder, then, that the saints of God do not think affectionately about coming back to spend another 1,000 years on this present earth after their resurrection and glorification! Many whose minds are confused by the Millennialist teaching have hearts that are "set on things above" and in their prayers, godly living, and fondest hopes their goal is "The Holy City," not the earthly Jerusalem and not on a dwelling-place somewhere on this earth for 1,000 more years after their resurrection and rapture. **I SAY, THEIR HEARTS SQUARE WITH THE BIBLE IN BEING SET UPON THE CITY FOURSQUARE -- FOR THAT IS WHERE THEY ARE GOING DIRECTLY AFTER THE RETURN OF CHRIST, FOLLOWING THE JUDGMENT!**

James 2:5 says: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" Christ has not promised His children a kingdom that is located in "this world" -- for even 1,000 years -- but rather "the kingdom which he hath promised them" is an heavenly kingdom that shall be everlasting! Anyone reading James 2:5 should be able to see clearly that the apostle makes a clear distinction between the present location of God's people in "this world" and their promised relocation "in the Kingdom" of Christ -- the former being a mundane residence in "this world" but the latter being located in the New Heavens and the New Earth.

Revelation 11:15 tells us that following the sounding of the Seventh Angel Christ "shall reign for ever and ever," not for 1,000 years.

But what about Matthew 5:5?: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."? Peter answers that for the Christian: "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... Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (3:7, 13). **THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT -- "THE NEW EARTH" WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS -- AND NOTHING BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOREVER!** This must be so, for in another place Peter says that God's people are destined "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.." (1 Pet. 1:4).

I conclude with this:

When the Grace of God teaches the saint to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts," and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, **IN THIS PRESENT WORLD,**" while "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:12-13), I believe that part of the realization of that "blessed hope" shall be their soon and sweet ushering into the New Heavens and New Earth -- not delayed by 1,000 long years in this present world -- even in a temporarily "patched up" condition.

Before His Crucifixion, Jesus announced to His Father, "I have glorified thee **ON THE EARTH: I HAVE FINISHED THE WORK WHICH THOU GAVEST ME TO DO.**" (John 17:4).

Nothing remained for Him to do on earth but to die on the Cross, and then tarry shortly for 40 days teaching his disciples, after which came his Ascension and disappearance into Glory. I maintain that the only work on this earth that remains for Christ to do is the work of fiery Judgment

which shall be totally accomplished at his Second Coming, and that work will be quick and will not drag on for 1,000 years, "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Rom. 9:28).

Acts 17:24 tell us: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, DWELLETH NOT IN TEMPLES MADE WITH HANDS." How then, do folks expect the glorified Christ to inhabit for 1,000 years an earthly temple?

In Acts 7:49, the Lord says: "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?" -- How then do folks expect Him to reign for even 1 second, let alone for 1,000 years, sitting on this earth, His Footstool.

The Hope and Home of the Saints is the New Heavens and the New Earth, and the Throne of Christ is in the Heavenly City! Therefore, shortly after His Return, that is where they shall be! -- FOREVER!

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08 -- MARGARET MACDONALD AND THE INTERESTING PRE-TRIB ORIGIN

A -- INTRODUCTION

I shall present the following information as a matter of fact. PLEASE NOTE:-- I SHALL NOT ENTER INTO DEBATE UPON THE SUBJECT. Before ever I came across the book, revealing to me the modern origin of the Pre-Trib Rapture Theory, after extensive research and study I had already discarded this theory as both unBiblical and unsupported by a sound exegesis of Second Coming prophecy. I reached this conclusion: (a) After having been schooled in the Pre-Trib teaching and preaching it for a number of years; and (b) After trying to rid my mind of all prejudice and embarking upon a study of the subject objectively, regardless of whether my final conclusions led me to believe differently from the stated position of the Church in which I was an ordained elder, and regardless of whether or not taking a different position would subject me to censure and ridicule. In short, I sought TO KNOW FOR MYSELF WHAT I HONESTLY BELIEVED THAT THE BIBLE TAUGHT REGARDING THIS AND OTHER SECOND COMING PROPHECY.

Have you ever tried to honestly discern for yourself -- free from all prejudices and ecclesiastical pressures -- what you believe about this or that? No, there is no virtue in being a maverick, but sometimes it does take a bit of courage to be objective in one's study on Bible topics, and the easiest thing for any preacher to do is "follow the accepted line" -- the one everyone else in your denomination believes, and the one which by accepting will cause you the least difficulty.

At one time, I was denied my District Preacher's License because I honestly voiced my opinion on a matter which I then believed, and still do believe, is totally secondary and peripheral to the main line: heart holiness. Don't bother asking me what that was, for I shall not answer the

inquiry, and indeed I shall not respond to challenges to what is set forth in this article. I do not publish it to open a debate -- but merely to present to my readers some facts and my views regarding them.

Let me preface the information which I shall present below with this statement:-- THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF ANY SCRIPTURAL SUBJECT (INCLUDING SECOND COMING PROPHECY) DOES NOT DEPEND UPON ITS ANTIQUITY, NOR IS IT NECESSARILY WRONG BECAUSE IT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE FOUND WIDELY TAUGHT IN THE EARLIEST CENTURIES OF CHURCH HISTORY. Also, a teaching is not necessarily wrong because the first, modern exponent of it was in error regarding some other Biblical doctrine(s). We all know that true doctrine (in any and every realm) depends upon only one thing: "WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?" -- Romans 4:3; Galatians 4:30.

NOW -- HOLD ONTO OUR SEAT, CONSERVATIVE HOLINESS BELIEVERS IN THE PRE-TRIB THEORY -- therefore, the fact that THE MODERN, PRE-TRIB TEACHING ORIGINATED WITH A TONGUES LASSIE, MARGARET MACDONALD, IN 1830, DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT IT IS UNTRUE. However, I am convinced that most believers in the Pre-Trib Rapture do not know this, and further, I am convinced that most of today's conservative holiness advocates know little or nothing of HOW THE PRE-TRIB TEACHING WAS SCATTERED ABROAD BY THE CALVINIST, SCOFIELD BIBLE before being accepted by many of those in the Holiness Movement. Nevertheless, I assert that these are facts.

So far as I am aware, the teaching of a Split-Second-Coming was never known to be taught by anyone in the Christian Church prior to 1830, when it was then first set forth by one Margaret MacDonald, a Scottish, Tongues Lassie. While some writers have suggested that Victorinus, who lived in the third century, may have hinted at a secret Rapture, I think that this is probably more of "a stretch" than a fact, and one writer says, "it is certain that no body of Christians ever taught it before 1830."

Wesley knew nothing of it, nor Fletcher, nor Adam Clarke, nor any of the early Methodists. Those who advocate Wesleyan doctrine should be aware that the Pre-Trib teaching is NOT a Wesleyan doctrine. After Margaret MacDonald claimed to have had a vision, revealing a Split-Rapture-Revelation, this teaching was taken up by other Tongues people, the Irvingites, and it was later adopted by the Darbyites and Plymouth Brethren, and by C. I. Scofield, who widely disseminated the Pre-Trib theory in his Calvinistic Bible.

It does not appear to be until some time after the Civil War in America that the Pre-Trib theory being scattered abroad in this Calvinistic Bible was first taken up by some in the Holiness Movement. So far as I am aware Mid-1800s Holiness Leaders like John S. Inskip, William McDonald, Alfred Cookman, M. L. Haney, and Beverly Carradine never did endorse this teaching, if ever they even heard of it -- and, it was decried by the likes of George Muller and A. M. Hills!

Two of the early Holiness proponents of the Scofield-Bible-scattered Pre-Trib Teaching were W. B. Godbey and L. L. Pickett, and it seems to have been Dr. Godbey who may have converted M. W. Knapp to the Pre-Trib teaching. And, if I recall correctly from my past reading,

because of his strong belief in the Pre-Trib teaching L. L. Pickett ceased selling the books of the great A. M. Hills because Dr. Hills was against that teaching, or at least did not endorse it.

I was quite unaware of these things when I came to the conclusion that -- for myself -- I was no longer a believer in, nor teacher of, what I came to consider as the mistaken teaching of a Split-Rapture-Revelation. One's opinion on the matter should not be decided by what others have or have not believed about it. However, I think that probably MOST conservative holiness folks today who have swallowed this teaching without question are unaware of just how unWesleyan it is in its origin, and how closely connected its roots are with Tongues folks, with C. I Scofield's Calvinistic Bible, and with those diametrically opposed to heart holiness as a second, definite work of grace.

It seems passing strange to me, and quite incongruous, that so many Holiness folks, who shun with utter abhorrence the Tongues and Calvinistic teachings, should at the same time "Parrot" with little or no investigation a teaching that originated with a Tongues girl, and that was, and is, widely spread by Calvinists and those who denounce the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification. Nevertheless, as stated above, these associations neither disprove nor verify the Pre-Trib theory.

To see a comprehensive presentation of my views on eschatology -- which are by no means based on a discrediting of Pre-Trib teaching because of the above -- the reader is invited to read my book, "His Appearing and His Kingdom," in the HDM Library under my listings as hdm0124. THAT BOOK IS MY REPLY TO THE QUESTIONS OF THOSE WHO WISH TO DEBATE WHAT IS PRESENTED IN THIS ARTICLE.

Do you say, "That is unfair; you present things in this article and will not allow me to rebut them to you." Well, think of it what you will -- I DO have a desire to present this article, but I DO NOT desire to debate the matter with you -- AND I SHALL NOT. Personally, I believe what I believe about eschatology -- for reasons which are to me both sound and satisfactory. However, at the same time, I also confess that I could be wrong.

Further, after much examination, I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT "ANY" -- AND I MEAN "ANY" -- INTERPRETATION OF SECOND COMING PROPHECY CAN BE NAILED DOWN WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY! I have looked at it much like a fellow trying to nail-down a badly-warped board, who -- after nailing down the first 3 corners of that board -- drives in and clinches the nail in the 4th corner -- whereupon one of the other corners pops back up! -- and, try as he may, using any combination he may select, every time he tries to nail down with absolute certainty the 4th corner of his "board of Second Coming interpretation" then one of the other corners pops up!

Do you say, "Not so! I have them all nailed down with absolute certainty!" I doubt that; you may have them all nailed down to your own satisfaction, but I think that it behooves every advocate of a particular theory on the Second Coming to be totally honest -- and if they are, I think that we all must admit -- "I MAY BE WRONG"!

Yes, I may be wrong! Margaret MacDonald may have gotten a genuine revelation from the Lord, and the Pre-Trib teaching may be right, even though first espoused by a Tongues Lassie in 1830 -- the Truth IS progressively revealed -- and, maybe God chose to bring this revelation into the world through this Tongues girl at this late date. Maybe, in spite of all doubts to the contrary, it is the correct view, even though it was early-on advocated by Calvinist Darbyites, Plymouth Brethren, and C. I. Scofield in his Calvinist Bible. Maybe, even though it was unknown to Wesley, Fletcher, Clarke, Early Methodists, not advocated by Inskip, Cookman, McDonald, Haney, and Carradine, and repudiated by George Muller and A. M. Hills -- yes, maybe it is still the right teaching. I simply do not accept it as such.

Those who are 1000 % per cent positive, that the Lord will come Before, During, or After the Tribulation, might do well to consider again Jesus' own warning in Matthew 24:44 "...in such an hour as YE think not the Son of man cometh."

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B -- THE 1830 ORIGIN OF THE PRETRIB TEACHING

In about 1974, while I was pastor of the Bible Missionary Church in Portland, Oregon I entered upon my own extensive study of eschatology and subsequently abandoned the Pre-Trib teaching. Some time later, I came upon a book by Dave MacPherson titled: "THE UNBELIEVABLE PRE-TRIB ORIGIN." He was -- and may still be -- a Baptist and no doubt a Calvinist, of all things, but HE DECIDED TO FIND OUT THE TRUE ORIGIN OF THE PRE-TRIB TEACHING -- probably having already discarded it as the true teaching on the subject. His discoveries only added fuel to his reasons for repudiating and disowning the Pre-Trib theory.

Because his book is copyrighted, I cannot present the digital version to you en toto -- even though I have created one for myself. I will therefore confine myself to some brief quotations therefrom, and some recitations of facts found in the book, which was published by Dave MacPherson's "Heart of America Bible Society," Kansas City, Missouri, in 1973.

In the Foreword to MacPherson's book, Dr. Arthur D. Katterjohn (another Calvinist who disowned the Pre-Trib teaching) states the following:

"This is a well-researched book containing a great number of excellent quotes from a variety of sources including some of the great evangelical scholars, both past and present. Mr. MacPherson's research was conducted in this country as well as in Scotland and England.

"This is a fascinating book written in a light, readable style. The author employs many short sentences, some well-turned phrases, and even a dash of humor here and there. I read it almost as a mystery book with a cast of characters, plots, and subplots.

"This is an important book in that Mr. MacPherson has found evidence that no one else has found concerning the origin of the Pre-Trib Rapture theory. He has clarified a point that has eluded many evangelical prophecy writers and teachers. He has found a source book which documents the exact beginnings of the Pre-Trib school of interpretation.

"This is a book that needs to be published. It will be the basis of many articles and books in the years to come. Mr. MacPherson's book will not only be quoted by writers of differing prophetic positions but must inevitably be answered, and admitted or denied, by every leading Pre-Trib author, radio evangelist, and Bible teacher. -- Wheaton College, Prof. Arthur D. Katterjohn"

In his Preface to "The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin," dated January 31, 1973, author Dave MacPherson states that for 18 years following his graduation from college in 1955 he was a news reporter, but he said, "nothing -- absolutely nothing -- has ever intrigued me as much as my search into the origin of Pre-Trib (or two-stage) Rapture teaching."

He goes on to state that his search began in 1971 after the discovery of a rare book by Robert Norton that he found in an Illinois bookstore. His extensive and exhaustive research on the origin of the Pre-Trib theory took him to England and Scotland, and the sources of that research included: the British Museum, Edinburgh University Library, Evangelical Library, Mitchell Library, National Library of Scotland, and New College Library, as well as at other sources in the US such as the Central Baptist Seminary, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Nazarene Theological Seminary, and Wheaton College.

In his Chapter 1, the Introduction, MacPherson discusses the Pre-Trib vs. Post-Trib theories, and in Chapter 2, titled "Some Post-Scripts" he discusses how that while many Post-Trib writers pointed to 1830 as the year in which the Pre-Trib teaching originated, none did so with certainty, and none had pinpointed the precise source. In Chapter 3, titled "A Few Rebuttals" MacPherson quotes popular Pre-Trib writer Hal Lindsey as stating on page 181 of his book, "The Late Great Planet Earth" the following: "Christians after the early second century spent little time really defining prophetic truth until the middle of the nineteenth century. Then there seems to have been a great revival of interest in the prophetic themes of the Bible."

Pre-Trib teachers assert that there was a late, modern-day "revival" of an ancient teaching on the Split Rapture-Revelation theory, while Post-Trib teachers assert that the occurrence of 1830 can in no sense be properly interpreted as a "revival of an ancient Pre-Trib teaching" and that, rather, those occurrences constitute the very origin of that teaching in 1830.

In Chapter 4, "Can A Scribe Ascribe," and Chapter 5, "Narrowing The Nineteenth," MacPherson discusses the opinions of various writers concerning the origin of the Pre-Trib teaching -- none of which had all of their facts totally correct. But, he goes on to state:

"The two-stage Rapture view of the Brethren spread to America and other parts of the world in the latter part of the last century, and Darby visited the U.S. at least five times during that period. Darbyist dispensationalism was injected into the Scofield Reference Bible (1909), which has done much in this present century to further the idea of a two-stage, Pre-Trib Rapture."

"...The Irvingites [a Tongues group] were teaching it, as we have already noted, as early as September of 1830 in their prophetic journal the Morning Watch. And I think we can conclude that Darby was attempting to verify it by scripture towards the end of 1830. We also know that the

Brethren in Plymouth, England, took up this teaching not long after Darby's analysis of 2 Thess. 2:1-2."

It is in Chapter 6 that MacPherson reveals that it was Robert Norton's 1861 book "The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church," that put him on the search for how, when, and by whom, the Pre-Trib teaching first originated. MacPherson discovered and bought Norton's book on October 20, 1971 after "rummaging through stacks of uncatalogued and not-for-sale books on Irvingism in the back of an Illinois bookstore..." Norton's Book revealed that the Pre-Trib Teaching had originated with Miss Margaret MacDonald of Port Glasgow Scotland.

Quoting MacPherson: "Norton says it was Miss M. M. (Margaret MacDonald, as the context shows) who saw a two-stage coming, and declares that her account was the first time such a distinction was made! Immediately after this amazing paragraph are her words: 'I felt this needed to be revealed, and that there was great darkness and error about it; but suddenly what it was burst upon me with a glorious light.'"

In subsequent paragraphs of his Chapter 6, MacPherson chronicles the discovered character of Norton as one whose writings could be trusted, and states: "On the thirty-first of January, 1883, Dr. Robert Norton, the almost unknown and unsung chronicler of the Pre-Trib Rapture origin, died at 75 years of age."

In chapter 7, titled "Pattern of Events" MacPherson mentions the 1830 Scottish revival of charismatic gifts, and states that Norton's Book, "The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Apostolic Church" had thrown "much valuable light on the years immediately preceding the 1830 charismatic outburst."

One of those involved in the Scottish revival of those days was Margaret MacDonald. She and her family were members of the Church of Scotland but held private prayer meetings "of great length and fervor, being concerned with the salvation of their neighbors and the world at large." Norton states that about this time Margaret "had become increasingly an invalid, and was thought to be dying; when all at once she received the gift of prophecy."

Then came the revelation to Margaret of the Split-Rapture Revelation. According to Norton it came to her on a certain morning in early 1830, and she afterward wrote down a narrative of her vision titled: "Recollections of the first morning of the outpouring of the Spirit."

Margaret MacDonald and her sister Mary, along with her brothers, all spoke in tongues -- this is true. However, in fairness to Margaret MacDonald, I must admit that according to MacPherson: "Margaret's Pre-Trib revelation occurred sometime in the early part of 1830 before she and her brothers ever spoke in unknown tongues, that her views were being circulated in her hometown of Port Glasgow soon after her revelation and healing, and that the unknown tongues did not create her views but rather emphasized them..."

Margaret MacDonald's entire "Pre-Trib-Originating Vision" is recorded in the Appendix of MacPherson's book, which in turn is taken from the Norton book. Students of the subject may

still be able to obtain printed copies of Dave MacPherson's "The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin," however, I am not sure that it is still in print.

In her vision, Margaret MacDonald claims to have perceived that the Rapture of the Saints will be unseen by human eyes -- i. e., be "Secret" -- something that Pre-Trib believers and preachers still teach. As I see it, this cannot honestly square with Jesus' statement that His coming would be "as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west" (Matthew 24:27). When a bolt of lightning streaks across the sky -- it IS SUDDEN, but there is NO SECRET ABOUT IT! This contradiction of the Pre-Trib theory, however, is only the tip of a huge iceberg of contradictions as I see it. So, please do not think that I rest my opinions on this alone. Far from proclaiming a SECRET RAPTURE, in fact, Jesus warned the Church not to believe in such: "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" (Matthew 24:26).

Neither can an honest, straightforward interpretation of the Greek words parousia, apokalupsis, and epiphany prove a split Rapture-Revelation -- but this is Margaret MacDonald's teaching after her reported revelation. A letter from one converted to her theory in 1834 states: "you cannot be sealed where you are, it is because if you are not sealed you must be left in the tribulations."

* * *

C -- THE CONCLUSION

Whether one accepts or rejects the teaching itself, most seem to be agreed that the modern teaching of a Split Rapture-Revelation originated at or near the year 1830. Robert Norton's book, and subsequently Dave MacPherson's book, "The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin," pinpoint it to the exact year, 1830, and to the exact person, Scottish lassie Margaret MacDonald.

Were the results of her vision the revival of a long-lost truth? Perhaps, but I am more inclined to believe that the vision originated a teaching that was never once heard of nor believed in by the apostles, the early Church fathers, nor by John Wesley and the earliest Methodists -- indeed by none until after Margaret MacDonald's vision. MAKE OF IT WHAT YOU WILL.

In his biography of M. W. Knapp, A. M. Hills wrote:

"About the close of the five years of his life covered by this chapter, our brother became a Premillennialist, and made the following announcement in his paper, under date of February, 1897...

"What books he read and studied which led to this change of views I can not learn. I presume it was the influence of Brother Godbey. About this time there grew up a strong and intimate friendship between these two earnest souls, that continually deepened while life lasted. Business relations brought them much together, and probably it led to this change of opinion on this much-discussed doctrine. It occurs to me also that his association with Brother Pickett in revival work and in the making of "Tears and Triumphs" might have been a potent influence upon his mind.

"Upon this subject the holiness people are much divided, and equally good and scholarly people are on both sides. But the grace of sanctification enables them to work together on the main issue of the sanctifying work of our Savior, and to respect each other's opinions and the right honestly to entertain them. Certainly neither side will win their argument and convert those of an opposite mind by the use of bitter epithets and clubs and pitchforks. The time for that is past, especially among those professing holiness. These new views of Brother Knapp seemed to be a great comfort to him."

In light of Aaron Merritt Hills' magnanimity on this matter, if true, it is sad that Leander Lycurgus Pickett felt that he could no longer publish A. M. Hills' writings because Hills disagreed with the Pre-Trib theory. Eschatological beliefs -- as I see it -- should always take a back seat to the main theme: -- "Holiness Unto The Lord." You certainly need not agree with my views on the Second Coming.

"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," (Rom. 14:5) -- but none should be "cock-sure" on this subject. Will Rogers once hit the nail pretty well on the head when he observed: "It isn't what folks don't know that's the problem -- IT'S WHAT THEY KNOW FOR SURE THAT JUST ISN'T SO!" Selah.

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09 -- THE INCREASING KNOWLEDGE THAT SHALL FOREVER PERISH

"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" (Daniel 12:4 -- KJV).

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; WHETHER THERE BE KNOWLEDGE, IT SHALL VANISH AWAY" (KJV).

"Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; WHERE THERE IS KNOWLEDGE, IT WILL PASS AWAY" (1 Corinthians 13:8 -- NIV).

* * *

A -- THE VARIETY OF KNOWLEDGE THAT SHALL PERISH -- Yesterday, First Corinthians 13:8 above came to my attention as never before: "Knowledge is going to perish!" Somehow, this astonishing fact had never sunk into my mind before, in all of the times I had read this scripture. When we take into account that "the Lord is a God of knowledge," (1 Samuel 2:3), this statement seems all the more incredible.

But, as I pondered Paul's astonishing statement, I knew that he must be referring to a specific variety or type of knowledge, for it is contrary to other scriptures that ALL knowledge

shall perish, and were all knowledge to perish then God Himself must needs perish -- and that shall not be. In the Eternal State, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," said the prophet in Isaiah 11:9, and in Habakkuk 2:14 the same truth is stated: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." None should doubt that throughout eternity "the knowledge of God" shall never perish. Thus, in order to rightly comprehend Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 13:8 we must perceive what is the variety of knowledge that shall "pass away" and forever "vanish".

Taking our deductions a step farther, we can rightly conclude concerning the lost that, having seen the Living God at the Judgment, they shall forever know that He exists, and "the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20) unforgiven that brought their doom shall never be erased from their minds. Conversely, among the redeemed, the "knowledge of salvation" (Luke 1:77) shall never vanish. In both Hell and Heaven various types of knowledge shall always exist -- shall never perish and vanish away.

Therefore, I assert that we are forced to conclude that the knowledge which shall forever perish is **EARTHLY KNOWLEDGE -- KNOWLEDGE THAT PERTAINS TO THIS WORLD AND TO TIME -- KNOWLEDGE THAT IS SPIRITUALLY AND MENTALLY APART FROM THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ETERNAL STATE.**

This "Earthly Knowledge" that shall forever vanish is no doubt mostly secular in character, but the context of St. Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 13 makes it clear also that much earthly knowledge of the religious sort shall also pass away with the dawning of Eternity.

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B -- THE VOTARIES OF KNOWLEDGE THAT SHALL PERISH -- Through the prophet Daniel, God informed us that in the last times knowledge was going to increase, as indeed it has, and is -- with its many votaries running to and fro, as thirsty to gain more earthly knowledge as the alcoholic is to take his next drink. To many, each new bit of earthly knowledge gained is as exhilarating as the "high" of a heroine addict after his "fix". In the mad pursuit for earthly knowledge, its votaries, its devotees and worshippers are "ever learning," but "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" of Christ. They are "hooked on the hunt" for more knowledge about what makes this earth and the universe tick. That is one of the big reasons why mundane learning is increasing at such supersonic speeds today.

The more rapidly the last grains of earthly time fall through the hour-glass chute of this world's measured existence, and the closer we come to the moment when "time shall be no longer," the more frantically the votaries of earthly knowledge pursue its secrets. The accumulation of earthly knowledge since my birth 65 years ago is mind boggling, and the rapidity with which it has increased in the last two decades is particularly amazing!

Asbury and Boehm stood amazed at their first sight of a steam-boat; others were astonished at the sight of the first "aero-planes," as they called them; the whole world was awed by Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and I, like many others my age, marveled in 1957 when hearing of

Sputnik, the first man-made satellite to orbit the earth. Millions later marveled also as the Russian Cosmonaut, Uri Gagarin, became the first man in space, and even more were enthralled when the American Astronaut, Neil Armstrong, stepped onto the surface of the moon, announcing to a listening world that this was, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

In rapid succession, the Steam Age was followed by the Air-Travel Age, that by the Atomic Age, that by the Jet Age, and that by the Space Age. Then fast on the heels of the latter has come the Computer Age, enabling the votaries of earthly knowledge to speed up by light years the accumulation of vast amounts of knowledge and the solution of mathematical problems which took years only a few decades ago, but can now be obtained in seconds!

With the advent of the Computer Age has come the greatly increased knowledge into the very building-blocks of animal and human life. Cloning has begun, the human genome is being mapped -- and -- perhaps within a few months (or less) we shall learn in this year (2002) that the first cloned human being is now in the world! Yesterday, I heard that they are developing a computer data storage device which, though no larger than a postage stamp, shall be able to store such huge amounts of electronic data that it will soon make our multi-gigabyte Hard Drives seem like an antiquated joke of the antique past! Advancements in technology and science are coming so rapidly today that what you take home off the store-shelf was well on its way toward becoming obsolete before you even bought it!

Why is this so? -- to a great extent because millions of votaries of earthly knowledge are rushing at break-neck speeds to be the first to explore, to discover, and to advance earthly sciences -- partly because of the money, fame, and power to be gained therefrom -- and partly because they are "hooked on the opiate of learning" and mesmerized by the means of doing so!

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C -- THE VEILING OF KNOWLEDGE THAT SHALL PERISH -- The reason St. Paul gave for the Divine Dissolution of Earthly Knowledge is that it shall vanish because it is Partial Knowledge -- knowledge that lacks all of the facts: "whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. FOR WE KNOW IN PART... But when that which is perfect is come, then THAT WHICH IS IN PART SHALL BE DONE AWAY" (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

Perhaps most of us who have lived a few decades have heard the saying, "A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE IS A DANGEROUS THING." There is a lot of truth in this sage observation. When I was a lad of 13, I dared to get in mother's 1942 Ford Business Coupe while she was in the house, put it in neutral, turn on the key, and start the engine. Next, I dared to put it in gear and move it a bit; then I dared to back it down the alley behind our house and drive it back to its parking place under a tree. After this, I dared to drive the car out onto 16th Street, turn right, proceed to Center Avenue, turn right again, and drive up to just outside our next-door neighbor's house. There, I decided I had better turn around, but in the process I backed into a car owned by someone visiting the neighbors. Little damage was done, and the kind fellow let me off with paying him \$5 for the damage I did. I was glad that my mother seemed to be more proud of me than she was inclined to punish me for this audacious experimentation of her 13-year-old son.

I was fortunate. The damage resulting from my experimenting with that about which I had "a little knowledge" turned out to be minor. But, let me tell you something folks, frequently when people know a little bit about something, and start playing around with it, the consequences prove fatal -- to themselves, and sometimes to others!

Scientists who are even now tinkering with the building blocks of human life are worse than a smart-aleck 5-year-old kid who has started the engine on a Mack Truck and is about to get it moving! -- they know just enough to cause BIG TROUBLE! You wait and see:-- before it's all over, some of us may live to see what horrors they shall unleash on this world through genetically engineered vegetables, animals, and the cloning of both animals and humans! I predict that the creatures evolving from some of this high-minded, but grossly ignorant, experimentation are going to unleash on this earth some real horrors far worse than those of the mythical Frankenstein!

Isaiah 47:10 paints a good picture of today's atheistic scientists: "For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee..." Too often, Partial Knowledge is Perverted Knowledge in our world -- knowledge which entices scientists, and others, to tinker with things about which they know far too little to be experimenting with them!

Today's scientists "know in part" about what makes the universe tick -- but the tiny part they know is really infinitesimal, even though some of them vainly imagine that it is almost becoming universal! What little bit they do know is "perverted" (more ways than one)! It is impossible for them to learn what really makes things "tick" because they have written off the existence of "THE TICKER" -- GOD HIMSELF! In Colossians 1:17, Paul tell us that "by HIM all things consist." I am not a Pantheist when I say this, but -- when you start playing around with life's building blocks, and the things of which this universe consists, you are playing fast and loose with HIM BY WHOM ALL THINGS CONSIST AND EXIST! "For in HIM we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

IT IS CHRIST WHO IS "UPHOLDING ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER" (Heb. 1:3). Every molecule, every atom, every scintilla of every element and every life-form is momentarily and constantly under his Omnipotent observation and control! The mythical creator of the fictional Frankenstein could not control what he created. This is not so with Christ -- He not only created all, but He controls all as well -- and, He has ordained that those who tinker with things which He has reserved to His own control shall, in so doing, bring destruction upon themselves!

The vaunted advances of science today, and the intrusions of men into the things reserved to God Himself, are actually hastening the destruction of the Universe in its present state. It is ironic that those who imagine they are making strides toward the preservation of the earth and the prolonging of human life on earth are actually having the exact opposite effect!

"Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?" (Psa. 14:4; 53:4). Answer: They have "a little knowledge" that "is a dangerous thing," and not nearly as much real knowledge as they imagine! The mass of today's brainy scientists in every realm should heed Isaiah 44:25, which speaks of the God Who "frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth

wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish"! They should heed also Hosea 4:6, which says that "people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"! For lack of complete knowledge, the brainy dunces of the 21st Century are doing nothing more than to help set the timer for the universe to self-destruct.

Too many today have just enough partial knowledge of things to make them think they know enough to tinker with them. Some of these Dunces with Doctorates should also heed the common sense advice that says: "If it's running, don't fix it!" -- because their blundering repairs are merely exacerbating the problems on this planet. To quote Will Rogers one more time, too often today: "The problem isn't what folks don't know; it's what they know for sure that just isn't so!"

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D -- THE VANITY AND VAUNTING OF KNOWLEDGE THAT SHALL PERISH -- Paul aptly described it, when he wrote: "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (1 Cor. 8:1). In these last days, as knowledge increases by quantum leaps, the pride of wicked men has, at the same time, inflated into gargantuan dimensions! St. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 8:2 "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." Today we have tiny, immoral pip-squeaks parading themselves like boastful Goliaths, and vaunting with loud voices their supposed, immense knowledge while pooh-poohing the stupid little David-like bunch of "born-again Christians" as if they were all a bunch of intellectual imbeciles!

Most all of today's scientists, politicians, and talk-show hosts (left-wingers and right-wingers) are legends all right -- but not "legends in their own time" as they vainly imagine, but instead, "legends in their own mind"! About 7 years ago or so, I remember that when the braggadocios Rush Limbaugh was criticized by Christians for some of his vulgarities, he proudly and disdainfully retorted with: "Jesus loves me, this I know, and I think He tunes my show!" Well, at the judgment it is not going to be Jesus tuned to Rush Limbaugh's show, but quite the opposite: little, insignificant Rush Limbaugh will be TUNED TO JESUS' SHOW! -- Who on that Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord "shall SHOW, Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15)! I guarantee you, when that occurs, Rush will Hush! Every loud-mouth braggart will be stunned speechless on that Day! -- and those who fancied they knew the most will see then that they knew absolutely nothing as they ought to have known it!

Job 15:2 "Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?" No, but millions who are worldly-wise today are, in God's sight, nothing but little puff-toads, filled with hot air! In many things it is true that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light," but they know much less about what really matters than they vainly imagine! When the Last Trump sounds, their gargantuan, but hot-air filled balloons of knowledge will suddenly be pierced by the Sword of Christ, and will instantly "pop" and deflate into the minute nothingness of their true size.

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E -- THE VANISHING AND VALUELESSNESS OF KNOWLEDGE THAT SHALL PERISH -- According to the apostle Paul, there is a form of knowledge that shall eternally vanish

-- it will be gone, utterly gone, forever! As I asserted above, I believe the knowledge that is doomed thus to perish is Earthly Knowledge.

As earthly knowledge has increased across the millennia, men have learned a huge amount about the elements, about the genetic make-up of plants, animals, and the human body. All of this knowledge will vanish! Why? Because the New Heavens and New Earth will not be constructed of, nor consist of, the same matter. According to Hebrews 10:34, they will consist of "a better and an enduring substance." Of what use will all of the knowledge about the substance of this universe and the forms of life on this earth be, when they no longer exist? None! That knowledge shall be utterly valueless, and therefore God will cause it to perish and to vanish -- forever!

What good in either Hell or Heaven will there be for knowledge about the human body as it was in this world? None! The enduring substance of both the damnation bodies of those in Hell and the glorified bodies of the saints in Heaven will be a different substance altogether. In Hell, doctors could do one no good, and in Heaven they won't be needed. So, you see, there won't be any Md.s in either place, and the earthly knowledge of every brainy physician will forever vanish!

But, there will be no D.D.s in Hell or Heaven either. Yes, there will doubtless be some who were such in both places, but what need will there be in either place for Theological Knowledge, however highly esteemed and touted it may have been among ecclesiastics in this world? None! In this world, the most accurate Theologian sees "through a glass, darkly," but Eternity will be that which is void of explanation and filled with experience. There will be no need to explain and define God, Heaven, Hell, or myriad other things, to the inhabitants of either place -- all will know by personal experience, either to their eternal grief or eternal joy. In eternity, all shall know, even as they are now known (See 1 Cor. 13:9-12). Yes, I do believe that heavenly knowledge will increase to the saints, but this may also come to them more by experience than by explanation. One thing I think is very certain: Earthly Knowledge, as I have defined it, shall vanish and be absolutely valueless in both Heaven and Hell.

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F -- THE VICTIMS OF KNOWLEDGE THAT SHALL PERISH -- Earthly knowledge shall perish to both the wicked and the righteous, but only the former shall be victims of the knowledge that shall forever vanish. When Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they obtained the knowledge of evil, having already had the knowledge of good. Those who continue to know and do evil until they die shall forever be the victims of that knowledge of evil.

Victims of the knowledge that shall perish will include countless millions whose heads were stuffed full of earthly knowledge, but who had not the knowledge of God. Proverbs 1:7 declares that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Great masses in the Lake of Fire will be those who had no fear of God and who despised the teachings of Christ and His lowly preachers on earth, while avidly embracing many other things related to earthly knowledge.

The victims of the knowledge that perishes will also include great numbers of Theologians, whose false teachings had the effect of that described by Jesus in Luke 11:52, and whose

damnation shall be the same: "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

The victims of the knowledge that shall perish will also include millions who were shrewd in their doings and dealings in this world -- people who "got by" without being arrested or punished for their evil deeds in this world -- people who were "wise to do evil, but to do good they [had] no knowledge" (Jer. 4:22).

And, the victims of doomed, earthly knowledge shall be those who spent their lives, "ever learning" about countless others things, but who through neglect "never came to the knowledge of the truth" as it is in Jesus. "For in much wisdom" apart from Christ "is much grief: and he that increaseth" worldly "knowledge" without the knowledge of Salvation "increaseth sorrow" that shall be suffered in Hell (Ecclesiastes 1:18).

Finally, the victims of vanishing earthly knowledge shall be those who "did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and whom God gave over "to a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28). They sealed their doom before death by shutting the doors of their minds to the entrance of Truth. In this world, they wanted to know everything but God, and they shall be doomed to knowing nothing from God but the awesome fact of His existence, their damnation, and the everlasting pains of His wrath.

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G -- THE VICTORS OVER THE KNOWLEDGE THAT SHALL PERISH -- In this world, too much emphasis and too much value is placed on earthly knowledge, and too much disdain is manifest toward those who are relatively ignorant and uneducated. This attitude has been imbibed from the world by much of the professed church. THIS is the reason why many congregations today prefer as pastor a man with a D.D. who is spiritually lifeless above a man who is filled with the Spirit, but who has little theological education.

But heaven is going to be populated with more than scholars, and probably more will be there who were not scholars on earth than those who were such. Heaven will be populated by those who could not learn (like my Brother Roger who was born pitifully retarded, and like babes who were butchered by abortion) -- with those who had little opportunity to learn -- and with those who purposely learned little of the earthly knowledge so that they might learn much about Biblical and Spiritual knowledge.

It is such as these who shall be the victors when earthly knowledge perishes and forever vanishes on the Day of Christ. In the New Jerusalem, one who was a dunce on earth will know more than any Einstein who inhabited this present, evil world. "He that is perfect in knowledge" (Job 36:4), shall bestow upon all of His own in that glory world a knowledge vastly superior to that puny and passing earthly knowledge that shall then have vanished -- forever! There will not be one Ph.D., M.D., or D.D. in Hell who would not gladly trade places with the most pitiful dunce on earth who then dwells in the Holy City!

The Victims of Vanishing Knowledge shall forever rue their ignorance of what really mattered, and the Victors Over Vanishing Knowledge shall forever rejoice with their astonishing, God-given brilliance, giving praise to Christ, world without end!

Dear Saint of God, it is no virtue to be unlearned in this world, but do not despair too much over your earthly dullness. Hosea presented a word of cheer to God's people when he wrote: "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" (Hosea 6:3).

If you know Jesus and His salvation, you know what really matters, and you know more than many wizards of this world think they know. Furthermore, "if you follow on" and continue "to know the Lord" till life's end you shall be endowed with the brilliant and everlasting knowledge of Christ's VICTORS OVER THE KNOWLEDGE THAT PERISHES!

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10 -- FIVE STRANGE THINGS CHRIST CAME TO DO

INTRODUCTION

THE STRANGER OF GALILEE DID AND SAID STRANGE THINGS -- strange, that is, to those who have an incorrect perception of the real nature of his mission on earth:

And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things today" (Luke 5:26).

When the apostle Paul preached Christ's message to the Athenians, they said to him: "Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean" (Acts 17:20).

In a very real sense, Jesus was a Religious Maverick -- One who went contrary to the things expected of the Jewish Messiah and One Who purposely said some things to make the Jews of His time sit up and take notice! -- startling things, but yet things that were very true. Furthermore, some of the things which Jesus declared that He came to do are, even today, 180 degrees backward from what worldly-minded people perceive to be the purpose of His Coming.

Let us consider below, five of Christ's declarations about the purpose of His Coming that sound "strange" to millions who know Him not -- and one of which may even sound strange to some of His people:

* * *

A -- CHRIST CAME TO START WAR -- "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). Too often, the world's concept of Christ is love, love, love, and peace, peace, peace! -- all so cuddly and tranquil that anything that

disturbs is considered "strange" and foreign to the loving and lowly Jesus. Contrary to this notion, someone has said that He came "to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable"!

The fact is, Christ did come to start a war on earth -- a war the battles of which have continued now for nearly 2,000 years and which shall climax with the real "Mother of all Battles," at Christ's Return. Yes, it is true that the war of which Jesus spake is a spiritual war, and the battles fought in it have been spiritual, but so antagonistic are the forces opposing one another that the last great battle of this war will so pose the Almighty, spiritual weaponry of Christ against the powers of wicked men that they shall be literally slaughtered! In a very real sense, Christ came to start war, and what He begins He finishes -- and that successfully!

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B -- CHRIST CAME TO DIVIDE PEOPLE -- "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law" (Matthew 10:35). "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division" (Luke 12:51). The war Christ started when He came has also divided the earth -- and that into a much greater division than was caused in our nation when the North was pitted against the South in the war against slavery. In the US Civil (or should I say, unCivil) War families and brothers were divided in our nation, some fighting in the Union Army and some in the Confederate Army.

But that heart-wrenching warfare divided only one nation. The spiritual war started by Christ has divided families, parents, and children around the globe -- the larger number by multiplied millions fighting on the side of the devil and the much fewer number truly fighting on the side of Christ (though many more profess to be on Christ's side). However, "there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few," and His side is sure to win, for while satan is powerful, Christ is ALL-POWERFUL! and on the Day of the Lord the entire assembled Universe will discover this! Following Christ's victory over all wicked men and devils, "before Him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. 25:32). What a division that will be! -- the goats being sent into everlasting fire and sheep being ushered eternally into the Kingdom of Christ.

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C -- CHRIST CAME TO BLIND PEOPLE -- "Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind" (John 9:39). Of all of the "strange" things that Christ said, this seems to be the most strange -- that He came to make people blind! It seems so completely contradictory to His nature and to His purposes, but there is a real sense in which it is true. But in what sense are we to take this? The answer is found in its context. Jesus was talking to a bunch of Pharisees, and after He made the remark in John 9:39, "some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth" (John 9:40-41).

Those whom Christ blinds are those who "say, we see" -- they are folks who insist upon walking according to their own understanding instead of obediently walking in the Light of Divine Revelation, God's Word. It has been said, "None are so blind as those who WILL NOT SEE," and this is the crowd whom Christ did -- still does -- and always shall -- make blind. It is the same crowd of whom Paul wrote, saying: "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:11-12).

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D -- CHRIST CAME TO TORCH THE PLANET -- "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" (Luke 12:49). WISE-UP, ALL OF YOU WOULD-BE ENVIRONMENTAL SAVIORS OF THE WORLD! -- Jesus is going to burn this world up! Yes, it is true that the above statement has its primary fulfillment in the fact that Christ came to ignite a spiritual blaze on earth, but it shall have its ultimate fulfillment on the Day of the Lord when "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" (2 Peter 3:10). No, He is not going to annihilate the earth, but he is going to change its spiritual "ecology," purging "out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matt. 13:41) -- including those who do the iniquity of butchering babies while protecting craw-dads!

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E -- CHRIST CAME TO GATHER A WICKED CROWD -- It is THIS strange fact that many in the conservative holiness Church need to face. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 12:49). Judging from the behavior and closed-door cloistering of many conservative Christians today, one would think that Christ came only to call the righteous together into small, little obscure gatherings!

The legalists of Jesus' day expected their Messiah to gather the righteous together and then to obliterate all of the wicked opponents of Israel. Thus, when He ignored their smug and self-righteous assemblies and went out among the sinners, they raised their eyebrows, declared Him a fraud, and called Him Beelzebub -- meaning "the dung-god"!

DID YOU READ THAT? What a blasphemous denigration of the Immaculately Pure Son of God! But why did they say that? Because He gathered sinners about Him and mingled among them, rather than calling together select crowds of self-righteous, spiritual snobs!

I had a man call me today who wanted a favor of me in helping him publish Christian material. He was quite friendly in his conversation with me, until I suggested that he could post an advertisement of his work on the Internet, and I also related to him how that Uchechi Waboso was saved recently after doing an Internet search and finding HDM. Then, he let me know that he did not use the Internet and politely, but shortly, ended the conversation. During the brief, latter part of our conversation, I also asked him whether he would conduct a street meeting outside of a bar? He was hesitant in his reply, and I am not sure he even said he would do that.

HOLINESS FOLKS -- WAKE UP! Do you think that Christ came to call you together into little obscure gatherings and that it is "there only" that He wishes His light to shine! Let me ask you something: -- What good is it, even to travel to the most remote spot on earth, if all that you do once you get there is open a hall or room in some obscure part of the area and conduct meetings there only -- praying that God will "send them in"?

Can it not be verily declared?: -- NEVER HAS THE HOLINESS CHURCH HAD MORE RULES IN THEIR MANUALS WITH FEWER WITNESSES IN THE WORLD! -- NEVER HAS THERE BEEN MORE OBSCURITY CONNECTED WITH PURITY -- THAN TODAY!

Christ declared to His true Church: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14) -- but the sad fact is today many who profess to have the most light, not only CAN BE HID, BUT ARE HIDDEN, and that so effectively that they appear, when seen at all, more like a flickering little candle in a deep cave than like a brilliantly lighted city set upon a hill!

Probably some ultra-conservative Holiness groups not only shun using the Internet, but also shun preaching on the Radio, advertising in the Newspaper, and passing out Tracts or holding Street-Meetings in seedy neighborhoods! I have even seen the case where the sign out in front of the little holiness church was so inconspicuous that one nearly had to be looking for it to notice it at all!

Do I hear the reply: "Well, the WEAPONS of our warfare are not carnal!"

I reply: "That may be the case, but what good is it, if the WITNESS of your truth is never heard, never read, and never seen anywhere but within the confines of your little cloister?"

Christ declared that THE LIGHT OF HIS TRUE CHURCH COULD NOT BE HID, and if a part of that Church is being quite successful in hiding that light, they are also in grave danger of snuffing it out -- for a light hidden under a bushel may soon suffocate! -- leaving behind nothing but darkness and a choking smoke!

The parable of the 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins emphasizes the need of having an adequate supply of oil in the lamps -- but all should realize that LIGHTS BURNING IN LAMPS FILLED WITH OIL CAN ALSO BE EXTINGUISHED BY BEING HIDDEN AND SMOTHERED UNDER A BUSHEL.

Yes, Christ came to gather a wicked crowd -- not to take part in their evil, but to impart from his virtue -- not to be light and merry in their darkness, but to be a Light of sobriety and truth in their darkness, leading them from sin to salvation and from shame to shining glory in heaven -- and, His Church is commissioned to be and to do likewise.

Who can say who shall receive the greater punishment at the Judgment -- one whose light went out because of a used-up supply of oil? or one whose light went out by suffocation under a bushel when the reservoir was still quite full of oil? Half-filled lamps will not be shining when Jesus comes, but neither will lamps that were full of oil whose flame was smothered when hidden under the bushel of an ultra-legalistic obscurity. Selah.

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11 -- WE ARE NOT ISLANDS UNTO OURSELVES

"Easter Island" is said to be the most remote spot on earth, located more than 2,000 miles from the nearest continent, South America, and 1,400 from the nearest habitable island, Pitcairn. This little dot in the Pacific received its name by reason of its discovery by Dutch explorer, Jacob Roggeveen, on Easter Sunday, April 5, 1722.

The subtropical location of Easter Island and its mild climate, according to one writer, "in theory.. should have made Easter Island a miniature paradise, quite remote from problems that beset the rest of the world. Nevertheless, Roggeveen's first impression was not of a paradise but of a wasteland."

Evidence seems to indicate that when it was first inhabited, Easter Island was indeed a little "tropical paradise," but the Polynesian settlers there began to denude the island of its trees and plant life, began to fight among themselves, and when the isolated little spot on earth gradually grew unable to sustain animal life the Easter Islanders began to cannibalize one another -- and what could have been, as it were, a little heaven on earth became instead a hell on earth.

"Easter" Island is really a poor name for a place on earth that embodies more that speaks of degeneration and death than it does of resurrection and life, and thus perhaps no harm is done when it is often referred to today by its Polynesian name, "Rapa Nui" -- a more fitting, heathen name for a spot on earth that demonstrates vividly the results of heathen mankind, trying to live as an island unto itself -- apart from, and unaccountable to, God, and all others.

NO PERSON ON EARTH IS AN ISLAND UNTO HIMSELF, OR UNTO HERSELF. This is the Philosophy of the so-called Libertarians of our day:-- "Let everyone do as they please -- live and let live -- so long as it does not harm anyone else." But the Bible declares clearly in Romans 14:7 that "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

It is impossible for an individual to either live or die without his or her life or death affecting someone else. This may not seem to be so;-- it may SEEM possible for us to remove ourselves so distantly and disconnectedly from all others that our living and dying will not affect any other soul on earth, but this SEEMING is a fancy and not a fact. God's Word says otherwise, and God's Word is never wrong.

But let us assume, for the sake of argument, that it IS possible for an individual to so isolate himself from all other human beings so that no other person on earth is affected by that individual's living or dying -- would that isolated individual then be living and dying unto himself?

NO! -- not even then would that isolated person be "an island unto himself," living and dying unto himself alone.

Why so? Jesus answered that question in Luke 20:38 when He said that God "is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for ALL LIVE UNTO HIM."

When Adam was the only human being on earth, he lived unto God, and had he died with no other human being having ever existed, he would have died unto God. Thus, if Adam had lived and died as the only human being that ever existed, he still would not have lived and died unto himself alone, for he would have lived and died unto God.

Echoing this same truth, Paul wrote in Romans 14:8, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

Were it possible for our life and death to affect no other person on earth, we would not be "islands unto ourselves," free to live and die as we please, for we are God's creatures, and not our own entities with no responsibility and no accountability to anyone but ourselves.

God is accountable to none but Himself, and the serpent told Eve: "Ye shall be as gods," (Gen. 3:5). It was fallen Lucifer who became the first creature to adopt the Libertarian notion that he was an island unto himself, and accountable to none other than to himself -- thus thinking to take unto himself an Autonomy and Independence that belongs to God Almighty alone. And, it was fallen Lucifer who first put that same proud and false notion into the heads and hearts of fallen mankind.

Don't buy into Libertarianism, for in so doing you shall have bitten into the same poisonous fruit that Eve and then Adam ate in the Garden of Eden. What Eve did affected Adam, and what Adam did affected every soul that has ever been born on earth, for "by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men" (Rom. 5:12).

Furthermore, 2 Cor. 5:15 shows us that Christ died to deliver us from the Libertarian notion of individual autonomy and from the heart condition that prompts it: Christ "died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."

"All live unto God, all die unto God," and all must, at the Judgment, give an account for the impact of their life and death -- not just upon themselves -- but upon others and upon the God Who made them. While living as if God does not exist, or as if God has no right to command His creatures, does not harm God, it does hurt Him; it does sadden His heart, and it is an affront to both His Dignity and His Deity.

The statements that many pompous individuals make about God reveal how little fear and respect they have for Him, even when they do acknowledge His existence. For example, in what strikes me as a very proud remark, Winston Churchill once said: "I am ready to meet my Maker. Whether my Maker is prepared for the great ordeal of meeting me is another matter."

This audacious statement has probably impressed some as accurate and others as humorous, but if he has not already discovered how impious and inaccurate his remark was,

Churchill will find it out at the Judgment. If there is any "ordeal" involved in the meeting of a human being with his Maker -- let none doubt it -- the "ordeal" will be experienced by the puny creature -- (be he a Prime Minister or a Paper Boy) -- and NOT by the ALMIGHTY CREATOR!

At the Great White Throne Judgment, it will be an "ordeal" of unparalleled magnitude for millions who fancied that they lived and died unto themselves when they face the awestruck realization that instead they "lived and died unto God," and must now give an account for the impact of their lives upon others, and UPON GOD. Then, following that dreadful, but passing, "ordeal" shall come the eternal "ordeal" of suffering the consequences in the Lake of Fire of the impact of their life upon themselves.

While Hell, or the Lake of Fire, might be termed an island eternally set apart unto itself, its anguished occupants -- far worse than the fiendish cannibals of Easter Island -- shall forever gnash upon and torment one another -- not even dying the Second Death alone, and unto themselves only. The Libertarian philosophy of "live and let live" will not exist there, as all seek to aggravate the agony of all others with whom they are forever confined.

There is a saying that I first heard about 18 years ago that says: "What goes around, comes around." In different words, it voices the same truth found in a poem of Edwin Markham, who wrote:

"There is a destiny that makes us brothers
None goes his way alone,
All that we send into the lives of others
Comes back into our own."

May we not see from Ecclesiastes 11:1 how that he who in this world "casts the bread" of goodness and righteousness "upon the waters" of time -- affecting both God and men -- "shall find it after many days" coming back to him forever in billows of Divine blessing throughout eternity; and that, conversely, he who in this world "casts the bread" of evil and wickedness "upon the waters" of time -- likewise affecting both God and men -- shall also find it after many days" coming back to him in ceaseless waves of pain and remorse in Hell, that horror-filled nether-world without end.

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12 -- THE FISH HAD BONES -- SOME THOUGHTS TO DIGEST

"And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and THE TWO FISHES DIVIDED HE AMONG THEM ALL" (Mark 6:41).

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

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Counting the women and children, more than 5,000 people ate those miraculously produced fish that day.

QUESTION: -- DID THOSE FISH HAVE BONES?

Answer:-- Yes, I THINK THOSE FISH which Christ miraculously created and which were eaten by more than 5,000 people HAD BONES in them!

Why even consider the thing?

Bear with me -- I shall try to explain.

Proverbs 2:11 says: "Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee."

NOW HERE IS MY FIRST POINT: Even though the fish which were eaten by 5,000-plus individuals that day were miraculously created, I think that it was necessary that the eaters of those fish "use discretion" in how they ate them -- because there were bones in those fish!

Just a bit ago, wife and I had Salmon for Sunday dinner. I always use caution and discretion when eating Salmon like that, or any fish of that sort. Why? I don't want to swallow and gag on a fish bone. Further, since I now have many fewer teeth than I once had, it is harder to grind and discover the presence of a little bone in a piece of fish. So, I like to eat the fish separately, slowly, carefully, and with great discretion -- endeavoring to make very sure that no bite of fish that I am about to swallow has a bone in it.

POINT NUMBER TWO:-- The fish were a miraculously created and provided gift to the 5,000-plus people that day, but Christ naturally expected them to use discretion in how they ate the fish -- not being so foolhardy as to take huge bites of that fish and swallow it without discovering and removing the bones from the fish! It was a miracle meal that demanded the exercise of discretion and common sense in how it was taken in, and -- no doubt the diners of that day did that very thing, carefully separating the bones from the fish before they swallowed it.

POINT NUMBER THREE:-- Salvation is also a miraculously created and provided gift of Christ -- but, does He not expect those who partake thereof to do so with discretion? Is it not necessary to separate the Divine truth concerning salvation from human misperception and misconception?

Simply because those fish were provided miraculously did not mean that they could be eaten without the exercise of discretion and common sense -- and -- simply because salvation is miraculously provided does not mean that there is no danger in what one swallows about it or how one takes in those things pertaining to it.

A skeptic is said to have encountered a Christian who was eating fish with a question something like the following: -- "How can you believe the Bible, when there is so much in it that seems contradictory?"

"Just as I eat this fish," replied the Christian: "I eat the fish and leave the bones!"

Of course, there are no real contradictions in God's Word, but not all statements by all preachers of the Word are free from error -- and, there are things which, even though true about Salvation, must be rightly divided in their interpretation. Thus, there is the need for the exercise of spiritual, Spirit-guided discernment and discretion when one seeks to partake of Salvation. Just as the bones in a fish meal must be discovered and removed when partaking thereof, even so one must use the utmost caution, common sense, and spiritual discretion in seeking to partake of Christ's miraculous Salvation -- the Word must be rightly divided, facts must be separated from fancy or fiction -- error must be discovered and removed from precious truth. One must "eat the meat" of Divine Truth in partaking of God's Grace in Salvation, while at the same time carefully "leaving the bones of falsehood" out of what is taken in.

The fish were free; they were miraculous; they were even served to the people -- but there was something that each of those eaters had to do for himself, or herself. Those fish could not be swallowed whole!

CONCLUSION:-- Salvation is free; it is miraculous; it is served to those who would partake of it by the Holy Spirit -- but there are still things which each and every partaker of that miraculous Salvation must do for himself, or for herself. Salvation cannot be swallowed whole without doing those necessary things -- and those who try to do so will be choked at the Judgment by the bones of error and falsehood they have tried to take in with Christ's free gift.

Therefore, even in partaking of Christ's miraculous and free Salvation, only the careful exercise of "discretion shall preserve thee." Selah.

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13 -- NO REMISSION WITHOUT REPENTANCE

Below, I have presented some nucleus thoughts on a subject that can be expanded upon much, much more, should the preacher, teacher, or interested reader care so to do.

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I. A LOOK AT TWO TRANSLATIONS OF PROVERBS 21:27

"The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?" -- (KJV Proverbs 21:27)

"The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable -- how much more so when brought with evil intent!" (NIV Proverbs 21:27)

Do we not see from this verse, that during O.T. Times it was very detestable to God for an actively wicked person to bring a sacrifice to God's altar -- i. e., God did not accept and even

abhorred the sacrifice of one who was doing evil and who had no other "intent" than to continue doing and being evil. One who brought a sacrifice without sorrow for, and repentance of, past sins -- even under the Law -- was not accepted of God, and the sacrifice brought by one who continued in sin and who had no other intention than to keep on continuing in sin was rejected -- the whole farce being greatly detestable to God!

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II. IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING VERSE:

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

A. Christ is the only Sacrifice one may now bring to God for the remission of sins.

B. QUESTION: -- If, during O.T. Times under the Law it was greatly detestable for an impenitent person -- one with "with an evil mind" and "intent" upon continuing in sin -- to present a sacrifice to God, IS IT NOT MUCH MORE DETESTABLE now to present Christ to God as one's Slain-Lamb-Sacrifice for sin "with an evil mind" that has no "intention" of ceasing from wickedness?

C. ANSWER: -- YES! it must be even more detestable to God under the New Covenant for one to present the Lamb of God as one's atonement for sin -- when that presentation of Christ to God as one's Sacrifice is offered "with an evil mind," presently engaged in doing evil, and with no other "intent" but to continue doing that evil.

It is true that "without [the] shedding of [Christ's] blood [there] is no remission" of sins," (Hebrews 9:22). One cannot be saved without presenting Christ to God as the Sacrificial Lamb, slain for his sins.

However, it is also true that "without repentance there is no remission of sins." Does someone ask: "Where is your chapter and verse for that quotation? I reply: It is not a quotation, but it might as well be, for the statement I have just enclosed in quotes is borne out repeatedly in the Scriptures:

"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4).

"And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Luke 3:3).

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

FOUR TIMES in the New Testament, REPENTANCE AND REMISSION ARE CONNECTED. THREE TIMES in the New Testament, CHRIST'S BLOOD AND REMISSION ARE CONNECTED. Should we not see from this that if there is no forgiveness without the Sacrificial Blood of Christ, neither is there forgiveness without Repentance of Sin? Yes, the latter should be seen as clearly as we see the former, and will be by any honest seeker of truth.

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III. THE THREE VERSES CONNECTING CHRIST'S BLOOD AND REMISSION

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the REMISSION OF SINS THAT ARE PAST, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3:25).

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

The second of the above 3 verses emphasizes what is brought out in Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3, Luke 24:47, and Acts 2:38 -- viz., that through Christ's Sacrifice, there is "REMISSION" ONLY "OF SINS" WHICH BY REASON OF REPENTANCE HAVE BEEN PUT INTO ONE'S "PAST".

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Beyond this, I leave it up to the reader to develop these thoughts further.

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14 -- THIS IS THAT GENERATION

"THERE IS A GENERATION that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. THERE IS A GENERATION that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. THERE IS A GENERATION, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. THERE IS A GENERATION, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men" (Prov. 30:11-14).

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INTRODUCTION

While the NIV translation of Proverbs 30:11 negates the thought of reference to a specific time in this verse, putting it, "there are those," instead of "there is a generation," -- and while none of the "there is a generation" phrases in Proverbs 30:11-14 refer to a specific time so much as to a

specific type of people -- still, it can be truly said that there never was a generation that so completely reflects the type of people mentioned in Proverbs 30:11-14 as today's "generation"! "There IS a generation" that matches the descriptions in Proverbs 30:11-14 as has no other that has ever lived! -- at that is the generation now living in the 3rd Millennium A.D. Thus, though the original Hebrew in those verses refers to a "type" rather than to a "time," THIS IS THE TIME WHEN THAT TYPE OF PEOPLE ARE MORE PREVALENT THAN EVER BEFORE!

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A -- THIS IS THE GENERATION THAT CURSES AND BLIGHTS THEIR PARENTS

"As none other has been, this is a generation "that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother."

Spiritual "death passed upon all men" (Rom. 5:12) through Adam's sin, but the sentence of Physical death is passed by God upon those who curse and dishonor their parents: Exodus 21:17 tells us: "And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death." And Leviticus 20:9 echoes the same Divine sentence: "For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him." Then in Matthew 15:4, Jesus reinforced the preceding with: "For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death."

Has there ever been a generation of young people, besides those of this generation, upon whom the Divine judgment of physical death has fallen more frequently? -- and more directly as the result of cursing, dishonoring, and abusing their parents? Mark, I do not ask if there has ever been a generation of youths more victimized by physical death from various other causes, but has there ever been a generation of youths more plagued by death as a Divine judgment upon their sins? I doubt it.

Proverbs 20:20 declares: "Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness," and never has there been a generation of youths more darkened spiritually than the youths of this generation! As never before, today's youths are abandoning the Christ and the Bible of their parents and grandparents, but Christ is still "the Light of the world" and His Word is still the only true "Lamp unto our feet and Light unto our path," (John 8:12; Psa 119:105).

The youths of this generation are cursing their "old man" and mocking their "old lady" for their ignorant and prudish beliefs in Christ and in the Bible, while being sadly unaware that "The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble" (Prov. 4:19). While in proud arrogance they mumble their disbelief they stumble their souls into hell. God's warning to all in this generation is: "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness" (Jer. 13:16).

So blind is this entire generation that they "call evil good, and good evil," they "put darkness for light, and light for darkness," and they "put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isa. 5:20). One vamp of the not too distant past declared: "When I'm bad, I'm good, and when I'm

real bad, I real good!" -- and her vile calling of "evil good" has millions of adherents now! Millions today are also rejoicing and reveling in a light that is actually gross darkness, and tasting delightful sweetnesses that have their end in the bitterness and pangs of the Lake of Fire -- and to a great extent this is so because they have, in many ways, cursed and dishonored their parents who feared and served Christ and who revered and obeyed His Word.

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B -- THIS IS THE FILTHY GENERATION WHO ARE PURE IN THEIR OWN EYES!

"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" -- AND THIS IS IT!

A prominent figure of bygone days was once very soured by a party he attended. As he departed, he told the host or hostess: "I've had a good time, BUT THIS WAS NOT IT!" The same could be said of the world: It too, has had a good time, BUT THIS IS NOT IT! That good time was before the Fall. Today, the true testimony of the world could be phrased thus: "I've had the worst time in my existence, AND THIS IS IT!"

If one who was wallowing in a putrid, stinking hog-swill would insist that his body was both clean and fragrant, most people would judge him to be either a clown or a fool, yet while many today declare themselves pure who are spiritually defiled, rotten, and loathsome to a holy God, millions now accept their claim as true!

As God spiritually beholds such unsanitary insanity, and as the rotten aroma of the putrefaction of such who profess purity reaches his nostrils, can anyone with an ounce of spiritual discernment doubt that His righteous wrath is being greatly aroused!

"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" -- AND THIS IS IT! -- defiled, debauched, and reeking with rottenness, millions today insist that they are white as a lily and smell like a rose!

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C -- THIS IS A LOW-DOWN GENERATION THAT IS LOFTY IN ITS PRIDE

"There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up" in pride, while at the same time living in the lowest gutter of godlessness! -- and this is it! Never before, in the entire history of the world, have men been more proud, with less about which to boast! Never have people's opinion of themselves been higher while their character was lower than is the case today. Moral pigmies see themselves as magnitudinous mammoths of the greatest stature ever seen! But the more they raise themselves in their own eyes, the lower they descend before God.

The declining effect of carnal elevation is a sad paradox today, but O, so true! It reminds me of the story of nine-year-old Henry, who struck upon the idea of hiring his little brother Tom as his servant. "I'll give you ten cents a week," he said. "O.K.," little Tom agreed. Henry then felt he

had offered too much money. "I can only pay you five cents a week after all!" he said. "O.K.," said Tom, just as cheerfully. Thinking he could get his little brother to work for even less, Henry next said, "All I can pay is a penny a week." "Well, O.K.," said Tom, "but DON'T RAISE IT ANY LOWER!"

The higher folks today raise themselves in their own eyes, the lower descend spiritually. Little Tom in the above story was confusing things when he made his illogical remark, but with the most keen and logically sound discernment, it could be said to those whose lofty opinion of themselves today is plunging them rapidly downward in God's sight: DON'T RAISE IT ANY LOWER! or you'll land in the bottomless pit, where you shall forever descend, never to rise again!

Let me bring this point toward a conclusion with this story: A fat-cat industrialist, though somewhat untutored, was about to receive an honorary doctor of laws degree from a rather hard-pressed college. After the initial reception the evening before, one of the more sensitive members of the faculty approached the president and said, "This man doesn't look like a scholar to me." The president said, "No, but he looks like a woman's dormitory to me."

After the occasion, the self-inflated industrialist was riding in the back seat of his limousine with his wife. Patting his rather expansive stomach while smoking a large cigar and thinking of the beautiful words spoken about him at the doctoral ceremony, the industrialist said to his wife, "Dear, You know, there are not many great men in the country today." She said, "Dear, you are absolutely right. In fact, there is one less than you think."

Obviously, he needed that pin stuck in the over-inflated balloon of his pride, and, on the Day of the Lord, God is going to puncture the grossly inflated balloon of the pride of wicked men as heaven and earth "pass away with a great noise" (2 Pet. 3:10). Creation didn't begin with a "Big Bang," but it IS GOING TO END WITH A "BIG BANG" -- as Christ pops the balloon of all carnal and satanic pride, deflating it suddenly, loudly, and forever!

* * *

D -- THIS IS A GENERATION OF GREEDY WHO DEVOUR THE NEEDY!

There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men" (Prov. 30:14) -- a generation whose god is gold, whose love is money, and whose wish is wealth -- a generation who are driven by greed instead need. In fact, they are greedy at the expense of the needy.

Several decades ago, someone observed that when the Communist looked upon the world he was moved with Conquest; when the Capitalist looked upon the world he was moved with Commerce; but when Christ looked upon the world with Compassion.

Today, Communism is waning; Compassion is disappearing; and Capitalism is growing by leaps and bounds! We are seeing the formation of the great one-world money-market and merchandising system of Babylon the Great, whose "merchants... shall weep and mourn over her"

on the Day of the Lord after Christ suddenly brings it down, "for no man buyeth their merchandise any more."

But today, most of the time, "money is the name of the game." It is not wise to become socially and politically paranoid, but the fact is, GREED, and not NEED is moving the world toward the anti-Christ system. The lust for money and wealth has probably been the real cause of more wars than we imagine, and it will be one of the major causes of Armageddon!

Yes, in numerous ways, the greedy are devouring the needy in this generation -- and -- it is going to get worse! But, the money-mongers of the last days should beware: "For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever" (Psa. 9:18). The psalmist's prayer in the next verse shall be answered: "Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight" (Psa. 9:19).

The time rapidly approaches when Christ's determination in Psalm 12:5 shall be dramatically fulfilled:-- "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, NOW will I arise... I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." The devil and powers of anti-Christ will do their utmost to "huff and puff, and blow down" the House of Christ, and the needy who have fled therein for safety, but it is built of brick and founded upon the unshakable Rock of Ages!

At the return of Christ, Jesus will "set every child of God in heaven's safety from him that puffeth at him." It is the house of the Greedy that shall be destroyed in the whirlwind of God's wrath, and all of its builders and occupants shall be flung forever from the presence of the Lord. The needy, saved by His grace shall dwell in the City, in safety forevermore.

Psalm 72:4-5 declares: "He [Christ] shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations" -- i. e., eternally, world without end.

Yes, there is a generation who shall live forever! Who are they? In Matthew 19:28, Jesus identifies them as those "which have followed me," and their eternal safety and bliss shall begin "in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory..."

* * * * *

15 -- NEVER BEFORE

NEVER BEFORE -- have people been so proud with so little about which to boast.

NEVER BEFORE -- has sound been more amplified when silence was more needed.

NEVER BEFORE -- has the world had so much to say with so little reason to say it.

NEVER BEFORE -- have so many desired to teach who need to be taught.

NEVER BEFORE -- have colors been prettier and natures uglier.

NEVER BEFORE -- has the Flesh been more gratified and the Spirit more grieved.

NEVER BEFORE -- has worldly knowledge increased so rapidly while spiritual knowledge has vanished so quickly.

NEVER BEFORE -- has real earning been higher while real giving has been lower.

NEVER BEFORE -- have so many traveled so much with less reason to go.

NEVER BEFORE -- have men flown so fast and known so little about where they shall land at last.

NEVER BEFORE -- has evil been more deified and deity been more vilified.

NEVER BEFORE -- have youths been more arrogant nor parents more indulgent.

NEVER BEFORE -- have the unborn been so ruthlessly slaughtered while the unworthy were so zealously protected.

NEVER BEFORE -- has the world's estimation of itself been higher while its behavior has been lower.

NEVER BEFORE -- has might loomed so large while right was so lacking.

NEVER BEFORE -- has levity been so indulged with gravity so ignored.

NEVER BEFORE -- has promiscuity been more advertised with purity more hidden.

NEVER BEFORE -- have so many unborn babies been butchered while so many unhatched bird-eggs were guarded.

NEVER BEFORE -- has the true Church been more divided with more reason to be united.

NEVER BEFORE -- have so many Christians dallied who should have rallied.

NEVER BEFORE -- have missionaries gone so far so fast who have shined so dimly and so little.

NEVER BEFORE -- has true holiness been more hidden with so many unbidden.

NEVER BEFORE -- has false holiness had more precedence with less substance.

NEVER BEFORE -- has the Genesis of Life been more explored when the Genesis of the Bible was more ignored.

NEVER BEFORE -- have holiness preachers been so loud in the pulpit while being so silent in the world.

NEVER BEFORE -- has the professed Church been filled with so much froth while spurning so much fullness.

NEVER BEFORE -- have the Numbers in the pew been more desired than the Exodus from sin.

NEVER BEFORE -- have so many hypothesized about fancies who have realized so little about facts.

NEVER BEFORE -- has so much time been wasted with so little time to lose.

NEVER BEFORE -- has temporality been so charming with eternity so near.

* * * * *

16 -- IF -- FOR THE CHILD OF GOD
A Revision of Rudyard Kipling's "If"

If you can keep God's Grace when all about you
Are losing Grace and blaming it on you,
If you can stay the Course when all men doubt you,
And never vary from the Way that's True,

If you can wait and not be tired of waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream -- and not make dreams your master,
If you can think -- and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And count them all but naught to bear the cross,
And lose the world with all its tinsel trimmings
And never once consider it a loss;

If you can press ahead when nerve and sinew
Are all exhausted and your strength is gone,
And stand your ground when seems there's nothing in you
Except God's Voice that says to you, "Hold On!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings--nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much,

If you can fill each quickly passing minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours shall be Heaven and all that's dwelling in it,
And evermore, you'll be with Christ, God's Son!

-- Revised by DVM

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17 -- YOU'RE GETTIN' OLDER IF...

You remember when the only screen most folks said much about was the kind designed to keep out the flies and mosquitoes.

You remember when a hard drive described a difficult, cross country trip, on winding, two-way-traffic roads in bad weather.

You remember when you did your utmost to rid your home of every mouse and wouldn't have purposely touched one, except to hold it carefully by the end of the tail while extricating it from a mouse-trap and flinging it away, or taking it outside for the cat to eat.

You remember when all desk-tops lay flat in horizontal positions and were designed to hold such things as elbows, papers, pen-holders, (or perhaps even inkwells with dip-pens), writing pads, typewriters, etc., and which if tilted into a vertical position would have been of no use at all, and would have spilled everything on your desk-top onto the floor.

You remember when most icons on desk-tops were paper-weights or small images (fetishes) placed on the desk-top of one who used such.

You remember when crashes took folks either to the morgue or the body shop instead of to a computer center, and when car crash damage cost much less to fix than a hard drive crash does now.

You remember that when you re-booted, you went to a shoe store.

You remember when a question regarding how many bites you had related to inflictions upon your flesh from some animal or insect, and was always spelled with an "i" instead of a "y".

You remember when CDs were only part of the A-B-C-Ds in the alphabet, and had absolutely nothing to do with bank deposits or compact recording discs.

You remember when the only toggle you ever used was a switch that turned something on or off, and had nothing to do with moving from one program to another.

You remember when Key-Boards were wooden boards with hooks on them for hanging up various sets of keys.

You remember when about the only fabulously wealthy Gates you ever heard of were the Pearly Gates.

You remember when Printers were found mostly in Print Shops and were identified as either workmen who did printing or huge pieces of machinery that did the same.

You remember when if you needed more memory the teacher might thump you on the head with her pencil for giving a dumb answer in class and flunk you, but you never dreamed of going somewhere to "buy" more memory!

You remember when the only click related to a mouse was when the mouse-trap got him!

You remember when your typos were corrected with a little round-shaped eraser with a brush on the end, or later with "white-out" and the only back-up key you used was the key to your car when you used it to start the engine and back up.

You remember when monitors were people, sometimes fellow-students, who told on you when you were mischievous.

You remember when mini-towers were always round-shaped little structures, less tall than higher round structures of the same sort -- buildings that people could climb into for a better view -- one of which in Pisa, Italy is famous for its leaning.

You remember when "floppy" was used to describe such things as long-ears and never meant square shaped recording diskettes.

You remember when it was mostly some Law Enforcement Officer who informed you that you had done something illegal, and it was never some message that flashed before your eyes on a computer screen.

You remember when an escape key was used mostly by criminals making a jail-break.

You remember when you didn't start drumming your fingers waiting for, and expecting, a reply to your letter five minutes after you sent it by snail-mail instead of by email.

You remember when you heard of "delete" it was only when someone was talkin' bout de-elite folks in town.

You remember when computers were folks who computed and sometimes made fewer errors than PCs do now.

You remember when your only P-ersonal C-omputer was that round-shaped object hooked to your shoulders by your neck, and when you couldn't buy a better one up town.

You remember when scanners were folks who scanned things with their eyes, sometimes using magnifying glasses, field-glasses, and telescopes.

You remember when screen-savers were those who took good care of their window screens and stored them to use again next summer.

You remember when about the only hardware seen on many office desks was a metal stapler and an antiquated old contraption made by a company named Smith-Corona.

You remember when "facts" were plural things related only to truth and the sound of that voiced word never related to something singular spelled "f-a-x" -- being an abbreviation of the word "facsimile".

You remember when a spell-checker was a human being who used a red pencil on your writing-paper, or a person who told you that you spelled it wrong during a spelling-bee.

You remember when discs were used to break up the furrows and clods in plowed fields, and they were pulled by tractors or horses, and were never things you shoved into slots and pushed buttons to eject.

You remember when, if you told someone you were carrying thousands of books and publications in your briefcase or coat pocket, they might have looked at you with a smirk and said, "What kind of joke are you telling me?" but they would never have believed you.

You remember when nobody could truthfully say that they could produce a copy of thousands of books and publications in less than 10 minutes, placing them all on a little round-flat object, a fraction of an inch thick and less than 5 inches in diameter -- when such a claim would have been just as false as the claim that the moon is made of cheese.

Yes, -- you're getting older if you remember all of these things... BUT... if your mind is still good enough to "compute" a bit, and you're not afraid to buy a computer and some of its gadgetry, you're probably not too old to take advantage of having and using the more than 5,100 files on the HDM CD! -- and -- you can get one of them from us and then look a fella straight in the eye, and tell him truthfully, "I have right here in my coat pocket, or right here in my valise, a vast library of books and publications."

But, you're getting real old if you don't believe that! -- and maybe you're from Missouri.

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18 -- WHEN IT IS TIME TO JUMP TO A CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

In the following, I shall present some situations "when it is time to jump to a conclusion," but beyond a few brief remarks and some quotations from the Scriptures I shall leave the detailed spiritual application of them to the reader, if there be such. The one exception to this is in item #07, which contains a quotation from Russell V. DeLong with an excellent spiritual application.

* * *

A -- IT IS TIME TO JUMP TO A CONCLUSION -- when you see the legs on the south end of a mule just north of you raised up, drawn back, and ready to kick you in the head! This goes for some human beings who behave like mules too! 1 Samuel 18:11 "And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice."

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B -- IT IS TIME TO JUMP TO A CONCLUSION -- when it is half-past Late-Thirty p.m., you're still preaching, and half of your crowd is in the process of emulating Eutychus! Acts 20:9 "And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead."

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C -- IT IS TIME TO JUMP TO A CONCLUSION -- when the figures all show that your outgo exceeds your income and the outcome will be your downfall! In such a case, either you are living beyond your means, or your means for living are below the demands. The former must be lowered or the latter raised. Which is it? Surely God will answer this prayer by one of His children: "Feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Prov. 30:8-9). In his old age, David could testify: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalms 37:25).

* * *

D -- IT IS TIME TO JUMP TO A CONCLUSION -- when all the cars you see are going the opposite direction on a one-way street! All those folks honking and waving as they go by are not just being friendly! "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Proverbs 18:24), but in such a situation one must immediately jump to the conclusion that it is no time for loving affection, and is time for lucid perception and lightning-fast action! to avoid harm and danger.

* * *

E -- IT IS TIME TO JUMP TO A CONCLUSION -- when you notice that everyone is out of step but yourself. Some have fancied that everyone has it all wrong but themselves. It IS TRUE that they are marching to the beat of a different drummer, but their cadence is off-beat from the facts. Proverbs 26:12 "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."

* * *

F -- IT IS TIME TO JUMP TO A CONCLUSION -- when you notice that the needle on the gas-gauge is just above empty as you pass a road-side sign reading: "Next Service 100 Miles"! Isaiah 28:16 says, "he that believeth shall not make haste," and in such a situation it is certainly not the time to "make haste" to reach the next filling station. Selah.

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G -- IT IS TIME TO JUMP TO A CONCLUSION -- when you put the pedal to the metal, and it is the brake! 2 Peter 2:14 speaks of those who "cannot cease from sin." Like Jehu the son of Nimshi, who drove "furiously" (2 Kings 9:20), the world has "the pedal to the medal" in its mad dash for sinful pleasure. The name of Jehu's father, "Nimshi," is interesting:-- according to Strong's it means, "Extricated". A past generation in our nation and in our world considered themselves "extricated" from all of the moral taboos of the antiquated, old Judeo-Christian ethic, and now their "Jehu" offspring are pell-mell on their way to hell, faster and faster -- thinking themselves to be "free" from all restraints, moral, political, and even legal!

Many a wild, lust-indulging Jehu in today's world, has had the gas pedal to the metal while furiously speeding down the back slope of sin's highway -- all the while thinking: "I can stop any time I want to" -- only to discover when they hit the brake, that it too went to the metal! -- and they were unable to stop! In this case, I should not say, "It is time to jump to a conclusion," for it is then past time to have reached the conclusion that the fast propulsion down the backside of sin's slope would likely bring the time when one could not stop. When a driver on a down-hill grade traveling at a fast speed hits the brake and the pedal goes to the metal, he certainly will "jump to the conclusion" that he is in grave peril -- but he may have jumped to that conclusion too late.

I conclude with the following excerpt from "Mastering Our Midnights" by Russell V. DeLong -- a portion titled: "Lost Control":

One of the most frightening, helpless experiences one can have is to be driving a car and suddenly to realize that you have lost control. You have your hands on the steering wheel but you cannot steer. You put your foot on the brake but you cannot stop. The automobile is out of control. It is free from your guidance. You now have to trust to non-human factors, hoping the crash will not be fatal.

It is a terrible moment -- that instant when I know that the direction of the car and the lives in the car are no longer in my hands. I have lost control. From here on the machine is at the mercy of other forces. I sit back, helpless, and wait for the consequences. I can do nothing about it. It is out of my hands. Whether these other powers will bring the car to safety or disaster I do not know; but, worse, I cannot determine. I had control but I lost it. Some other power took over -- I merely await results. Gravitation, velocity, winds, trees, stones, precipices, bridges, fences, other cars and trucks, telephone poles may play their part in wrecking or saving my car, killing or sparing my life. Impersonal forces now take over. I am their prisoner and victim. I no longer call the signals. I have lost my grip; the controls are no longer mine.

But -- I am responsible for this horrifying situation.

Lost control may be due to mechanical difficulties; I should have had them checked.

Lost control may be due to excessive speed; I should have slowed down.

Lost control may be due to carelessness; I should have been more attentive.

Lost control may be due to foolhardiness; I should have been more cautious.

Lost control may be due to drunkenness; I should have remained sober.

Lost control may be due to boisterous, wild companions; I should have warned them.

But, no matter what may be the cause of my lack of control, I am now helpless. I can do nothing -- nothing but wait for the consequences of my careless acts.

The car is now swerving, bouncing, careening on two wheels -- no personal control, only the fate impersonal things may have for me. If I'm lucky, I may escape. If not, I have killed myself. In reality, I'm a suicide because I had control and lost it.

Such a situation as described is bad and tragic. It has to do only with material machines and human bodies.

More horrifying and more alarming is the fact that many persons have lost control of their lives. They are careening through life, bringing destruction to others, and finally will commit spiritual suicide and be lost forever. The end -- the wreck -- is only a matter of time. They are out of control, they have lost their grip. Their will is no longer at the wheel; something else pulls the stick. Their chart and compass and rudder are determined by other forces.

The serious, sobering question of this sermon is this: What controls you? Temper?

Have you given way so often to outbursts of passion that you now fly off and do irrational things without intelligent control?

Habit?

Have you so permitted yourself to follow certain courses of activity that now you have lost the ability to change?

For years you have imbibed alcohol until now your body cells are so drenched you no longer control the intake -- alcohol controls you.

Is it true that nicotine has so saturated your body chemistry that you can no longer call the signals -- nicotine signals the call?

Have narcotics so debauched you that they are in control and you are just an obedient servant?

Are you a slave of habit? Do alcohol, nicotine, and dope control you or do you control them?

Possibly it is neither temper nor habit that controls you. Maybe it is the gang. You do what they want. They call the tune and you dance to it -- and then pay the fiddler. Do you control the activities of your clique or group or gang, or do they control you?

Does your love for money or for pleasure or for position or for power or for social approval cause you to be controlled by them, or do you control them?

Have you decided where you are going on the highways of life? Do you have an objective and goal? Are you heading that way? Do you have your hand on the wheel, your eye on the road, and your mind on the objective; or have you lost control of your personal soul and are being shoved, pushed, by bad habits, evil pals, sinful desires until it is only a matter of time until you crack up? Lost control!

At the bottom of all moral and spiritual wrecks is sin. There are no moral accidents. All spiritual tragedies are the result of personal, willful choices. One gives himself to sinful practices and continues such until his habits, his inner nature, his evil companions take him over, body and soul -- lost control.

And when one loses control he then tries to make up in speed what he lacks in direction. He will compensate by speed for what he loses in purpose. So he goes twice as fast toward nowhere and crashes fatally. His motto is, "Go faster -- eat more, drink deeper, for tomorrow we die."

Yes, but what about the day after tomorrow -- the Judgment?

There is only one way to regain control of your life -- turn it over humbly to Christ. He will break the fetters of sin. He will snap the chains of sinful habit. He will cleanse from carnal desires. He will bring back to your life purpose and objective and meaning. He will adjust your rudder, release your steering wheel, and give you a road map, a chart, and a compass.

And in addition, He himself will be your constant personal Guide.

An ocean liner was crossing the Atlantic. A terrific storm struck. The lightnings flashed, thunders roared, winds blew. The ship climbed the mountainous waves and plunged to the watery depths. It seemed that the vessel would break in two or sink. Everyone was frightened -- that is, everyone except one little girl who sat rocking her doll and singing.

Someone asked, "Little girl, aren't you scared?"

She replied, "No. My father is captain of this ship. His hand is on the wheel. All is well."

Listen, friend. If you have lost control, let Christ, the great Pilot, become your Pilot. Thus you can gain control here and hear God say, "Well done," hereafter.

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19 -- LOSING ONE'S FIRST LOVE BY HATING SIN TO A FAULT

This is going to be one of the shortest articles I have ever sent out. Did you know that one can "hate sin to a fault"? -- hate it so much and so vehemently that unconsciously one begins to "hate the sinner" also! I have a story below, illustrating this, but first consider two verses of Scripture:

To the Ephesian Church in the book of Revelation, Jesus said in 2:6, "this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate," yet in 2:4 He told them: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

No, I cannot definitely make a direct connection between Jesus' statement about their hatred of the Nicolaitanes' sin and the Ephesians' loss of their first love.

However, more than one Christian has lost their first love, at least partly because they became so zealous and overheated in their hatred of sin that they unconsciously began to "hate sinners" as well -- having become almost cruel in their legalistic "slicing and dicing" of them with an unChristlike spirit and with unloving, cutting, and vicious remarks about "those horrible Nicolaitane sinners and backsliders!"

In my home-town of Payette, Idaho, one time a dear old saint of God in the Church of the Nazarene had a wayward son. As I recall, that son was a drummer in a dance-band, but his dear old dad loved him, and no doubt often besought the throne of grace for his salvation.

Finally, one night that son came to a revival meeting -- got under conviction, and headed for the altar. The Nazarene pastor, who vehemently "hated sin" and worldliness, saw old Bro. S____'s son coming up the aisle toward the altar -- and -- would you believe it!? -- he stopped that penitent prodigal on his way to the altar and DEMANDED THAT HE TAKE HIS RING OFF BEFORE KNEELING AT THE ALTAR!

The wooing of the Spirit drawing old Bro. S____'s son to prayer and repentance was broken! -- and instead of a heart-broken penitence, an angry resentment came into the prodigal's heart! -- He turned, walked out of the Church -- went back to his evil ways, and so far as I know, may never have been saved!

It certainly appears that Bro. S____'s son may have lost his soul -- BECAUSE THE PASTOR HAD LOST HIS FIRST LOVE -- THROUGH HATING SIN TO A FAULT -- SO MUCH SO THAT HE HAD INWARDLY BEGUN TO HATE SINNERS ALSO!

Ecclesiastes 7:16 warns: "Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" "Overmuch Righteousness" often consists of a zeal that transgresses the bounds of God's hatred for sin -- and therefore is not true righteousness at all, but is a carnally-warped, sinful zeal that has begun to hate sinners as well as sin. Thus, "Overmuch Righteousness" is actually evil and can both destroy the zealot's first love, damn instead of save souls, and do great harm to the cause of God! It is manifest in "the letter that killeth" instead of in the "Spirit that giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6). Selah.

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20 -- WHY SOME ARE SHIRKERS AND NOT WORKERS

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel..."
"Go work today in my vineyard..."

* * *

INTRODUCTION

Please read carefully all of the following Scriptures, concerning:

FIRST -- THE GREAT COMMAND TO GO WORK IN GOD'S VINEYARD:-- Mark 16:15 "And he said unto them, GO YE into all the world AND PREACH THE GOSPEL to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

SECOND -- THE WORKER WHO WENT -- AND THE SHIRKER WHO DID NOT GO:-- "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, GO WORK TODAY IN MY VINEYARD. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I GO, SIR: AND WENT NOT. Whether of them twain DID THE WILL OF HIS FATHER? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matt. 21:28-31).

Christ's command is GO YE -- WORK IN MY VINEYARD, WHICH IS THE WORLD -- and, among those professing to be His Sons are really only two classes: (a) THOSE WHO GO, and (b) THOSE WHO DO NOT GO. The WORKERS GO, while the SHIRKERS GO NOT.

Let us consider some of the reasons WHY MANY SHIRKERS ARE NOT WORKING IN GOD'S VINEYARD:

* * *

A -- BECAUSE THEY FEAR AND DISDAIN GETTING DIRTY IN THE VINEYARD

It was the Jewish "chief priests and elders" whom Jesus likened to the son who said, "I go sir: and went not" -- and THE REASON THEY WOULDN'T GO WAS THAT THEY DISDAINED THE DIRTY, FILTHY HARLOTS AND PUBLICANS to whom John the Baptist was preaching: "For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." They not only feared getting dirty if they worked in God's Vineyard with such sin-stained souls, they "held their noses" at the very thought of being anywhere near them!

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING:-- In essence, Christ's command to "Go into ALL the world and preach the gospel to every creature" means GO EVERY-WHERE YOU CAN, GO EVERY-WAY YOU CAN, GO TO EVERY-ONE YOU CAN, AND GO ON EVERY-DAY YOU CAN -- and, any person, or group, that is so extremely fearful of losing grace -- by going into the world in obedience to that command -- that they excuse themselves from that duty, IS IN REAL DANGER OF LOSING GOD'S GRACE through that very fear!

Or, if any person, or group, so disdains rubbing elbows with harlots, publicans, and sinners that they wouldn't be caught dead within ten miles of one -- even to preach to them the good news of "so great salvation," then THEY HAVE ALREADY BEEN CAUGHT DEAD IN THE DEVIL'S TRAP!

Which did Christ preach? TOTAL ISOLATION? or INWARD INSULATION? You know very well what He preached. No! He didn't preach that his people should go out and mingle with worldly people in their sinful pleasures and indulgences -- but on the other hand He didn't want them to be cloistered hermits either -- HERMITICALLY and HERMETICALLY SEALED into little cloisters like bands of monastic monks. When that philosophy prevailed in the Church the World and Church both entered the Dark Ages. I fear that we are now rapidly approaching an even Darker Age!

JESUS DID NOT PREACH TOTAL ISOLATION:-- In John 17:15 we read His prayer: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Anyone with a lick of good sense ought to be able to see from the above that Christ's method for KEEPING HIS CHURCH FROM THE EVIL IS NOT TOTAL ISOLATION!

Well, what then WAS to be His method of "keeping them"? In the very next verse we read: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16) -- they were already sanctified in the sense of being "set apart from the world" spiritually. It is John 17:17 that explains How Jesus planned to "KEEP THEM FROM THE EVIL" -- i. e., by the inward, purifying, insulating grace of God: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

So, there you have it, and it does no injustice to the essence of Christ's prayer if we state it thus: "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst INWARDLY INSULATE THEM FROM THE EVIL BY SANCTIFYING THEIR HEARTS!"

No, it is not an "insulation" that makes the sanctified impervious sin, but impeccable in salvation -- spotless within, and possessed of no inward desire to partake of evil, so that, like John the Baptist who was sanctified from the womb, they can go among the harlots, publications, and sinners in this world proclaiming, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" -- AND NOT ONCE GET DIRTY MORALLY FROM THAT CLOSE PROXIMITY TO EVIL!

John the Baptist was a highly successful WORKER -- but his self-righteous critics were nothing more than finger-pointing SHIRKERS! -- which brings me to my next point. Many SHIRKERS are not working in God's Vineyard:

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B -- BECAUSE THEY CONTENT THEMSELVES IN BEING CRITICS OF THE WORKERS

The critics of John and Jesus were a gang of "DO-NOTHING CRITICS!" Besides drawing their hyper-legalistic robes of self-righteousness about themselves and holding their noses when around those to whom John and Jesus preached, the main occupation of these chief priests and elders had degenerated into the bitter business of how and where they could find fault with them!

WITNESS:-- THE PROMISE OF SUCH MODERN-DAY SHIRKING-CRITICS TO CHRIST'S GREAT COMMISSION: "I GO, SIR," but "THEY GO NOT" because they are preoccupied, occupied, and myopic-upied, with eye-balling, scrutinizing, and looking cross-eyed at what some are doing who fear not to take the gospel right out among those who most need it in this world! The world goes to hell while they go to their telephones, their typewriters (perish the thought of using a computer!), their pulpits, and their soap-boxes, to condemn those who, like John and Jesus, dare to go among those who are morally fallen and help them up with the only panacea for their spiritual illness -- the gospel of full salvation!

"I go Sir," but "he went not" because he was busy preparing an epistle of condemnation for all who rub shoulders with the world -- in any way, for any reason!!! Just today, Bro. W. L. King informed me of the epithets and evil brands being attached to him, and others who dare use the Internet to spread scriptural holiness! HOW AWFUL! "John, don't you realize you can't preach holiness among these filthy people!" -- and -- "Jesus, don't you realize what kind of woman it is you are actually allowing to TOUCH YOU!"

Friends, if such "busybodies in other men's matters" would pay half as much attention to fulfilling God's command to "GO" as they do to heaping condemnation and harsh words upon others who are trying to publish much needed truth in all the world -- they might stand a better chance of hearing Christ say, at the end of their lives, "WELL DONE".

Did you ever stop to consider that Christ's welcome to His faithful laborer is not going to be: "WELL CRITICIZED, THOU SHARP-EYED, NIT-PICKING LEGALIST, ENTER THOU INTO THE JUDGMENT OF THY LORD!""?? All Judgment has been reserved to Christ, and according to Romans 2:13, it is not the critics, "but the doers" who "shall be justified."

Christ wants His servants to be WORKERS RIGHT OUT IN THE VINEYARD, and not SHIRKERS STANDING AFAR OFF WITH FIELD-GLASSES, peeping and squinting to see if there is something that the workers are doing wrong. Such should heed Romans 14:4, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."

When it comes to Christ's Great Command to "GO," a truth-conveying paraphrase of James 1:22, could read: "But be ye DOERS of the word, and not CRITICS only, deceiving your own selves." I shall conclude with this last point: Many shirkers are not working in God's Vineyard:

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C -- BECAUSE THEY THINK IT IS JUST ABOUT QUITTING TIME

I have worked in factories where workers would lay down their tools long before the whistle blew at quitting time. Why? because they wanted to make sure they could leave on time -- they didn't want to become so occupied with their work that they worked right up till the quitting whistle -- Perish the thought! They wanted to have their machine shut down, their hands washed, with plenty of time to spare, so that when that whistle blew they could be out the door in a flash! So, some men in factories where I have worked no doubt started standing around 20 to 30 minutes or more before quitting time -- drawing their breath and drawing their wages -- but doing nothing!

Are you getting my point yet?

Jesus said, "OCCUPY TILL I COME" (Luke 19:13). He DID NOT SAY, "OCCUPY TILL YOU THINK THE TRUMPET IS ABOUT TO SOUND... THEN, LAY DOWN YOUR TOOLS, AND GET READY TO RUN OUT THE DOOR!"

Do I hear someone say, "Well, nobody in the holiness movement believes that!" I grant you this: none would preach such a thing -- but, is it not a fact that many holiness folks have thought that the hour is too late to really get anything more done? -- their heart attitude being, their working philosophy being: "WE ARE SO NEAR THE END THAT WE HAD BEST FOCUS ALL OF OUR ATTENTION ON BEING WASHED-UP GOOD AND CLEAN SPIRITUALLY, SO WE CAN MAKE THAT QUICK EXIT WHEN THE TRUMPET BLOWS!"

Hence the Conservative Holiness Movement is often found today, in spic and span little cloisters, all washed up spiritually, and just standing around, marking time -- waiting for the whistle to blow!

Yes, Christ demands a purified Church, but can you not almost hear the Master Foreman fairly shouting out: "GET YOUR EYES OFF OF THE CLOCK! -- STOP STANDING AROUND!"

-- PICK UP YOUR TOOLS! -- GET BACK WORK! -- OCCUPY TILL I COME! "YE KNOW NOT WHAT HOUR YOUR LORD DOTH COME" (Matthew 24:42). Christians are also commanded to watch, but they are never commanded to be such clock-watchers that they cease laboring for Christ long before the quitting time!

With the following, I conclude:-- It so happens that there are various churches in the Conservative Holiness Movement that have the word "Missionary" in their name. My concluding statement is not intended to reflect on any one of them, but rather to make a point that applies to the entire True Church of God on earth in 2002. As He beholds His Great-Commissioned Laborers right now, a truly "_____ Missionary Church" is without a doubt blessed in the eyes of Christ, but a "_____ Stationary Church," with their tools laid down, all washed-up spiritually, but idling, just standing around, waiting for the Trumpet to sound, would no doubt grieve Him to the very depths of His Infinite Being! May it never be so. Selah.

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THE END