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PROPHETIC AND SUNDRY WRITINGS

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01 -- REVELATION 20 VERSE BY VERSE

INTRODUCTION

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

Consistently, throughout the scripture, the kingdom of Christ is spoken of as singular and separate from evil, and His Messianic reign is shown to be eternal in duration, not simply "a thousand years" in length. Should we not, therefore, look for an interpretation of Revelation Chapter 20 which places it in line with the all of the other scriptural testimony in these matters, instead of fixedly fastening upon it a line of interpretation which contradicts that testimony and actually creates more interpretative problems than it resolves? I assert that we should look for a different interpretation of this passage than that which is put forth by pre-millennial teachers.

This article will present an interpretation of Revelation 20 which I believe harmonizes it with the rest of eschatological prophecy which shows that Christ's Second Coming will bring about quickly the CLIMACTIC "END OF ALL THINGS" pertaining to this earth, and NOT AN ANTICLIMACTICAL EXTENSION OF TIME FOR ANOTHER ONE THOUSAND YEARS. As I interpret the Book of Revelation, the millennium is now occurring in the Church Age and shall END, rather than BEGIN at the Return of Christ.

The reader of this article will quickly see that my interpretation of Revelation 20 is spiritual, rather than literal. I make no apology for this, for I believe that "the voices of the prophets" (Acts 13:27), when correctly discerned, speak of one Spiritual and Eternal Salvation through Christ and of one Spiritual and Eternal Kingdom of Christ. Therefore, as I see it, a spiritual, versus an hyper-literal, interpretation of Christ's Revelation to St. John is not only permissible, but necessary to its correct interpretation.

* * *

REVELATION CHAPTER 20 VERSE BY VERSE

(REVELATION 20:1) -- "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand."

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

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

"HAVING THE KEY" -- In Rev. 3:18 Jesus said: "I have the keys.."

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

"AND A GREAT CHAIN IN HIS HAND" -- More will be presented about the "chain" involved here under verse 3. In Whose "hand" is the power to chain "the dragon"? Jesus said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in the earth" (Matt. 28:18). It is with this power that "whatsoever (is) bound on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever (is) loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 17:19).

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(REVELATION 20:2) -- "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years."

"AND HE LAID HOLD ON THE DRAGON.. THE DEVIL," Christ alone, none of His angels, is stronger than the Devil: "When a strong man (Satan) armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he (Christ) shall come upon him he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils" (Luke 11:21-22). Isaiah 53 brings out that because Christ "poured out His soul unto death," therefore "He shall divide the spoil.." It was at Calvary, and as the result of Calvary, that Jesus bound the devil.

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

READER, PLEASE TAKE NOTE: -- Christ DID indeed begin the spoiling of Satan's house immediately following His death and resurrection, for the Bible says so: "And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15). How much plainer need it to be? None. Therefore, since the spoiling began immediately after Christ's death and resurrection, the conclusion should be obvious: Christ bound Satan at Calvary.

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

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

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(REVELATION 20:3) -- "And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed for a little season."

"AND CAST HIM" -- "Now (at Calvary) shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31).

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

"AND SHUT HIM UP, AND SET A SEAL UPON HIM" -- Satan IS PRESENTLY BOUND, along with all of the other angels that sinned: "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4). "And the angels which kept not their first estate.. He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). When Christ "came down from heaven, having.. a great chain in His hand," He bound Satan through His death on the cross. Satan's power to destroy is limited to the perimeter within the length of his chain. Thus, he walketh about, to the full length of his restraint, like a chained, yet ferocious, lion, "seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Whom may Satan devour? Only those who sin willfully so as to place themselves, by their own choice and actions, within the perimeter of his chain.

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

"TILL THE THOUSAND YEARS SHOULD BE FULFILLED" -- From the time when Satan was first bound at Calvary until the "little season" of final tribulation near the close of the

church age: "For these be the days.. that all things which are written may be FULFILLED" (Luke 21:22).

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

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

* * *

(REVELATION 20:4) -- "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

"I SAW THE SOULS OF THEM" -- 100 out of 105 times in the new testament, when souls are mentioned, it refers to the spirits of men apart from their bodies.

"AND THEY LIVED" -- The dead in Christ still live: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25-26). After a Christian dies, his or her "life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3), but the individual continues to live still in God's presence.

"AND I SAW THRONES, AND THEY SAT UPON THEM.. AND REIGNED WITH CHRIST" --Christ now sits on the throne, and Christians are now reigning with Him, including the dead in Christ: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). "God.. hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4, 6). "They which receive abundance of grace.. reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17).

"AND JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN UNTO THEM" -- With Christ, the saints will judge the world: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?.. know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:2, 3). This judgment will be given when Jesus comes again, and it will

be a rulership that both judges and destroys the evil ones: "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.." (Rev. 2:25-27).

* * *

(REVELATION 20:5) -- "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

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

"BUT THE REST OF THE DEAD LIVED NOT AGAIN UNTIL THE THOUSAND YEARS WERE FINISHED."-- If we are born again, we NOW live again unto God, we see the kingdom of God and are living in a consciousness of His presence. Thus, during the "thousand years," or millennium in the church age, men may NOW "live again" spiritually and then die physically in the Lord, but "the rest of the dead" (those both physically and spiritually dead) will not "live again" in any sense until the "mystery of God.. is finished" (Rev. 10:6-7) and all men are resurrected at the second, and bodily, resurrection.

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

Speaking to the wicked Caiaphas, Jesus said: "I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64). Since Jesus will be seen "coming in the clouds of heaven" at His Revelation, just after the close of the great tribulation, must we not conclude from this verse that either?:

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

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

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

If Caiaphas were to be resurrected with the wicked 1,000 years after Christ came "in the clouds of heaven," how then could he see Christ "coming in the clouds of heaven" when the event was already one millennium in the past?

Matt. 26:64 presents a dilemma for those who insist that 1,000 or more years will separate the bodily resurrection of the wicked from that of the righteous. However, Matt. 26:64 does harmonize perfectly with a number of other scriptures which locate the bodily resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked at the time of Jesus' Second Coming.

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(REVELATION 20:6) -- "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

"BLESSED AND HOLY IS HE THAT HATH PART IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION" -- The spiritual resurrection is characterized by both happiness and holiness. Those who have part in it are not only made "alive unto God through Jesus Christ," but conversely they are to reckon themselves "dead indeed unto sin" (Rom. 6:11). Having "part in the first resurrection" involves all 3 works of grace: justification, entire sanctification, and bodily glorification. While both the righteous and the wicked shall be resurrected on the day of the Lord, "the dead in Christ shall rise first," as the recipients of both God's heavenly blessing and God's holy nature.

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

"BUT THEY SHALL BE PRIESTS OF GOD AND OF CHRIST" -- "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.." (Rev. 1:6). "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.." (1 Pet. 2:9).

"AND SHALL REIGN WITH HIM A THOUSAND YEARS" -- See the comments on verse 4: Christians are NOW reigning with Christ, and that reign will not only span the Millennium in the Church Age, or the time from Calvary to the "little season," but it will continue forever in the Eternal, Messianic Kingdom of Christ: "they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:5).

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(REVELATION 20:7) -- "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.."

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

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(REVELATION 20:8) -- "And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."

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

"GOG AND MAGOG, TO GATHER THEM TOGETHER TO BATTLE: THE NUMBER OF WHOM IS AS THE SAND OF THE SEA." -- Notice the similarities between all of verse 8, including this portion, and an earlier reference to the battle of Armageddon: "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. 16:14, 16). Thus the "little season" is taken to be identical with the reign of anti-Christ, and the battle of Gog and Magog to be identical with the battle of Armageddon.

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(REVELATION 20:9) -- "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

"AND THEY WENT UP ON THE BREADTH OF THE EARTH, AND COMPASSED THE CAMP OF THE SAINTS ABOUT, AND THE BELOVED CITY." -- Once again, notice the similarity between the above portion of verse 9 and a statement of Jesus, as recorded in Luke's version of the Olivet Discourse: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem COMPASSED ABOUT with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars.. for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:20, 25, 26, 27). Who would say that the scene in Luke was not the compassing about of Jerusalem just before Armageddon and the Lord's Return? The striking similarity between the passage in Luke and the above portion of Rev. 20:9 is taken as more than a coincidence, and as another indication that the battle of Gog and Magog, as recorded in Revelation chapter 20, and the battle of Armageddon are one and the same battle.

"AND FIRE CAME DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN, AND DEVOURED THEM." -- Again, notice the similarity between how the enemies are destroyed at the battle of Gog and Magog and how they are destroyed at Christ's return, a similarity which is taken as yet further evidence that the battles of "Armageddon" and "Gog and Magog" are one and the same battle: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel.. who shall be punished with everlasting destruction.." (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

* * *

(REVELATION 20:10) -- "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

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

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

into prison. Then, from a different perspective of the same story, Act #7 tells of how their boss is brought to justice, and concludes with his being cast into prison at the same time that his two accomplices were imprisoned.

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

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

"AND THE DEVIL THAT DECEIVED THEM WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE.. AND SHALL BE TORMENTED DAY AND NIGHT FOR EVER AND EVER." Luke 12:47-48 makes it clear that the wicked will suffer varying degrees of divine punishment from the Lord: "That servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.." According to this rule, it would appear that the one who will be tormented the most, and who will suffer the most, in the lake of fire will be Satan himself, and that forever!

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

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

"FROM WHOSE FACE THE EARTH AND THE HEAVEN FLED AWAY"

AN IMPORTANT OBSERVATION: -- The fleeing away of the present earth and heavens will take place at Christ's Second Coming on The Day Of The Lord, and not 1,000 years later. This is seen in 2 Peter 3:3-13: "There shall come.. scoffers.. saying, Where is the promise of his coming?.. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away.. the earth also.. shall be burned up." Again, Rev. 20 is seen to conclude on the day of the Lord, and not 1,000 years later.

"AND THERE WAS NO PLACE FOUND FOR THEM" -- No place will be found for this present universe at the great Judgment scene. The heaven and earth, as we now know them, will vanish on the day of the Lord. At the opening of the 6th seal we read: "the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (Rev. 6:14).

In Heb 1:10-12 we read: "..the earth; and the heaven.. shall perish.. And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed..." We can establish the time in which these dramatic changes will occur by reading an earlier portion of the first chapter of Hebrews: "When He bringeth again the Firstbegotten into the world.." (Heb. 1:6, marginal alternative KJV). Also, as has been earlier pointed out, seals 6 and 7 have brought us to the day of the Lord. Thus, we again see that the removal and regeneration of the material universe will occur on the day of the Lord, and not 1,000 years thereafter.

* * *

(REVELATION 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."

"AND I SAW THE DEAD, SMALL AND GREAT, STAND BEFORE GOD" -- This is the general judgment. Every man, woman, boy, and girl who ever lived will be there, without exception. This same, general judgment scene is spoken of in different terms in Matt. 25:31-33: "Then shall He sit upon the throne.. and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left." This will not be a judgment of nations as groups. Rather, it will be a judgment of all nations as individuals, every individual from every nation. When Jesus said: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations," He meant that we should teach all individuals everywhere.

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

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

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(REVELATION 20:13) -- "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

"AND THEY WERE JUDGED EVERY MAN" -- None shall escape from being brought to the judgment. "Every man" will be there! "There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves" (Job 34:22). Men may have their bodies cremated and their ashes scattered across a vast expanse of ocean in the attempt to avoid the resurrection and final judgment, and yet God will see to it that "every man," without exception, will be there on Judgment Day.

* * *

(REVELATION 20:14) -- "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

"THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION... THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH" -- These two brief statements, written in similar form, seem to present to the reader two emphatic opposites: The first resurrection, bringing spiritual and eternal life; and the second death, bringing spiritual and eternal death. Those resurrected twice (spiritually and bodily) will die once, bodily -- while those resurrected once, bodily, will die twice, bodily, and eternally.

* * *

(REVELATION 20:15) -- "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

"AND WHOSOEVER WAS NOT FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE" -- This statement provides another confirmation that all will be at this judgment as the general, and final judgment of every human being. Many at this General Judgment shall be found in the Book of Life.

"WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE." -- Millions not found written in the Book of Life shall be cast into The Lake of Fire, which is the second death.

Thus, we see that Revelation chapter 20 concludes at the same, awesome final judgment as that portrayed in Matthew chapter 25, where those not found written in the book of life "shall go away into everlasting punishment," and where "the righteous," whose names are found written in the book of life, shall go "into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46). The judgment portrayed in Revelation chapter 20, is identical to the judgment portrayed in Matthew chapter 25, and it will occur on the day of the Lord, and not 1,000 years later.

Reader, consider how many proofs are found in Revelation 20 which point out to us that the conclusion of the chapter shall come, not one millennium beyond the return of Christ, but

rather at Christ's Second Coming on The Day Of The Lord. When the "thousand years" and "little season" of Revelation chapter 20 are interpreted as in the church age, and spanning the time from Calvary to the day of the Lord, then the time of the final judgment of all, Rev. 20:11-15, is seen to occur at exactly the same time that all other scriptures locate its occurrence: on Judgment Day, The Day Of The Lord. (See Acts 17:31 and Romans 2:5.)

* * * * *

02 -- THE KINGDOM FULFILLMENTS OF REVELATION 21-22

Yes, the following is prophetic truth, but it contains some of the most marvelous facts in the Bible about THE HOLY CITY and THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM OF CHRIST. And, yes, the following paragraphs do show that much of what Millennialists think will occur on this earth will actually take place in the New Heavens and New Earth. But still, this little article should bless the heart of any saint who is "Going to a City where the roses never fade."

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

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

* * *

New Heavens And New Earth, Former Things Passed Away

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

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

* * *

Eternal Bliss, With No Sorrow Or Tears

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

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

* * *

Nothing Hurtful Or Painful

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

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

* * *

Long Life, No Death

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

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

* * *

No More Curse, But Instead Blessing

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

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

* * *

Jerusalem The Prominent City, Honored By Nations

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Micah 4:1-2 But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. (2) And many

nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD..and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (see also Isa. 2:2-3)

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

* * *

Jerusalem Become The Dominant City

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

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

* * *

Jerusalem's Gates Be Continually Open

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

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

* * *

Jerusalem's Dimensions Be Foursquare

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

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

* * *

Jerusalem's Wall Foundations Garnished With Precious Stones

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

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

* * *

Jerusalem's Gates Named After The 12 Tribes Of Israel

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

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

* * *

Jerusalem Divinely Lighted

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

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:23-24 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. (24) And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

* * *

Jerusalem Experience Endless Day

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 60:19-20 The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. (20) Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

* * *

Jerusalem Adorned As A Bride

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 52:1 ..put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city..

(b) Shown to be in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

* * *

Jerusalem Pure And Holy

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 52:1 ..put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Zech. 14:20-21 In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. (21) Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts..and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts. Isa. 60:21 Thy people also shall be all righteous..that I may be glorified.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.. 2 Pet. 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

* * *

Eternal Damnation To Those Without The City

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 66:22,24 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. (24) And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. (8) But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

* * *

The Tabernacle Of God With Men

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Ezek. 37:27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:3,22 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God..(22) And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

* * *

The Water Of Life And Tree Of Life

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Ezek. 47:1,9,12 Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward.. (9) And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live..and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.. (12) And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine. Zech. 14:8,11 And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem.. (11) And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:1-2 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. (2) In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

* * *

Jerusalem The Place Of God's Throne

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Jer. 3:17 At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem..

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:3 ..the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it..

* * *

The Eternal Presence Of Christ

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Ezek. 48:35 It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:3 ..the Lamb shall be in it..

* * *

Christ Reigning Over All The Earth From Jerusalem

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Zech. 14:9,16 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.. (16) ..all the nations..shall even go up .. (to Jerusalem) to worship the King, the LORD of hosts..

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it (New Jerusalem); and his servants shall serve him.

* * *

Jesus Reigning Forever, Endless Increase, Peace, And Order

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Isa. 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. Isa. 66:10,12 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.. (12) For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream..

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 22:3,5 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.. (5) ..for ever and ever.

* * *

Jerusalem Filled With God's Glory

(a) Prophesied to be in The Messianic Age: Ps. 87:3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah. Isa. 60:13 ..I will make the place of my feet glorious.

(b) Shown to be fulfilled in The Eternal State: Rev. 21:10-11 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, (11) Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

* * *

In Conclusion

Surely all of these marvelous things shall have their fulfillment, not in the Jerusalem which now is, nor during a millennium of time, but rather in the New Jerusalem of the eternal state. Beloved, let us not look for the realization of Messianic kingdom promises within the feeble framework of time and matter here below, but rather in the "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. 11:10

Heb. 12:18,22 tells us: For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched.. (22) But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.. That which is touchable and visible often appeals more to the human mind than that which is spiritual and invisible, but should not the above quotations from Hebrews reveal to us that our hope is not to come to the touchable Jerusalem on this earth, but rather our hope and purpose should be to enter in through the gates into "the heavenly Jerusalem." Nowhere in the Bible is the Christian pointed to this present earth as the location where God's promises shall be fulfilled to Christ's Church. Why, then, after the return of Christ, should we expect to re-inhabit, for even a thousand years, this old earth and the Jerusalem which now is?

This writer asserts that, along with numerous other scriptures, the comparisons of scripture with scripture presented in this chapter should convince us that the Jesus' Messianic reign will take place in the eternal state within the New Heaven, the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem. Further, I suggest that since Revelation 21 and 22 speak primarily of the bliss which Christ will share with His Church, we should also be able to see from the comparisons presented in this chapter that the Messianic kingdom will not be a fulfillment of "this-earthly" promises to flesh and blood Israel, but will instead be a fulfillment of "the world to come" promises to the entire, spiritual "Israel of God," Christ's Church.

At His return, Christ will shake down, utterly consume, and remove from His sight all material things. I maintain that this "consumption" will eliminate the possibility of a Messianic reign on this earth.

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

Saint of God, why is it that you anticipate, sing, and rejoice over going to THE NEW JERUSALEM after you die? If you were going to a refurbished, earthly Jerusalem, or some other spot on a patched up version of this earth for a thousand years, why do you never think about it, sing about it, or rejoice over it? I'll tell you why: -- Because THE NEW JERUSALEM IS GOING TO BE YOUR NEXT HOME! The song writer declared:

When the toils of life are over and we lay our armor down
And we bid FAREWELL TO EARTH with all its cares,
We shall meet and greet our loved ones, and our Christ we then shall crown
IN THE NEW JERUSALEM.

There'll be singing, there'll be shouting, when the saints come marching home,
In Jerusalem, In Jerusalem;
Waving palms with loud hosannas as the King shall take His throne,
IN THE NEW JERUSALEM!

* * * * *

03 -- CAIAPHAS AND THE REVELATION OF THE INVISIBLE KING

Herewith, I shall make a very brief commentary on the above-titled subject. Let me first present three scriptures:

"Now unto THE KING eternal, immortal, INVISIBLE, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Timothy 1:17).

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7).

"And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to CAIAPHAS the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled... JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM.. HEREAFTER SHALL YE SEE THE SON OF MAN sitting on the right hand of power, and COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN" (Matt. 26:57, 64).

Now, my brief commentary: -- A number of times, I have made the following point: -- Jesus' statement to the wicked Caiaphas in Matthew 26:64 proves that the resurrection of the wicked shall occur at the time of Christ's Revelation -- not one thousand years later -- as the teachers of Chiliasm, or Pre-Millennialism, would have us believe.

Further, I have explained that this is true because Jesus said that the wicked Caiaphas would "see the Son of Man.. coming in the clouds of heaven" -- something that would be utterly impossible if Caiaphas was resurrected 1000 years AFTER Christ's "coming in the clouds of heaven."

Christ now is "The Invisible King" -- but, at His Revelation "every eye shall see Him" -- including the eyes of Caiaphas. Further, since the Revelation of Christ shall occur at the time of His Second Coming -- not 1000 years AFTER His Second coming -- it should be clear to any honest and logically reasoning student of the subject that CAIAPHAS (A WICKED MAN) WILL BE RESURRECTED AT THE TIME OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING -- NOT 1000 YEARS LATER.

This conclusion could only be nullified if one of two following things was the case:--

(a) If Caiaphas was a righteous person, or Jesus saw that he would become a righteous person before his death, and thus be resurrected with the righteous dead. Obviously, Caiaphas was NOT a righteous person at the time Jesus made to him the statement in Matthew 26:64. And, personally, I think it highly unlikely that Jesus was foreseeing that Caiaphas would become righteous, and thus be resurrected with the righteous, so as to see Christ "coming in the clouds of heaven" at the time of His Second Coming Revelation. It seems quite clear to me that Jesus was telling the wicked Caiaphas that as one of the wicked dead, hereafter he would be resurrected with the wicked dead (right after the resurrection and rapture of the righteous) in time to "see the Son of Man... coming in the clouds of heaven."

(b) If Caiaphas, and all of the rest of the dead (righteous and wicked) see Christ while still being unresurrected in the intermediate state. If ALL of the dead see Christ in the intermediate state, this might be construed to be the way the wicked Caiaphas could "see the Son of Man.. coming in the clouds of heaven" though still not having been resurrected.

In answer to point (b) above, I would reply that 1 Timothy 6:16 tells us that prior to His Second Coming Revelation Christ is "DWELLING IN THE LIGHT which no man can approach unto; WHOM NO MAN HATH SEEN, NOR CAN SEE.."

Thus, it seems quite clear to me that while the pure in heart "see God" spiritually before and after their earthly demise, and while the wicked, rich man lifted up his eyes in hell and beheld Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham, JESUS' STATEMENT TO CAIAPHAS REFERRED TO THE "SEEING OF CHRIST" IN A WAY WHICH NONE DO NOW SEE HIM, NOR CAN SEE HIM, PRIOR TO THEIR RESURRECTION. Even the righteous shall not "see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2) until His Second Coming Revelation -- and -- I very much doubt that the wicked dead ever have, or ever shall, see Christ in any way while they are in the intermediate state -- viz. at any time prior to Christ's Second Coming Revelation.

IN CONCLUSION: -- I believe that an honest and logical interpretation of Jesus' statement to the wicked Caiaphas in Matthew 26:64 demands that we interpret it to mean that Caiaphas will be resurrected among the wicked dead at the time of Christ's Second Coming Revelation -- and not 1000 years later. The glorified Jesus is not only "dwelling in" the "invisible Light of Heaven" -- He is PART OF that invisible Light -- being "the King eternal, immortal, invisible."

UNTIL the Second Coming Revelation of Christ, Jesus shall remain "The Invisible King" that "no man" (living or dead) "hath seen, nor can see" (1 Timothy 1:17). BUT AT THE TIME OF Christ's Second Coming Revelation, all shall be resurrected, so that the wicked dead, and "every eye" will "see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven."

This, I believe, is the correct interpretation of Matthew 26:64 -- only one of the scriptures which show that the resurrection of wicked shall occur in rapid succession after that of the righteous -- at the time of Christ's Second Coming -- and not 1000 years later.

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04 -- PERTAINING TO THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD

"..the manifestation of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19).

INTRODUCTION

A correct understanding of this particular aspect of Christ's Second Coming sheds much light upon the entire subject. While we cannot say that it is the paramount part of Jesus' Return, it IS a part of that event from which, like one piece of a jig-saw puzzle placed properly, all other aspects of the Second Coming can also be seen correctly. In other words: Get the picture right about "the manifestation of the sons of God," and it is then possible to see all other aspects of Christ's Return in their proper place and view the entire Biblical Mosaic of this climactic occurrence in clear focus.

One could say the same for any of the other parts of the eschatological puzzle: Get any one of them right, and you can then fit around it all of the other parts and of the Second Coming and get "The Big Picture" correct, with all of its correlated and conjoined pieces creating a clear and beautiful picture of the whole.

This is not to say that one can always easily and quickly do so. Second Coming prophecy is not an enigma -- a dark and confusing puzzle which can never be seen clearly or correctly, but IT DOES TAKE STUDY AND TIME to fit the pieces together correctly. The reason why many people never attempt or never finish a jig-saw puzzle is because they will not exercise the patience and invest the time it takes to "get the picture" right and to get it completed.

Perhaps another reason why some jig-saws have not been fit together rightly and completely is because a would-be helper keeps suggesting the wrong thing. Here, let me assert that often the only way one can get the Second Coming, prophetic picture right is to first "shoo-off" all human helpers and all prejudiced and preconceived notions on the subject, and then with a completely honest and open mind, ask GOD to make it clear from His Word. Even then, however, one should not expect to suddenly see it all, with no effort, no time invested, and no study. Nevertheless, with Divine inspiration and assistance, accompanied by honest and earnest study, I believe it is possible for a Christian to reach the point where, like one who peers into a kaleidoscope and turns it just right, EVERYTHING WILL FALL INTO PLACE, and the beautiful, symmetrical, and correct picture of Christ's Second Coming will be seen.

I do not infer that a correct grasp of Second Coming Prophecy will enable the student to pinpoint the precise time and every detail relative to that awesome event, but I DO believe that the correct structure and picture of the main things relative to that occurrence can be clearly perceived.

Now, back to the one piece of that puzzle upon which I shall expound, and around which I shall build the general picture: -- "THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD."

* * *

FIRST -- WHAT IS THE "MANIFESTATION" IN ROMANS 8:19?

The Greek word here for "manifestation" is "apokalupsis" -- and we could correctly translate this phrase: -- "the REVELATION of the sons of God." The Greek word translated as "manifestation" here is the same Greek word that is translated as "revelation" in 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."

Before discussing the "when" of "the MANIFESTATION of the sons of God," let me relate some additional scriptures concerning "what" it is.

In Romans 8:18 Paul writes of "the glory that shall be REVEALED in us." In this verse the Greek word for "revealed" is also "apokalupsis" and obviously "the glory REVEALED" in the saints is synonymous with "the MANIFESTATION of the sons of God" mentioned in the next verse.

Daniel 12:3 also prophesies of "the MANIFESTATION of the sons of God" thus: -- "And they that be wise shall SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

In reference to this same "MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD," Jesus said in Matthew 13:43 -- "Then shall the righteous SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father."

By way of contrast now, the following Scriptures do NOT refer to the "manifestation of the sons of God" mentioned in Romans 8:19:

In Matthew 5:14-16 Jesus said to His disciples: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Again, Philippians 2:15 instructs: -- "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom YE SHINE AS LIGHTS in the world.

So, while it is clear from a number of New Testament scriptures that there IS a "manifestation of the sons of God" while they remain on this earth, it is equally clear that the manifestation mentioned in Romans 8:19 is a manifestation that has not yet occurred. The entire verse says: "For the earnest expectation of the creature WAITETH FOR THE MANIFESTATION of the sons of God." It is an event that is yet to come.

Naturally, this leads us to my next point:

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SECOND -- WHEN SHALL THE MANIFESTATION OF ROMANS 8:19 OCCUR?

St. Paul answered that question in Colossians 3:4 -- " WHEN CHRIST, who is our life, SHALL APPEAR, THEN shall ye also appear with him in glory."

"The manifestation of the sons of God" awaits the time of Christ's Appearance, and though the Greek word used for "appear" in Colossians 3:4 is "phaneroo" and not "apokalupsis" it should be clear to any honest student of the Word that it refers to one and the same double-event: viz., THE REVELATION OF CHRIST IN GLORY -- and -- THE REVELATION OF HIS SAINTS with Him in the heavens.

Regardless of one's belief concerning the details preceding Christ's Return, all must agree that the "manifestation" or "revelation" of the sons of God shall occur at the time of Christ's Second Coming, Revelation in Glory. When HE is revealed, THEN shall His Saints "also be revealed with him" in the skies. The Apokalupsis of Christ and The Apokalupsis of His People shall be seen at the same time by an evil, but awe-struck world -- AND WHAT A GLORIOUS DOUBLE-REVELATION THAT SHALL BE!

Since even before His ignominious Crucifixion and Death, Jesus has been despised and rejected by "this present evil world," and, since before the martyrdom of Stephen, His true followers have also been despised and rejected with Him.

In John 15:20-21 Jesus said to His disciples: -- "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.. all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

But -- the Hour is fast approaching when "this present evil world" which has spit upon, rejected, and blasphemed Christ, shall "see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and GREAT GLORY" (Lu. 21:27). And, I think probably most have greatly underestimated THE MAGNITUDE OF THAT HEAVENLY REVELATION.

By way of comparison, consider the following concerning Jesus' earthly revelation of His Glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Luke 9:29 tells us that "His countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening." Speaking of that same earthly revelation, Matthew 17:2 says that Jesus "was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Mark 9:3 says, "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them."

Further, 2 Chronicles 7:2 says that "the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house."

If earthly revelations of Christ's Glory have been so awesome and overpowering, dear reader, consider how much GREATER shall be THE REVELATION OF CHRIST'S GLORY IN HEAVEN AT HIS SECOND COMING!

And, if at "the manifestation of the sons of God" with Him in glory they shall "shine as the brightness of the firmament" (Daniel 12:3), and "shine forth as the sun" (Matthew 13:43), just imagine, if you can, THE TREMENDOUS MAGNITUDE AND RADIANCE OF CHRIST'S OWN HEAVENLY REVELATION! ITS RADIANCE AND GLORY WILL BE INCONCEIVABLY OVERPOWERING by itself -- without even taking into consideration the exceeding brilliance of the saints with Him. Add these two revelations together, and the combined magnitude of that Heavenly Spectacle both now staggers the mortal imagination and shall then stagger in horror the evil who behold it from below.

Consider the following Old Testament picture: -- As the army of Abimelech approached Shechem, "Gaal spake again and said, See there come people down by the middle of the land, and another company come along by the plain of Meonenim." The evil Gaal had despised and rejected the Abimelech, his army, and his rulership. But, after Gaal espied Abimelech coming with his army, "Then said Zebul unto him, Where is now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? IS NOT THIS THE PEOPLE THAT THOU HAST DESPISED? go out, I pray now, and fight with them" (Judges 9:37-38)

When "the MANIFESTATION of the sons of God" occurs at "the REVELATION" of Christ coming in the clouds -- Too late, a Christ-Rejecting, Christian-Despising world will then discover that THESE ARE THE PEOPLE THEY DESPISED -- now shining as the brightness of the firmament -- and THIS JESUS, Whom they have rejected and blasphemed IS THAT even more indescribably AWESOME ONE WITH WHOM HIS DESPISED SAINTS COME!

Revelation 19:11-16 describes that event which shall occur on "THAT GREAT AND TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD" (Joel 2:31): -- "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

I need not have gone into so much detail, but along with a glimpse of the magnitude of that Heavenly Spectacle, the preceding should fix in the mind of the reader that "the manifestation of the sons of God" shall occur at the same time of the awesome Revelation of Christ.

Now to my next point on this subject:

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THIRD -- THE REGENERATION DIRECTLY FOLLOWS THE REVELATION

"The manifestation of the sons of God" shall occur at the time of Christ's Revelation, and in quick succession following this shall come what Jesus called "The Regeneration" in Matthew 19:28.

Before presenting scriptural proof of that The Regeneration directly follows The Revelation, let me first define the term. The word "regeneration" used in Matthew 19:28 is "paliggenesia" and it means: "rebirth (the state or the act), i.e.(fig.) spiritual renovation; spec. Messianic restoration:--regeneration." It is a compound of "palin," which can be interpreted "anew" or "once more" and "genesis". (See Strong's Greek Dictionary #3824, #3825, #1078)

We can see from the definition of this word that "the regeneration" to which the Lord referred in Matthew 19:28 will be the time of the "anew-genesis," the time when all things will be "made new". It will be the time when "once more" there is a "genesis," a new beginning with all things renovated and restored by the Messiah into their proper, glorified, and eternal state.

Romans 8:19-23 should make it clear to any thoughtful and honest student of Second Coming Prophecy that "The Paliggenesia" -- "The Regeneration" does not await the passing of 1,000 Years of additional Time after Christ's Revelation, but that **THE REGENERATION AWAITS ONLY THE TIME OF THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD -- WHICH MANIFESTATION OCCURS SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE REVELATION OF CHRIST!**

"For the earnest expectation of the creature [kinesis, creation] WAITETH FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD. For the creature [kinesis, creation] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature [kinesis, 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 [kinesis] groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they [God's creatures and His creation], 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" (Romans 8:19-23).

This passage alone should convince any honest interpreter of prophecy that **THE CREATION WILL BE REGENERATED RIGHT AFTER THE REVELATION OF CHRIST AND "THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD"!** It awaits only that Double-Revelation.

Furthermore -- St. Paul here connects "The REGENERATION" with the time of "the REDEMPTION" of the saints' bodies! "The Redemption" of the saints' bodies is synonymous with the Resurrection of the dead in Christ and the "Change" into glorified their glorified bodies of all Christ's People, both dead and living at The Revelation. In rapid succession following "the manifestation of the sons of God" with Christ at His Revelation, shall come the Destruction and Resurrection of the wicked, the Judgment, and The Regeneration. Were it not for what I deem to

be the sadly erroneous interpretation and doctrine of one thousand years to follow Christ's Return, and if Revelation 20 was instead interpreted in harmony with the rest of the Bible on this subject, many might more easily and readily see this truth.

I invite my reader to read more fully my book, "His Appearing and His Kingdom," (hdm0124) for a complete treatment of the subject. Repeatedly in Second Coming Prophecy, the destruction of the earth as it now exists and "The Paliggenesia" -- "The Regeneration" are seen to take place in direct connection with Christ's Return -- and certainly NOT ONE THOUSAND YEARS THEREAFTER.

In 2 Peter 3:11-13 the apostle says to Christ's followers: "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."

Peter didn't leave anything out here. He says that the saints must be "Looking for the coming of the day of God," which, if not confused by Millennialistic teaching, can be easily seen as synonymous with "Looking for the Second Coming of Christ" on the Day of the Lord. Then, without saying one thing about "Looking for any supposed One Thousand Year extension of Time," Peter says that along with looking for that "Coming of the Day of God," the saints "look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Again, in direct connection with the fearful and awesome Revelation of Christ -- "Him that sitteth upon the Throne" (Rev. 6:16) -- we read in Rev. 6:13-14 that "the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

And, in Revelation 21:5, "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." Dear Saint of God, as I understand God's word on this subject, THE REGENERATION AWAITS ONLY "THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD" AT THE REVELATION OF CHRIST!

Jesus Second Coming is CLIMACTIC -- NOT ANTI-CLIMACTIC! Away with this notion that His Second Coming shall bring about only a partial destruction of evil and a partial renewal of this earth for a paltry one thousand years! He is going to "MAKE ALL THINGS NEW" -- AND THAT, MIGHTY QUICK AND FOREVER AT THE TIME OF "THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD" AND HIS REVELATION WITH THEM IN GLORY!

If we interpret the prophecy of John the Revelator correctly, it will harmonize beautifully with all of the rest of Second Coming Prophecy -- which negates the idea 1,000 more years of time after Christ's Return. Jesus' Olivet Discourse -- if not bent out of shape -- also negates the idea of a thousand years of time following His Return, as do the scriptures of all other inspired writers, including, of course, the apostle Peter, who wrote in 2 Peter 3:10,13 -- "But the day of

the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

In the above, there is no mention by Peter of a Millennium on a patched up version of this earth after Christ's Return. Why? I assert BECAUSE THERE SHALL BE NONE! Christian, why don't you ever consider where you are going to live for a thousand years on this patched up earth after Christ's Return? Why is it, instead, that you always think and sing about your Eternal Home in THE REGENERATED, NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH? I'll tell you why: -- Because that shall BE your next home, and because that's what comes, promptly after "the restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21) at Christ's Return!

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FOURTH -- THE RESTITUTION FOLLOWS THE MANIFESTATION

Put more fully, my subtitle here would say: -- "The Restitution of All Things" promptly follows "The Manifestation of the Sons of God."

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

At the time of Christ's ascension, "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19). According to Acts 3:21, "The heaven must receive" Christ "until" the time arrives for the "restitution of all things." Thus, until this very hour, Heaven has "Received" and "Retained" His presence, but, at His Revelation, Him Who now sits upon the Throne shall be unveiled, shall arise, shall leave Heaven, shall resurrect, change, and rapture His saints to be manifested with Him in the air, and in rapid succession He shall destroy the wicked, destroy the earth as it now exists, shall resurrect the wicked and bring all to the Judgment, and shall bring about "THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS."

Further, as I understand God's Word, the re-created order described by the Bible terms "changed," "restitution of all things," "make all things new," and "the regeneration" cannot be seen as a transitory condition, but rather these terms speak of a state that shall be eternal, a state which once brought about shall never be reversed or undone.

Thus, when Jesus spoke of "the regeneration" as the time and state during which He would sit in the Messianic "throne of His glory," He spoke of a Messianic Reign, not lasting 1000 years, but which would continue forever. This, I maintain, is the true, Biblical concept of Jesus' Messianic reign. Part of "the restitution of all things" shall be this Eternal "Regeneration" of all things, and both shall follow fast on the heels of "the manifestation of the sons of God" at Christ's Revelation.

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FIFTH -- GOD'S UNACCOUNTABLE CREATURES SHALL BE IN THE REGENERATION

Romans 8:20-21 declare that "the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope," and "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

I think it highly likely that "creature" (kritis) in these verses refers to virtually all of God's Creation -- animate and inanimate -- which was made subject to vanity (or mortality, death) through no willful sin or rebellion. Neither inanimate Matter nor any unaccountable Creature were capable of sin -- and they shall therefore, after being destroyed as they now exist, be regenerated "into the glorious liberty of the sons of God," and shall eternally exist and live in their glorified state as, and in, "the new heavens and the new earth."

As things are now, "all the foundations of the earth are out of course" (Psalm 82:5). The Material Universe is "out of whack". And, through no fault of their own, the animals were cursed with a bloodthirsty ferocity after Man's Fall. There is discord and decay everywhere, and "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:22). But, "in the Regeneration" when Christ "makes all things new," Matter will be transformed into a "better and more enduring substance" (Heb. 10:34) -- indeed it will be changed into an Eternal Substance. And, every "creature" that is now mortal and ferocious will be transformed into eternal and docile creatures.

Millennialists think that the docile behavior of God's animals shall come about during a paltry one thousand years, after which they will be burned up. I reject such teaching as both unScriptural and senseless. The prophesied docility of God's creatures shall take place in the Eternal New Earth.

In that New Earth, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:6-9).

Again, Isaiah 65:25 describes God's Creatures in the Eternal Regeneration: -- "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."

Yes, there is some figurative language in the preceding verses, but nevertheless, they speak of the Eternal, Glorified state of God's Creatures in The New Earth.

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FINALLY -- IN SUMMATION

I believe that when one rightly perceives "the manifestation of the sons of God" -- What it is, When it shall occur, and those Awesome, Wonderful and Eternal Things that shall follow -- there is seen a profound and poignant, Prophetic Picture of that which shall "surely come to pass" (1 Kings 13:32) and of "the things which must SHORTLY be done" (Rev. 22:6).

Jesus did not tell John that things would wrap up SOON -- although these things may occur now, much, much SOONER than millions imagine. The word "shortly" in Rev. 22:6 is "tachos" and might also be translated (according to Strong's Concordance): "in haste, quickly, speedily."

Contrary to the teaching of Millennialists, who say that following Christ's Return there shall come a thousand-year-long, drawn out completion of "the restitution of all things," I believe the Bible both TEACHES and WARNS, that while Christ, "The Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it," (James 5:7) -- ONCE HE BEGINS THE HARVEST AT THE TIME OF HIS REVELATION, "He will finish the work" QUICKLY "and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Romans 9:28)!

The word "short" here in "short work" is "suntemno" and means to "do concisely, speedily, and cut short"!

"The Manifestation of The Sons of God" shall occur at The Last Trump: -- "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:52).

That Last Trump is synonymous with the Seventh Trumpet of Revelation 10:5-7 -- "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be TIME NO LONGER: 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."

Do they not greatly err, who mistakenly teach people that AFTER THE RAPTURE of the saints shall come another seven years in which some shall be saved? Do they not even more greatly err who teach that AFTER THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD shall come another one thousand years during which some shall be saved?

I assert that such teachings both confuse the Facts of Second Coming Prophecy and encourage many to believe what is NOT SO! There shall be no chance to be saved after The Last Trump blows and "The Manifestation of the Sons of God" occurs! Nay, when that Last Trump blows, there shall "be TIME NO LONGER" -- Christ's Revelation shall occur, the saints will be Resurrected, Raptured and Manifested with Him in the air, the wicked shall be defeated

and utterly destroyed, the earth and the works therein (along with the entire universe) shall be burned up and destroyed as they now exist, the wicked will be resurrected and changed into their never-but-ever-dying damnation bodies, every human being who ever lived will be brought to the Judgment, all will be sent to their respective Eternal Abodes -- the wicked into the Lake of Fire, and the righteous into the New Heavens and New Earth.

All of this shall occur IN SHORT ORDER, for once Christ, the Great Husbandman has put in His sickle, "He will finish the work" QUICKLY "and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Romans 9:28)! And all who suppose otherwise had better take another long, sober, and honest look at what the Bible says on the subject.

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05 -- NO MUNDANE MESSIANIC KINGDOM SHALL COME

INTRODUCTION

In this article, I shall discuss the following three points:

- A -- The Jewish Nation Wrongly Expected A Mundane, Messianic Kingdom
- B -- The Pre-Pentecostal Disciples Wrongly Expected A Mundane, Messianic Kingdom
- C -- Post-Pentecostal Millennialists Wrongly Expect A Mundane, Messianic Kingdom

I expect that perhaps many will heartily disagree with me, who receive and read this article by email or later from an HDM disc. That is the prerogative of any and all who choose so to do. However, I shall not respond to those who wish to refute what I teach on this subject. It is my hope that many will take the time necessary to read and study this article, and that at least some will be persuaded to accept as true what I have written. Whatever the case, without any debate on the matter, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." (Romans 14:5).

*I have appended to the end of this corrected edition of this article an interesting response from Dr. George Lyons of Northwest Nazarene University.

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A -- The Jewish Nation Wrongly Expected A Mundane, Messianic Kingdom

When Jesus "came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11), one reason for that rejection was the Jews' mistaken notion that when their Messiah came He would set up a Mundane, Earthly, Kingdom -- in "this present evil world" (Galatians 1:4).

Under the leadership of such men as Ezra and Nehemiah, Zerubbabel and Haggai, their nation had been restored after the Babylonian Captivity. But a restored existence alone did not fulfill their Messianic hope. As prophesied by Micah, they expected their coming Messiah to bring the nation into world-wide dominion -- as the chief of all nations: -- "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" (Micah 4:8).

But alas! the Jewish Nation fell under foreign dominion, including that of the Greeks and next the Romans. "The first dominion" was nowhere in sight, and once again they were not only not the Supreme Nation on earth, they were in subjection.

And, when Zechariah 9:9 prophesied: -- "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation," they expected him to come as a Mundane, Earthly Savior, and even though the remainder of the verse prophesied that He would come, "lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass," they fancied that He would ride majestically on a White Horse, deliver them from subjection to Rome and elevate their nation as the Supreme Power on Earth!

The Psalmist had prophesied of their Great Coming King: -- "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with thy glory and Thy Majesty. And in Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people [Israel's foes shall] fall under Thee" (Psalm 45:3-5).

They expected their Messianic King to utterly overthrow all of the foes of the Jewish Nation, and raise them into a Mundane, This-Earthly, Dominion, Prominence, and Glory that would far exceed even the Kingdom of Solomon -- the first king-son of David.

But Jesus, the Greater Son of David was not recognized as such. To the eyes of many around Christ, nothing about Him sparkled like Solomon, the first king-son of David. The ancient prophecy of Isaiah relating how Israel's Messiah would have "no form nor comeliness; and.. no beauty that we should desire him" was forgotten by most, and Jesus did not fit their preconceived picture of the long expected "King of the Jews."

Born in a manger, raised in the relative obscurity of the little town of Nazareth, He took up Joseph's trade and became known as just "the carpenter's son"! Why! Solomon, the first king-son of David was no carpenter!!! He employed thousands of them to build the Temple and his own glorious Palace, but he was no menial laborer. Surely this rude and callus-handed menial laborer was not the Greater Son of David for whom they looked: -- "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him" (Luke 13:55-57).

Yes, Jesus wrought many miracles, but He shunned the spotlight in spite of them. And, because the lowly carpenter, turned miracle-worker, refused to manifest his August Majesty to the world, "neither did his [own] brethren believe in him." In that incredulity, they chastised Him thus: "For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. IF thou do these things, shew thyself to the world" (John 7:4-5). At that point, they even doubted His power to perform miracles, and His refusal to make an outward show convinced

them that this, their older brother, one who had dwelt with them in the same house, was NOT the Messiah.

In John 7:31 we read: -- "And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" Indeed Jesus' miracles were in part meant to convince those to whom He ministered, but He never performed them to awe and convince the Jewish Rulers nor many other unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, that He really was the Messiah. Thus it was, "When Herod saw Jesus, he.. hoped to have seen some miracle done by him" (Luke 23:8), but he saw none.

Here Jesus was, proclaiming that He was the Messiah, but because neither His appearance nor his proffered "salvation" was visible, mundane and earthly, He was rejected as an impostor: -- "Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is" (John 7:26-27).

Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah? Impossible! they thought. He did not advocate the overthrowing of Roman rule and the setting up of an earthly kingdom that would elevate the Jewish Nation! He did not even allow Peter to kill one of the crowd that came to arrest Him. And, when brought before Pilate "Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

Contrary to the expectation of most of the Jews, Jesus did not come the first time to set up a kingdom in "this present evil world." Millennialists emphasize "NOW is my kingdom not from hence" as meaning "LATER my kingdom shall be in this world." But, the fact is, neither is Jesus coming the second time to set up a kingdom in "this present evil world"! -- not even in a temporarily patched-up version of "this present evil world"!

"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).

Plain and simple, Christ's kingdom "is not of this world," period! It exists invisibly now in the hearts of His born-again followers, and shall exist later visibly, eternally, and only in "the New Heavens and New Earth, and never in this world, not even in a supposedly, temporary, patched-up version of this world for a thousand years.

Seeing no outward sign that Jesus of Nazareth fit the preconceived picture of their Messiah, and seeing no indication that He would, or could, set up an earthly kingdom that would throw off Roman Rule and elevate the Jewish Nation to world-wide prominence and dominion, therefore, unbelieving Jews, with the acquiescence of Pontius Pilate, nailed him to the Cross of Calvary, where He died with the mocking "accusation set up over his head, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matt. 27:37).

And why did God allow this? Because Christ's Salvation is spiritual, not political, and because His Kingdom was never intended to exist in this present evil world, and it never shall exist therein.

The New Testament, and especially the Book of Hebrews, is replete with scriptures which clearly state that Christ's Salvation is spiritual, His People are spiritual Israel, His Visible Kingdom shall exist in "the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," and that it shall endure forever. And all of this, when "the voices of the prophets" are correctly discerned, was also prophesied in The Old Testament.

For example, when "the voice of the prophet" Daniel in Daniel 7:27 is correctly discerned, its fulfillment is seen to speak of the everlasting Kingdom of Christ with His People in the New Heavens and New Earth: -- "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."

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B -- The Pre-Pentecostal Disciples Wrongly Expected A Mundane, Messianic Kingdom

It was no doubt partly because of Peter's utter disappointment in Christ's refusal to defend Himself, or to allow others to defend Him, that he denied Christ. He too, along with all of the disciples before their Spirit-Baptism at Pentecost, believed that Messiah's Kingdom was to have been "in this present evil world." Thus, earlier, when Jesus began "to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee" And, no doubt Peter was stung by Jesus' response, when "He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matthew 16:21-23).

Later, at the time of Jesus' arrest, Peter was still persuaded that if Christ really WAS the Messiah, He should defend Himself, or at least allow him (Peter) to wield such defense. How could the Jewish Messiah's Glorious Kingdom come on this earth, if he was slain. So, you know the story, Peter wielded that sword, and Jesus again contradicted his zealous disciple's violent action: -- "Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11).

Playing on Peter's misconception of the nature of Christ's Kingdom, Satan probably tempted Peter with thoughts such as the following: -- "How could Jesus really be the Messiah, and allow Himself to be slain? Did not the Psalmist prophesy of Israel's Conquering Messiah, 'Gird Thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty!' (Psalm 45:3). But Jesus was not girding on a sword. He could not truly be the King of the Jews!"

Overcome by these dark, Satanically injected thoughts, Peter "began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the

word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:74-75).

Satan had temporarily robbed him of his faith -- and I think it was partly because of Peter's nagging, This-Earthly Concept of Messiah's Kingdom.

But apparently all of Jesus' disciples had this same misconception. He whom they had supposed was the glorious Messiah, must not really be such -- "And they all forsook him, and fled" (Mark 14:50).

It had all started with such bright promise when "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.. first [found] his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ!" (John 1:40-41). But, sans evidence of the establishment of an earthly Kingdom, in spite of Jesus' miracles they had seen, doubts had crept in. Even the stalwart John the Baptist had asked Jesus, before his execution, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3). And then, with the arrest and ignominious death of Him whom they thought would "restore again the kingdom to Israel," all looked exceedingly dark!

Then, on the third day after Jesus' crucifixion, word got out that Jesus had risen from the dead! Could it be? Indeed it was so! But when the risen Christ drew nigh and questioned the two forlorn disciples on the road to Emmaus, their This-Earthly-Concept of the Kingdom can be seen in their response: -- "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done" (Luke 24:21-21). Please allow me to phrase this differently: -- "We thought that Jesus was going to save Israel from Roman dominion, but he was crucified. Yet we recall that He said He would rise from the dead on the third day -- and this is the third day."

You know how that later, while they were eating with the resurrected Christ, "it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and He vanished out of their sight." (Luke 24:30-31)

Yes, their eyes "were" opened -- to the fact that Jesus was risen, and their hearts burned within them during that time -- But -- their eyes were not yet fully opened to the fact that the Messianic Kingdom of the risen Christ was not going to be in this world.

And, even after Jesus had "shewed himself alive" to his happy disciples "being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3), they still clung to a This-Earthly-Concept of Messiah's Kingdom. And even just before Christ's ascension, "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

It took the purging, spiritually-clarifying, Baptism of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost to show Peter, and the other 119 or so in the Upper Room what "the voices of the prophets" were really saying about the nature of Messiah's Salvation and Messiah's Kingdom.

After His Pentecost, Peter saw that Christ's Kingdom is not of this present evil world, but in a "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter 3:13).

Then, filled with the Holy Ghost, Peter declared: -- "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him" (Acts 13:26-27).

After his Pentecostal Baptism, Peter saw that he, his fellow disciples, and those who had crucified Jesus, had failed to correctly discern "the voices of the prophets" about "Who" their Messiah was, and about "What The Real Nature Of His Salvation And His Kingdom Is"! At last, Peter had discerned that Christ did not come to save from the bondage of Rome -- He came to save from the bondage of sin. And, He did not come to set up a Kingdom in This Present Evil World, but a Kingdom in "The New Heavens And New Earth Wherein Dwelleth Righteousness" -- and a Kingdom that would endure forever!

For a detailed study of this subject, I refer the reader to Section II of my book, "His Appearing and His Kingdom" (hdm0124), which is published both on CDs and DVDs in the HDM Digital Library.

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C -- Post-Pentecostal Millennialists Wrongly Expect A Mundane, Messianic Kingdom

Ironically, and mistakenly -- many Spirit-Filled Christians since Pentecost have fallen into the same erroneous interpretation of the Messianic Kingdom: -- viz., that it shall exist in this present world -- albeit, a thousand-year, temporarily patched-up version of this present world.

The primary reason for this, I believe, is because their general interpretation of the entire Book of Revelation is mistaken, and because they feel compelled to interpret Revelation Chapter 20 literally.

Again I refer my reader to Section II of my book, "His Appearing and His Kingdom," and particularly to the portion in Chapter 8 thereof entitled "Revelation Chapter 20 Verse By Verse," where I give a spiritual interpretation of Revelation 20 which brings its meaning into harmony with the rest of the Scriptures which reveal that Christ's coming Kingdom shall exist eternally in "the New Heavens and New Earth, and not in a thousand-year, patched-up version of this present world.

What many sincere Millennial interpreters have failed to recognize and/or address is that their insistence upon a Post-Second Coming, Literal interpretation of Revelation 20 opens up a Pandora's Box of preposterous absurdities and outright contradictions of the majority of Scriptures in the Bible which teach that Christ's coming Kingdom shall exist only in "the new heavens and new earth," and that never (not even for a thousand years) shall it exist visibly in this present evil world!

By the way, one could not correctly characterize the supposed "Millennial World" as anything but a "Mixed Bag" of Evil with Good, and Sinfulness with Holiness -- a supposed world in which Christ is presented as "Suppressing" and not totally "Eradicating" evil!

Dear Heart, Christ never has practiced "suppression" in His Kingdom -- anytime, anywhere, and if I understand my Bible aright, He will never ever do so!

But Millennialist are forced into such contradictions by their misinterpretation of Revelation 20. Take, for example, their teaching about Zechariah 14:19 as taking place in the supposed Millennial, Messianic Kingdom: -- "This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles."

According to their interpretation, we shall have a glorified Christ along with His glorified saints reigning in a patched-up version of this earth in the Jerusalem on this earth. And, in this supposed Millennial Kingdom there shall be sanctified-glorified servants of Christ mixed with unregenerate-flesh-and-blood, outward servants of Christ, whose evil must be suppressed and punished for not "coming up to the feast of tabernacles."

Such contradictions and absurdities ought to make it clear to every perceptive student of Second Coming prophecy that it is a mistaken interpretation -- particularly, this should be clear to those who believe in Hebrews 12:14, that "without [inward and outward] holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

But there is another absurd contradiction here also: -- i.e., that the Jewish Feasts shall be re-instituted in the supposed Millennial Kingdom! -- which things were long ago, "done away in Christ" (2 Corinthians 3:14)!!

It is pathetic that the profuse and palpable contradictions of Millennialism have not been, long ago, seen for the erroneous interpretations that they really are. But because Millennialism is ancient, and because it seems (mistakenly so) to harmonize with other scriptures that must be interpreted literally, many devout and sincere students of the Bible have felt compelled to stick with it.

Down across the centuries, and especially since the time of Wesley, spiritual people have seen correctly the spiritual meaning in such O. T. passages as Zechariah 13:1 -- "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

Godly preachers have clearly shown that numerous O.T. passages speak of a spiritual salvation. For example, the "fountain opened in the house of David.. for sin and uncleanness" has been long and correctly shown as fulfilled in the shed blood of Christ on Calvary.

Just as correctly, holy men of God have, across the centuries, insisted that one must be "born again" to ever "see the kingdom of God."

Is it not sad, then, that many of those same preachers have insisted that there is coming a "Mixed Bag" Millennial Kingdom in which unregenerate and unholy subjects of Christ shall dwell -- many of whom shall rise up in rebellion against Him at its close!!

I believe that the Bible not only teaches that Christ's Salvation is Spiritual and Eternal, but that His Kingdom is also Spiritual and Eternal -- and that it shall never exist visibly, even for a thousand years in "this present evil world." It will be visible in "the New Heavens and New Earth," but NEVER violated -- any time, any place -- by the presence of unregenerate, unholy, flesh-and-blood subjects who shall rise up in rebellion against King Jesus! "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life " (Rev. 21:27).

In Christ's one-and only, coming Kingdom, Spiritual "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation" and they "shall not be ashamed nor confounded WORLD WITHOUT END" (Isaiah 45:17).

This, I believe, is the correct interpretation of Christ's soon-coming, and Eternal, Messianic Kingdom. Readers who wish to further examine my views on the entire subject are invited to read my book, "His Appearing and His Kingdom" (hdm0124).

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APPENDED FROM DR. GEORGE LYONS OF NORTHWEST NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

From: "George Lyons" <gll Lyons@nnu.edu>

To: "DUANE MAXEY" <hdm@cox.net>

Subject: RE: NO MUNDANE MESSIANIC KINGDOM SHALL COME -- By Duane V. Maxey

The evidence in church history is strongly in your favor. After months of extensive research on the subject in the AnteNicene and Nicene fathers about a decade ago I discovered this interesting bit of trivia on this subject.

There were some Christians who expected a mundane messianic kingdom (a literal millennial reign on earth). But they also expected that believers who died "slept" until the final resurrection. Those Christians who looked forward to an intermediate kingdom had no room in their eschatology for an intermediate state for the dead. These Christians were a clear minority.

Most Christians in first millennium believed that Christians who died entered immediately into the presence of the Lord. They understood this intermediate state to be the symbolic meaning of the millennial reign in Revelation 20. They expected no intermediate kingdom following the second coming.

It was sometime after the Reformation before any Christian confused and combined the two different eschatological expectations as is commonly done today. They either expected an intermediate place or an intermediate state, but not both.

George

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06 -- GALATIANS 4:30 CORRECTLY INTERPRETED

"Nevertheless what saith the scripture? CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman" (Gal. 4:30).

Holiness writers often overlook and miss the primary meaning of this verse. In Galatians 4:22-31 St. Paul likens SARAH ("the freewoman") to "JERUSALEM WHICH IS ABOVE" (Gal. 4:26) -- and HAGAR ("the bondwoman") "answereth to JERUSALEM WHICH NOW IS."

Further, in this same passage ISAAC is compared to SPIRITUAL ISRAEL, "BORN AFTER THE SPIRIT" -- while ISHMAEL is compared to FLESH AND BLOOD ISRAEL, "BORN AFTER THE FLESH" (Gal. 4:29).

Now get this -- for it is very important to a correct understanding and interpretation of Galatians 4:30:

Paul says in this verse that BOTH EARTHLY JERUSALEM AND EARTHLY ISRAEL ARE "CAST OUT"!!!! "CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN (EARTHLY JERUSALEM) AND HER SON (FLESH AND BLOOD ISRAEL)!"

Why cast them out?

(a) Because they constitute part of the Old Covenant "from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage" (Gal. 4:24).

(b) Because The Earthly Jerusalem was only a foreshadow of the New, Heavenly Jerusalem above, and because Flesh and Blood Israel "shall not be heir" -- shall not inherit the promises of, and the kingdom of, God with Spiritual Israel.

What does all of this mean?

(a) It means that Christ will never reign in "the Jerusalem that now is" -- earthly Jerusalem.

(b) It means that the final remnant of earthly Israel can only become "heirs" to the kingdom of God by being born again -- which they shall be, just before the Last Trump on the Day of the Lord.

(c) It means that CHILIASM or PRE-MILLENNIAL DOCTRINE IS IN ERROR! -- There shall be no Mundane Messianic Kingdom with Christ reigning for a thousand years in "the Jerusalem that now is" -- and, in case you didn't know it, Duane V. Maxey is far from being

alone in discarding Chiliasm -- DANIEL STEELE IS ANOTHER OF THOSE WHO HAVE DEBUNKED THIS TEACHING: -- He writes in hdm2028, "Antinomianism Revived":

"The universal Church of Christ, from the beginning to the present hour, has never formulated premillennialism in its creed statements of Christian truth. They all speak of Christ as coming "to judge the quick and dead," but never to set up an outward and visible kingdom 'with Jerusalem for the center of worship and of blessing.' Examine that summary of Christian faith, the Apostles' creed, so-called, not because it was made by them, but because it is a compound of their doctrines, and you will find no trace of Chiliasm contained therein. The judicious Bishop Pearson, in his Exposition of the Creed, says, 'That the end for which He shall come, and the action which He shall perform when He cometh, is to judge all those which shall then be alive, and all which ever lived.'

"The Nicene Creed, better known and more generally recognized than any other, except the Apostles', teaches exactly the same doctrine with respect to the purpose of Christ's second advent, 'to judge the quick and the dead.' There is even a verbal agreement.

"The next most important symbol of the early church, the Athanasian Creed, has these words: 'Whence He shall come to judge the quick and dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account of their works.'

"All these three great creeds agree in four points:

"1. That Christ will come again.

"2. The object of His advent will be 'to judge the quick and the dead.' This they testify with one voice, and as preliminary, all confess the resurrection of the dead, meaning all the dead.

"3. All imply what the Athanasian distinctly states, that this resurrection and judgment will be at His coming.

"4. All are silent about any premillennial coming, or personal reign, or any of the peculiar tenets of millennarians. Now these creeds universally received, in ancient and modern times, by Roman, Greek, and Protestant churches, must be presumed to accord with the Divine Word."

Chiliasm (Pre-Millennialism) does have some ancient roots, but all must agree that the antiquity of a teaching does not prove its validity. Arianism, for example, was but one of the various ancient errors in the Early Church -- and even Roman Catholicism has ancient roots. Who would presume to say that any of the afore-mentioned teachings is true because it is ancient? None should, and I assert (along with many others) that while Chiliasm is old, it is an old error, and not an old truth.

When the apostle Peter declared in 1 Peter 4:7 that ""The END of all things IS AT HAND," I do not accept that he meant with Christ's coming "A THOUSAND-YEAR-LONG EXTENSION OF TIME IS AT HAND"! He meant what he said. With the Second Coming of

Christ "THE END OF ALL THINGS" relative to this world shall occur in rapid succession! -- with no chance thereafter for any to repent and be saved.

Just prior to that climactic, "END OF ALL THINGS" an impostor shall indeed sit upon a throne in earthly Jerusalem -- but he will be "the antiChrist" and NOT THE CHRIST! Then, immediately prior to the outpouring of "THE INDIGNATION" a remnant in Israel will perceive the Truth as it is in Jesus and "be born-again in a day" -- and, they will be caught up with all of Christ's saints to meet the Lord in the air.

But Earthly Jerusalem and impenitent Flesh and Blood Israel (and all of the wicked) shall forever perish under the wrath of the Lamb. At Christ's Return, this earth and this universe as now constituted will forever pass away, all will be ushered to the General Judgment, and all shall next enter their Eternal Abode -- the wicked into the Lake of Fire, and the righteous into the Heavenly "JERUSALEM WHICH IS ABOVE" (Gal. 4:26).

Such an abrupt and eternal "END OF ALL THINGS" may not suit the fancy, nor fit the interpretation, of millions, but all had better believe it when God says in Romans 9:28 that "a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" and that "he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness"! Selah.

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07 -- IT WASN'T WHAT HE LACKED, BUT WHAT HE KEPT!

"The young man saith unto him, All these things have I KEPT from my youth up: what LACK I yet?" (Matthew 19:20).

The young man who came to Jesus thought that it might be something he LACKED in order to enter the Kingdom of God, when, in fact, it was something he KEPT, something to which he clung, that was the problem.

And, whether the problem be about entering the Kingdom of God, about entering the experience of Holiness, about entering into clearer knowledge of the Word, about entering into a Greater measure of Grace, or about expanding one's sphere of influence for Christ -- whatever the religious problem may be -- it often involves something a person KEEPS, rather than something a person LACKS.

Yes, Jesus did answer the young man's question by saying, "One thing thou LACKEST," but He could just as easily have stated it: -- "Young man, it is NOT what you LACK, but what you KEEP, that is preventing you from entering into the Kingdom of God.

He was very religious, having KEPT (so far as he was aware) ALL of God's commandments from his earliest years on up, and Jesus did not contradict his claim. But, this young man had also KEPT his great wealth -- probably inherited from his father.

In effect, Jesus told him, "With you, young man, it is a matter of LETTING GO of your wealth that is necessary to your entering the Kingdom of God.

In the same way, some folks who have clung to various doctrines, inherited from others -- from their youth up -- must LET GO OF THOSE DOCTRINES in order to enter into a clearer and more correct understanding of God's Word. And, often they are just as reluctant to do this as the young man who met Jesus was reluctant to let go of his wealth.

"But that's what my Father and my Mother believed! That's what my Church believes! That's what I have believed from my youth up! I cannot, I will not abandon that interpretation of the Scriptures!"

Alright -- have it your way -- but your bullheaded and blinded prejudice will prevent you from a better, and clearer understanding of God's Word!

"Well I don't care! If my Dad and my Mother, and my Church believe that, then it's good enough for me!"

OK -- so be it.

But this is the same argument I encountered years ago when I was conversing with a Mormon who worked in the same business where I worked. He let me know that his forebears believed in Mormonism, and thus it was good enough for him too! -- and he had no desire to abandon that teaching.

Holiness folks have often cited such examples as the type of prejudice that has kept many from Salvation. However, that type of prejudice often keeps "died in the wool" Holiness folks from ever examining their own tenets. No, I do not say that such examination of essentials should ever lead the Holiness student of the Scriptures to repudiate the doctrine of Second Blessing Holiness. But, I do say that there are many non-essentials set forth by Holiness Folks wherein their blinded prejudices (from their youth up) are keeping them from a better and clearer understanding of what the Bible actually says on those matters.

If one such prejudiced Holiness person should ask the Lord: -- "What LACK I yet, to a better and clearer understanding of your Word?" Might He not say to such an one: -- "It is not so much what you LACK as what you KEEP that is hindering you. Yes, you have KEPT all my commandments since I saved and sanctified you, but -- in order to more clearly see the meaning of my Word in this matter you must LET GO of your past teaching, and examine the subject with a completely open, and teachable mind. Do that, and I will broaden, deepen, and clarify the Truth of this subject in your mind."

The young man who met Jesus "went away sorrowful, for he had great riches," and likewise many prejudiced Holiness Folks go away from a better and clearer understanding of God's Word, still clinging to their long-held prejudices and notions, and sometimes (not sorrowful, but) ANGRY with those whom God is trying to use to broaden their knowledge.

Further, those same teachings and prejudices, kept from their spiritual youth up, have hindered many good (and even sanctified) Holiness folks from growing in grace, and from expanding the sphere of their influence.

The dear one who yesterday accused me of anti-Semitism in my eschatological views has long been involved with some of the most hyper-legalistic groups in the Holiness Movement. From past correspondence, I gather that he has been disappointed with some of that legalism that has caused repeated divisions, and even the demise of one or more of those groups. It is unfortunate that the long-held and long-engrained teachings of such hyper-legalistic Holiness folks go beyond the realm of Church Standards, and even involve a prejudice against and hostility toward those who differ with them on such non-essentials as eschatology.

It is sad when Holiness folks will brook no transgression of their demanded dotting of "i"s and crossing of "T"s in their standards; -- it is even more sad when they will tolerate no difference of opinion regarding eschatology, or any other non-essential. There was a time when people in the Conservative Holiness Movement could worship in the same tabernacle with those who differed with them on many things. Now, such tolerance seems to be dead -- and that is something that ought to make everyone "go away sorrowful" -- for, I believe it grieves away the presence of the Holy Spirit from those folks and from those churches wherein such rigid intolerance exists. Selah.

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08 -- WHEN THE TARES SHALL BE GATHERED OUT

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:24-30, 36-43

24 -- Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 -- But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 -- But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 -- So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 -- He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 -- But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 -- Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

36 -- Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 -- He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 -- The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

39 -- The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 -- As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41-- The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 -- And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 -- Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

It is true that in "this present evil world"(Galatians 1:4) there is a mixture of Tares among the Wheat -- both professed Christians who are actually "the children of the wicked one" intermingled among other professed Christians who really are "the children of the kingdom."

But, shall this intermingling be carried on and even expanded AFTER Christ's Return -- so that for another, long, drawn-out period of one thousand years there shall be, not only a commingling of Born Again servants of Jesus with Unregenerate Subjects who merely bow to Him outwardly, but also the intermixture of Glorified Beings (Christ and His Glorified Saints) with Flesh and Blood Human Beings?

I TROW NOT!! -- There shall be no Millennial Reign of Christ that is made up of such totally contradictory elements. And, there are a number of plain Scriptures that should make this apparent to any honest, thoughtful, and perceptive student of the Bible. Let us examine several of those palpable contradictions to such an absurd concept, and conclude with locating precisely WHEN THE TARES SHALL BE GATHERED OUT OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

* * *

(A) ALL MUST BE SAVED BY FAITH, AND NOT BY SIGHT

Jesus chastised doubting Thomas for his faith, which came only after he saw: -- "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." It is absurd to think that AFTER His Return Christ is going to LOWER THE STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR BEING SAVED AND BEING IN HIS KINGDOM. Even though His 11 faithful disciples SAW Christ with their physical eye, after His Ascension they were all compelled to "walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Corinthian 5:7). And, after the stunning revelation of Christ from heaven on the Damascus Road, St. Paul also had to walk by faith.

For two thousands years, those brought into Christ's Kingdom have entered it by faith, and not by sight, and they have walked by faith, and not by sight:

Ephesians 2:8 -- "For by grace are ye saved through faith."

Galatians 3:26 -- For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Romans 8:24 -- For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"

To assert that AFTER Christ's Return He is going to LOWER THE BAR, and allow flesh and blood people to be BORN AGAIN BY SIGHT, and to WALK BY THE SIGHT of their physical eyes: -- beholding the Glorified Christ, Glorified Saints, and perhaps even Glorified Angels -- is such a contradiction of everything taught in the New Testament that it boggles my mind how anyone could believe it!

* * *

(B) THERE SHALL BE ONLY ONE "PRESENT EVIL WORLD" -- THIS "PRESENT EVIL WORLD" -- NOT ANOTHER EVIL WORLD, WITH HOLY AND EVIL OCCUPANTS!

Galatians 1:4 says that Christ "Gave Himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD, according to the will of God and our Father."

Don't try to convince me that there is going to be ANOTHER EVIL WORLD in a future, a supposed Millennium composed of Sanctified and Glorified Saints along with some Unregenerate, Unsanctified, and Unchanged, Flesh and Blood inhabitants!! IT SHALL NEVER BE!

Does someone say: -- "Well, it WILL BE A HOLY WORLD, because CHRIST WILL FORCE OUTWARD OBEDIENCE AND PURITY!"

SINCE WHEN HAS CHRIST EVER ADVOCATED "SUPPRESSION" INSTEAD OF THE "ERADICATION" OF EVIL IN HIS KINGDOM!!?? WHEN!!?? NEVERRRRRRR!!!! Yet here we have Holiness Folks who, on the one hand preach that "Without Holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14), and who, on the other hand teach that in a supposed, coming Millennium Christ is going to "SUPPRESS" rather than "GATHER OUT OF HIS KINGDOM" (Matt. 13:41) ALL EVIL! It is hard to think of a more preposterous notion! Nay, my dear reader, if it takes a holy heart to "SEE the Lord" then it will take a holy heart to BE in His Messianic Kingdom -- a Kingdom that shall last FOREVER, and not for a paltry one thousand years!

* * *

(C) FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT -- EVER -- INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1Corinthians 15:50 -- "Now this I say, brethren, that FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

NEVER, NEVER, NEVER! -- shall it be possible for "corruption" to "inherit incorruption" -- Mortal Human Beings (subject to bodily death) shall NEVER live in any Kingdom of Christ on this earth. God's Word here declares that it is IMPOSSIBLE! Read the BOOK! -- and believe it!

The palpably foolish notion put forth by Millennialists that Corruptible, Flesh and Blood Human Beings are going to inherit Christ's Messianic Kingdom along with Glorified Beings is not only preposterous -- it is utterly UNSCRIPTURAL!

Therefore, it should be clear from this fact alone that both everything evil and everything corruptible will be gathered out of Christ's Messianic Kingdom, and that it shall be an Eternal Kingdom, inhabited only by Immortals!

* * *

(D) THE GATHERING OUT OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM SHALL OCCUR RIGHT AFTER "THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD"!

If you will, please follow with me now: -- In my last article on the Second Coming, I clearly showed that "The manifestation of the sons of God" shall occur AT THE REVELATION OF CHRIST.

In Colossians 3:4 "WHEN CHRIST, who is our life, SHALL APPEAR, THEN SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR with him in glory."

In Matthew 13:30 Jesus says that there shall be an intermixture and intermingling of "the children of the wicked one" with "the children of the kingdom" only "until the harvest."

Then in Matthew 13:41-43, Jesus explains WHEN THAT HARVEST SHALL OCCUR: -- "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they SHALL GATHER OUT OF HIS KINGDOM ALL THINGS THAT OFFEND, AND THEM WHICH DO INIQUITY;

42 -- And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 -- THEN SHALL THE RIGHTEOUS SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Notice here: -- Jesus CLOSELY CONNECTED THE PURGING OF ALL UNHOLY BEINGS FROM HIS KINGDOM WHEN.... WHEN... WHEN "THE RIGHTEOUS SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN" -- AND, AND, AND, -- THAT "MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD SHALL OCCUR AT THE REVELATION OF CHRIST AT HIS SECOND COMING -- NOT 1000 YEARS THEREAFTER!!!

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IN CONCLUSION

Why preach such prophetic things on a Sunday Evening? What do they have to do with what really matters?

Let me tell you:

First, because I believe that the Pre-Trib Rapture theory (never heard of on earth until 1830) is not only wrong, but fallaciously encourages many to think that AFTER that event there shall be 7 years more wherein some shall be saved.

Second, because I believe that the Pre-Millennial theory (ancient, but mistaken) encourages people to believe that there shall be 1007 years after the Rapture and 1000 years after the Revelation during which some shall be saved.

Third, because I believe that through the Historical fulfillment of Second Coming prophecy, it is entirely possible that nothing remains to be fulfilled but the Last Trump. It MIGHT blow tonight!

Fourth, because I believe that NO TIME SHALL REMAIN FOR MEN TO REPENT AND BE SAVED AFTER THAT TRUMPET BLOWS -- not 7 more years, and most assuredly not 1007 more years!

Dear Reader, Christ is not going to fiddle around with evil after His Return -- again, not for 7 years, and not for 1007 years! Away with such false notions about the Second Coming of Christ! -- His Return shall be CLIMACTIC -- NOT ANTI-CLIMACTIC!!!

After the Last Trump sounds, "He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Romans 9:28) -- "A SHORT WORK" -- NOT A WORK LASTING 1007 YEARS! -- and all who doubt this should awaken to that awesome fact!

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09 -- A VERY MOVING STORY FROM 1895

Edited by Duane V. Maxey

INTRODUCTION

The following story was inserted into Paul Frederick Elliott's book, "The Voice of God," as Chapter 8, but it was not written by him. He does not show the author, and at the close of the story, its source is merely shown as "Selected". As I present the story in this file, I have omitted only part of the first paragraph of the story as related by the unknown author. I have deleted those 41 words because they reveal in advance some things about the end of the story which I would like the reader to learn only at the conclusion -- a marvelous and moving climax that was obviously brought about by God in answer to prayer. THE STORY IS NOT LONG... BUT IT WILL BE LONG-REMEMBERED by many, if not all, who read it. -- DVM

A most touching incident occurred here last Sunday in a church.. the most touching thing I ever saw. About one block below our place of business stands the church. It is a large and handsome building, far more beautiful on the inside than on the outside. This church, seating about one thousand people, with the gallery, was filled to the utmost last Sunday (January 26, 1895). The audience was composed of all, classes of people, both rich and poor, God-fearing and ungodly people.

As in all great revivals, many came only for curiosity's sake, and others to point the finger of scorn and to scoff. Those who have wandered far away from the fold of God have become His meek followers, and now dare to face old friends and testify in unmistakable words of Christ's wonderful saving power. The Holy Spirit has always, in time past, and will in the future, use such incidents as that which took place here, which almost compel sinners to feel themselves lost, and make them cry aloud to God for mercy. It was the most heart-touching scene I ever saw.

Even now, although it is past, it comes to memory time and again. They brush aside every obstacle and fill my eyes. But I am thankful to God that I was there, because it has drawn me closer to Him. It has strengthened my faith in Him most wonderfully that He is able to save to the utmost, and no man, however low he has fallen in sin, no matter how far he has wandered away from God, need despair.

How many have shaken their heads and said, "It's no use to pray for such men, as they have sinned until their hearts are so hard that God Himself is not able to move them." But, thanks be to God, such was proven not true by the case of these two tramps. I will tell you now about it.

As I said, the church was full, and these tramps were dressed in rags. One arose to his feet. By his clothes you could readily tell what manner of life he lived. There was deep silence all over the church. We could hear the clock tick. It seemed as though we were all holding our breath. But when we looked into his face we could read that Jesus had possession of the man, and could tell at a glance that a great change had taken place in his heart.

He was a handsome young man, about five feet and ten inches high, high forehead, dark hair and eyes, and about twenty years of age. Tears were streaming down his cheeks. At first his voice seemed choked, and he could hardly speak; but as he kept on his voice grew stronger and stronger. Toward the close he became eloquent. We all could see he was an educated man, and could have listened to him another hour. My eyes seemed not to be my own; even so with the rest. Handkerchiefs were used by the strongest men as he continued to speak.

He said if ever a person had reason to be thankful it was he. He said:

"Although you see me clad in rags, I am a most happy man -- happier than any millionaire or king up on his throne, because God has come to me and my brother and forgiven our sins. He has made new men out of us. He has taken, or, better said, snatched us off the road that leads to damnation, and placed us in the road that leads to a useful life, and at last to a life everlasting.

"It seems more as if we had just arisen from an awful dream than that it should be something real. No greater sinner than I ever lived. My father and mother lived ten miles from Nashville, on the Gallatin pike, on a small farm. Father and mother were the best parents a boy ever had. It was their desire that we two should have a good education, and they worked hard to help us, never seeming to become weary.

"They sent me to Nashville, to Scott University, to study law. They often spoke of the joy it would be to them to see me rise higher and higher in public life. Four years they sent me to school. Money gave out, and in order that I might finish my studies they mortgaged their farm, and sent me two hundred dollars more.

"A short time after I entered college I fell in with a lot of companions who walked not in the ways of God, and made light of my father's and mother's religion. At first I would not listen to them, but at last I yielded, and from that time I date it that I started on the downward path. I also became a scoffer at religion. I soon started to drink and gamble. I was found in company where no man should be.

"I first went about in my sinful ways shyly, but grew more and more bold in sinning. I have seen one of my companions die of delirium tremens, another killed in a drunken fight, and another commit suicide when he realized that his life was a wreck. I was shunned by everybody, and ashamed to meet my dear old mother and father and ask forgiveness.

"I started the life of a tramp again until last Friday. As about seven of us tramps were sitting about the campfire, another tramp came up to us. We were glad to see him come, as he had something to eat, which we all ate heartily. Why it was, I know not, but I took a special liking to the newcomer.

"As we were talking of different things, each boasting of what he had already done, each trying to outdo the other in telling of shameful acts, this newcomer of ours told us how nicely he had fooled his old mother. With an oath, he said he would never be a preacher.

"He said: 'Wesley Crockett will never be a preacher. That is for people who are soft-minded, and men who are more women than men. But I fooled the old woman. But boys,' he added, 'she was the best woman that ever lived; I have often wished I could do her a favor now and then.' And with his dirty, ragged sleeves he would wipe away tear after tear.

"We were all touched by the word 'mother.' Then one after the other would tell of his good mother; and these hard-hearted men would turn their heads to one side, so that they could not see each other's tears that had gathered in their eyes. This newcomer seemed to be the most tender-hearted, and when I heard him mention his name I began to take a special interest in him.

"I asked him if that was his name -- Wesley Crockett. He said it was. I told him that Crockett was my name; I handed over for a shake, and as we shook hands I thought he was my own brother. I asked him if he had a brother by the name of Daniel. He said he had. 'He was about five years older than I. But he left home some five or six years ago. My father loved him,

and sent him to college, and mortgaged his farm to raise money so he could finish his studies. But Daniel, my brother, broke his heart, and it killed him at last. But he told us before he died, if we saw Daniel, to tell him that his father forgave him. Those were the last words he spoke. And, he said, lowering his voice, 'as mean as Brother Daniel was to father, I have been to mother.'

"I now realized that this stranger, who was also a tramp, was nobody but my brother. I tried to keep back, but could not. I said, 'I am Daniel,' and cried aloud, 'Brother, brother!' We then fell on each other's necks and wept like children. When we got to ourselves again, and looked around, we were all alone -- the rest had left.

"Brother had studied for the ministry. He said we were like the prodigal son -- we had sinned against Heaven and against father and mother. He told me the story of the prodigal son. When he finished the story he said, 'Let us ask God to forgive these great sins of ours, brother.'

"Then he told me one Bible verse after another, which we applied to ourselves. We stayed on our knees and prayed to God until God left His glorious light of forgiveness of sin shining deep into those black hearts of ours."

Here the speaker broke down and wept like a child. The congregation was deeply moved. As he sat down, an old lady dressed in a thin calico dress came in and sat down in the back part of the church.

The younger brother got up next. He was equally handsome as his brother Daniel. He started to tell us how he had wandered away from God, and how he had sinned against Heaven and parents. He told us of the grandmother he had, and how she sacrificed everything so that he could go to college and study for the ministry. He continued:

"As my brother told you, father mortgaged his farm to raise money in order to let brother finish his education. After he saw how brother was living, and that he had left, not knowing where, it grieved him that he was soon brought to his grave. But his love for Daniel never ceased.

"After father died, mother paid all she could. The farm was sold by the man who had the mortgage, and we were turned out into the world. But dear old mother never lost faith in God. She said to me, 'God leadeth us at times in mysterious ways, but at the end all will be well.'

"It was her and father's, and my own, desire that I should go to college and study for the ministry. I gave myself to Him in my early youth, and now I make another vow to go out and preach the Gospel of the blessed Savior to the lost sinner.

"We moved to Nashville. One day mother told me to write to the president of the college and tell him how I was situated, and what I wanted to study for, and ask him if there was any way that a poor boy could go to college and study. I received an answer that I could earn my education by doing all manner of work about the college, but that I must board somewhere else.

"When I read the letter to mother she said, 'The Lord has opened a way already. We will move into yonder log house, near the college, and I will take in washing and sewing, and you can take your meals and sleep at home.' So I went to college. The boys would make all manner of fun at my patched pants. But I could tell them I was proud of those patches, because mother made them.

"One time a gold medal was to be awarded to the best orator in college. I took part. Mother helped me all she could. When the judges decided who was to get the medal, to my astonishment it was presented to me. But I thought it belonged to mother, and not to me, so I walked down the aisle to the last seat, where mother sat, and put it about her neck, saying, 'Mother, you earned this; you shall have it.'

"Yes, I loved my mother and she loved me. But in an hour of great temptation I fell. I had disgraced myself, and did not feel worthy of the high calling for which I was studying, and was wondering how I could face the Christian mother. Others who fell with me were making preparations to run away that very evening. I was not myself any longer, and I went with them.

"We then roamed from one place to another. We took to eating whatever we could find or lay our hands on. My heart grew harder and harder. That tender love for mother was gone, and I became a mocker and scoffer at religion.

"One day a wonderfully strong feeling came over me. Something seemed to drive me away from my companions. I wanted to be alone. I thought of my dear old mother, and something told me that mother was praying for me. So I broke away from the boys and roamed and tramped about until I met Brother Daniel.

"He told you what happened then. When we arose from our knees I said, 'Dan, let's hunt mother, if she is living. I want to see her.' We went to the old log house where mother and I had lived. We asked the nearest neighbor if he knew where we could find mother. He told a most pitiful story. He told us that from the time I ran away mother never gave her boys up as lost. She had said, 'As a shepherd I will seek for my boys.' They tried to persuade her not to go, as she was old and feeble, and had no money to travel with. But she said she must go.

So she started out on foot, and has walked many and many a weary mile, and slept many nights under the clear heavens when there was no house near by, no kind people to offer her shelter. But she came back now and then, and asked if her boys had not come back, or if the neighbors had heard anything of them. She has not given up yet, they tell me. She believes God will bring back her boys."

The man cried aloud, and begged as I never before heard anybody:

"Oh, is there anybody here today who knows where mother is? Tell her Mrs. Crockett's own two boys are saved -- that her prodigal sons have returned."

Just then the little woman who had come into church dressed in a thin calico dress, and had taken the last seat as the first brother finished speaking, cried out, "God answers prayers." The younger brother said out loud; "Dan, it's mother." "Mother, Mother!" they both cried.

They ran to meet her; then they fell on each other's necks and wept -- the boys dressed in rags, the mother poorly clad, but rejoicing because God answers prayers.

I never saw such a sight in all my life. Men who you would think could not cry wept like little children. And such feelings! I never saw any thing so touching. Many who had come for fun were now down on their knees pleading with God to have mercy on them.

Oh, I wish I could tell it so that you could all understand it as I saw it.

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10 -- A MAN LIKE ME
Compiled By Duane V. Maxey

INTRODUCTION

This little compilation contains four stories -- all of which contain in them the phrase, "a man like me." All of them have been excerpted from the HDM Digital Library. Each of them is a remarkable story that will bless the reader's soul. I have rendered the phrase (A MAN LIKE ME) into all caps where it occurs in the stories.

* * *

FROM (HDM2216) "SOME WOMEN I HAVE KNOWN" -- By John B. Culpepper

Mrs. Fisher

Let me tell you a beautiful story of a woman by the above name, who came to this country from Liverpool. She brought along her little daughter, Annie. The mother was a staunch and devout Catholic. There fell into the hands of the little girl a tract from a Protestant pen. It led her to the holy Jesus. Shortly after the sweetness of pardon came into her young heart, her mother moved to Charleston, S. C. Here, in a neighbor's house, little Annie chanced to see these words: "I, the chief of sinners am, but Jesus died for me." She exclaimed, "I'll join the church of whoever wrote that." Of course that decided her for the Methodists. A few weeks later, she met and married Dr. Moore, of Abbeville, S. C., to which point they at once went. On the next Sabbath, mounted behind her husband, they rode out six miles to hear the unique "Uncle Jim Donnelly" preach. As was the custom in those primitive and better days, the door of the church was opened, as part of the day's service. Mrs. Moore, the bride of a few days, joined. She and her worldly, and unprofessing husband rode back to town, while a growing hunger filled her soul for a preaching place in her newly adopted home. After much prayer, she set about the work alone, by going from house to house, till she begged enough to put up a small meeting place, with unplanned lumber, building in cottage style to economize material and labor, and placing it amid

the gullies, back of the old jail in that then small and unattractive place. With faith, fear and perseverance, she watched and superintended till it was completed. She then called a prayer-meeting. Six persons -- all men -- responded. That night was eventful. Little Annie, a shrinking bride, was the only professor of religion, as well as the only woman present. She had to lead -- a thing almost unknown then. After singing a hymn, almost alone, she read the Word, and, without attempting a comment, led in prayer. She then, in simple story, recounted the steps by which their little church had come to be, and why she had called them together. She next called them to prayer, asking her husband to lead. They, out of deference, had knelt. The astonished doctor kindly, but firmly refused. His wife prayed, then sang a hymn, and again called to prayer. But, as at the first, it fell upon her. This she repeated, taking them as they sat, until the row of kind but worldly men was exhausted. During the last prayer, the dear woman was quite overcome at the thought of failure, and began to cry to God to help her. One of the men blurted out to Dr. Moore, "Doc, if that was my wife, I'd pray, if it killed me." To this Dr. Moore replied, "O, I know I ought; but, my Lord! how can A MAN LIKE ME pray?" But before he knew it, he was praying, and God heard every word and saved him. He turned and asked one of the others to pray. They all began, and in about the time it, takes to tell it, they had everyone surrendered to God, and the house was turned into a scene of indescribable joy. Little Annie took wings, so to speak. Listen: One of the men converted, as you know, was Dr. Moore, Annie's husband. He made a great and useful local preacher. and was the father of the present good Dr. H. D. Moore, of the Alabama Conference. I know him well, having helped him in meetings in Court Street church, Montgomery; also in Knoxville, Tenn. He has won many souls. Another of the men was Mr. Branch, who became a great preacher, and was the father of Dr. J. O. Branch, and F. A. Branch; also grandfather of Orson and Charlie Branch -- all preachers in South Georgia. These Branches have been rivers, too. Four of them yet live. Another of the six was Mr. Huckabee, who also became a preacher, and was, no doubt, the ancestor of the present Bro. Huckabee, of South Georgia Conference, a man of marked usefulness. Still another was the Rev. Mr. Davis, a blind preacher, the most eloquent of them all, who died a few years ago in Mississippi. I have also met men whom he won to Christ. I forget the name and history of the sixth man, saved in that first prayer-meeting -- only he became a preacher, and was also distinguished for soul-winning.

But, reader, think of that night! From it there burst the cloudless day of spiritual disenthralment upon many thousands who have reached a nightless heaven, and many thousands more on their way. That night, little Annie, with more than a Deborah's faith, a Deborah's prowess, and without a Deborah's Barak, she led forth a grander army, which have marched and are still marching, to more than a Deborah's victory, without the assistance of rushing Kedrons, fighting stars, or neighboring kings.

Bro. Moore told me, when with him in Montgomery, that when a very small boy, he had a group of little Negroes in an old ante-bellum wagon body, playing church. He was the preacher. After the sermon he made the usual call for penitents, but none responded. Failing with words, he crawled out of the wagon, went to a stump and took up a rope, came back and flogged all the congregation, and made them go to the altar. Just as he got them down, he glanced up and there stood his mother (little Annie) at the window, looking down upon him, and she was crying. He shrank away. There was no allusion made to the matter by either mother or boy. Both remembered the hour though, supposing the other did not. In after years, the boy ran from God

and duty. When he surrendered, he hastened to communicate the fact to her. She wrote that she had been expecting to hear of his conversion and call to the holy ministry -- that she knew, too, he would succeed, for she found While watching him, when a little fellow, hold services with the darkies, that he was both persevering and resourceful. So he has proved to be.

I trust that the history of Annie Fisher, as I gleaned it from the Autobiography of Joseph Travis and the Memoirs of the Moore Family, will incite many young women to strong faith and noble effort.

* * *

FROM (HDM2345) "HIS AMBASSADOR" -- By C. Helen Mooshian

I recall the campaign at Tupper Creek, British Columbia. There were only twenty-five inhabitants here until hundreds of Czechoslovakians, who had been driven out of their country by Hitler during World War II, moved in. They arrived with only the clothes on their backs and had to begin anew. The Canadian government had given them a large plot of land on which to build make-shift homes and to establish schools.

Pastor A. G. Weiss, being of German descent, found this a profitable mission field. There were some excellent conversions and physical healings. It was my pleasure to visit this settlement on several occasions.

Prior to my campaign in Tupper Creek, Mr. Wrolson had been converted and Pastor Weiss tells the story. "Mr. Wrolson was reputed to be a wicked man shunned by the people. I was advised to avoid this ungodly character. This challenged my heart and I made it a subject of prayer. One day an audible voice spoke to me to visit this desperado. I was startled and Mrs. Currie's advice rang in my ears: 'Brother Weiss, don't ever go near his place; he's very dangerous and may kill you!' With faith in God, I stood before the door and knocked. There was no answer. Then I heard the dog growling at the second knock. Footsteps followed, the door opened and a large boot landed on the dog about to attack me. The yelping animal ran under the bed. With a grave face, a husky, unshaven Swede stood before me. 'Who are you?' he demanded.

I backed up a bit, flashed a big smile and extended my hand. I am the pastor of the Nazarene church. Are you Mr. Wrolson?

'Yes, and what's it to you?' he replied.

I then related my concern for his soul. Mr. Wrolson's countenance changed, for the Lord had prepared the way.

He extended his hand saying, 'Come in son, you are welcome. I have lived here eighteen years and you are the first Christian to call on me.'

The shack was anything but home-like, with rubbish all over the floor. The dog was chewing on the bones of a deer leg. An uncovered jar of strawberry jam was on the table with

hundreds of flies swarming in and out continuously. A large, jam-smearred butcher knife lay beside a loaf of bread. Suddenly, he said, 'Say, preacher are you hungry? I can fix you a sandwich in a hurry.' Wiping the jam-smearred knife on his overalls and shooing the flies out of the can, he made the sandwich. Neither the circumstances nor the sandwich appeared palatable, but I thanked him and tried to eat it.

Mr. Wrolson told of his coming to Tupper Creek many years ago. He had been given religious training by his mother. On the fly-leaf of his Bible, she had written, 'To my son George who is leaving home. Wish he would be good and serve God.' Tears coursed his cheeks as he told of the church, schools and colleges he had attended and of the two degrees he had earned in the States. He continued, 'I have wasted my life. I am eighty-five years old with a severe heart ailment. Is there any hope for A MAN LIKE ME?' I assured him that there was hope for such as he and quoted John 3:16. Convinced that he was in the 'Whosoever,' he knelt with his head between his knees until he found peace and victory in his heart. The Lord forgave him and transformed his life."

One year later while pastoring a church five hundred miles south of Tupper Creek, A. G. Weiss received a letter from Mrs. Currie which read in part, "You will remember Mr. Wrolson. I am very sorry that I ever told you not to go see him, because he became one of our best neighbors. He lived a consistent Christian life for a year until his death. His last words were, "Thank God for the young preacher who dared to come visit me."

* * *

FROM (HDM0180) "KENTUCKY MOUNTAIN OUTLAW TRANSFORMED" -- By Charles Little Wireman ("Bulldog Charlie")

But, one day as I was going about that awful business, all at once seemingly something settled down over me--the most miserable sensation I had ever experienced. I did not recognize what it was. I knew nothing about Holy Ghost conviction for sin. I knew nothing about the covenant of prayer and that all over that town the saints of God with burdened hearts and weeping eyes, were calling on God in behalf of my poor hellward bent soul. I carried on as best I could and that evening just a little after dark, it was a rainy, dark night, I said, "Now Jack, take over; I am going home." He said, "You have been acting strange today." I said, "I feel bad and I am going home." I went home, but on the way I had to pass the home of a sister whose husband and his cousin had come in my place not many days before and bought some drinks and then bought a bottle to take with them and said, "We are going down below the town this afternoon." They were my entertainers. One of them had the finest high tenor voice I ever heard and a beautiful soprano voice. The other had the best bass voice I have ever heard before or since. They were both drink addicts. They would entertain us by singing in that place. I said, "Now, I am expecting you back tonight." They said, "We will be back." But that afternoon while under the influence of that damnable stuff they got into a drunken brawl and one knocked the other's brains out. The killer was arrested, charged with murder, put in jail. His wife was one of the best women in this world. She could not attend the night service because of the care of the children. But she went to the day service and entered into the covenant to pray for the bad man. I had to pass their home on my way home.

At this time I only weighed 118 pounds, was just a walking skeleton. They said I would be in the insane asylum or in my grave in a little while. I could only walk a little ways without either having to sit down or lean against something till I regained my strength. This night I stopped at the gate post of that home and leaned on the gate post and inside was the Christian woman and her little children getting ready for family prayer. I could see them as plain as I can see these on this front seat. I was that close to her. It was so dark on the outside she did not know anyone was near. When she knelt to pray, she faced that window and I could hear everything she uttered. I could not move away. She prayed earnestly for her family and God's protection for her children and that they might be saved in early life and live for God. Then she prayed so tenderly for her poor husband in jail charged with murder, that God would show mercy, and save him before it was too late. Then she prayed so tenderly and earnestly for the widow and orphans of the man whom her husband had killed; claiming God's promise to be a husband and a father. Then she lifted her voice and in desperation prayed out, "Oh, God, we now remember our covenant to pray for poor, sinful, wicked, Charlie."

If you would have shot me, it would not have affected me more. I thought, is it possible that I am the subject of that good woman's prayer? I was soon convinced I was the poor guilty wretch for whom she was crying to God for mercy. When she finished, I staggered on to my father's home. All night long I tossed to and fro, afraid to go to sleep; afraid I would wake up in hell.

I went down the next day to my business to carry on, but not with the interest I had had heretofore. That afternoon just about dark, I said, "Jack, take over; I am going home again." He said, "there are two factions to be here tonight. There might be serious trouble; you better stay on the job tonight." I said, "No, I am going home. If you see it brewing send a horseman for me and I will come as quickly as I can."

I got home that night just as the family was sitting at the supper table, but my appetite was gone. I went into the bedroom and threw myself across the bed and thought I must get some sleep. It seemed I would smother to death if I did not get up out of that bed and into the fresh air. I walked out on the front porch and I was walking back and forth like a lion in his cage. I was between the two opposing spirits. All Heaven moved me toward the house of God where the revival was in progress, and all hell was marshalled to hinder. That day, as I stood on the street, the evangelist came down the other side of the street and turned and walked across to where I was, and taking me by the hand not knowing who I was, he said, "I am holding a revival in the Methodist Church. I don't believe I have noticed you in the revival. Won't you come and be with us?" But now I opened not my mouth. There was a feeling of admiration came up in my mind for that man and I wondered why a good man would cross the street to shake hands with A MAN LIKE ME. I found the secret in this Book. "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." And conviction deepened.

I only had that kind of conviction once before, not a long time before. I fought a man in a gun battle, giving him just a flesh wound on his face, but one week to a day later a man killed him in a gun battle. Both men had notches in their own pistol handles. It was customary for bad men to attend funerals of other bad men, and when I passed around the casket and saw the

wound from my pistol in the face of that dead man, there was a feeling came up in my heart that I ought to change my way of living, ought to be a better man. That feeling was soon crowded out. It came up again when Brother Roberts spoke to me that day, on the street.

That night as I was walking the porch I swore vengeance against the churches, but prayer changes things. While the great spirit was pulling me toward the house of God, all the forces of hell were against me. But the first thing I knew, the old church bell began to toll, and with every toll of the old bell, the arrow of conviction went deeper into my soul. If I were to build a thousand churches in the village, country, or city, I would insist on putting an old fashioned bell on each one of them. Thank God for the old church bell. Then, the first thing I found myself going toward the house of God.

When I entered, Sister Connoy, who was sitting where she could see, let out a war whoop of victory and said, "Thank God, Brother Roberts, He has answered prayer." He did not know who I was. Others looked about to see who it was and when they saw that it was me, some of them left the church, went out and sent it around town that the bad man had gone up to the house of God to run the good man out, and a great company of people gathered around the church to see the good man run out, but I had come for a better purpose than that.

That man got up and began to preach. I never heard such a sin-scathing sermon. He read my pedigree. If he had known all about me he could not have read my history more clearly than he did with the old Gospel that night. Before he was half way through, I was feeling like the Samaritan woman who said, "Come, see a Man which told me all things that ever I did." I am so glad he wasn't a compromiser; wasn't afraid to preach the truth with no uncertain sound. I am so glad that he fearlessly preached the truth, and was no mush mouth, pussy footer.

I began to wonder before he got through if he would ever give me a chance to get to the mourner's bench. Finally they started to sing and I started down that aisle. One woman said, "He is going after the evangelist." I went to the altar a penitent sinner before God and began to get religion. I found it a bigger job than I anticipated. Listen, brother, if you are teaching that a man can live for years in sin and repent of it all in a twinkling of an eye, you go tell it to someone who is more narrow between the eyes than this old Kentucky preacher. Every man lives his life over sometime, somewhere. Some men's sins go before them to judgment; others follow after. Those whose sins go before them to judgment are those who live their lives over in repentance. Those whose sins follow after will live their lives over in hell.

There I was at the altar getting religion. I had no more than got on my knees until God said, "Back there is a man you mistreated. You go back and apologize and ask that man's forgiveness." I got up and went back and said, "I am sorry about the way I treated you. I want you to forgive me if you can." He said, "Charlie, that is perfectly all right." He has told me often times since, he never was so glad to see any man at the mourner's bench. That night after service I was busy pouring out my whiskey and burning up the cards. The town was stirred and people came from far and wide, driving old buggies that every wheel started in a different direction. Men and women who hadn't been inside a church for years, came to that revival meeting when they heard that the bad man was trying to get religion. I got on the job and went at it like I meant business.

The next day I went to the sheriff's office, walked in. He turned as white as a corpse and said, "What do you want?" I said, "I want to surrender." Pulling back my coat he saw I had no gun. I said, "I mean it." He said, "guess you are doing the right thing. What has come over you?" I said, "I am trying to get religion, trying to be a good man." He said, "We have a strange judge from another part of the state."

There were thirteen murder cases in that small county, and our own judge was indisposed for some reason, and the governor had appointed another man and he had read the commonwealth of Kentucky against Charlie Wireman. They had other prisoners at the bar. When he would say to the sheriff, "Where is this man Wireman you have so much against," he would say, "We haven't caught him yet." The sheriff said, "I don't know anything to do but to take you up before the new judge." I said, "Let's go and have it done with." The devil told me that I would spend time in the penitentiary, but I knew I must be right with my fellow men, and with the Lord.

When we went into the presence of the new judge, he said, "Are you Charlie Wireman?" I said, "Yes, sir." He said to the sheriff, "Where did you get him?" "He surrendered in my office." It is often known that men hide out in the mountains months and years without as much against them. The judge could not understand when he told him I had given up. "You know what we have against you?" I said, "Judge, I am trying to get religion in the Methodist revival and I want to be right with the law and my fellowmen." He said, "You know what we have against you. I think we have enough to put you in the place where the dogs won't bite you for a long time. Can you give bond?" "I am sorry, judge; there isn't a man in this town that would sign my bond." "I don't know what else to do but to commit you to jail." I said, "If there is any way that you can make it so I can go back to the revival I would be glad." Talk about running away from a revival meeting; I thought I would die if I could not get back to that meeting.

By that time the sheriff was weeping like a child. He said, "Judge, may I speak with you privately?" They held a muffled voice conversation and when they broke away, I heard the sheriff say, "I am sure he will." The judge said, "The sheriff knows your father and knew you from the time you were in swaddling clothes, and he knows you well enough that he believes you mean business and if I would take your recognizance that you would come back the day after the revival is over. Will you do that?" I said, "I will." He then recognized me to come back. I felt now like I was converted, almost; but I wasn't.

I walked out of that court house and went down the street and got a horse. I said, "I am going to make friends with a man who had threatened my life." We never passed each other on the street that we did not have our hands on our guns and men would turn their backs, expecting one or both of us to die with our boots on. I said, "I am going to try to make friends with him." He was a big man and had a roaring voice. He was a desperate character. My father stood by the side of the horse and said, "Son, don't go about that man. If he knew you were unarmed he would kill you on sight." I rode away and my father said, "We will never see him alive again." I rode up to the gate that was about thirty yards from the house and hollered "Hello." He saw who it was, seized a high powered rifle and stepped to the door. I put up my hands and said, "If you shoot me, you will shoot a man who is helpless. I want us to be friends. I am sorry I shot your brother.

Will you forgive me and let us be friends?" He dropped that gun in one hand and came cautiously down the path to the gate, opened it and stepped up beside the horse and said, "Bulldog, do you mean that?" After showing him that I was at his mercy, I said, "I am trying to get religion; I want to be a good man." The tears came up and he has told me repeatedly since, the first tears that had dimmed his eyes in thirty years. And he stepped back and set that old rifle down against the fence and reached up and clasped my hand with his big hand and said, "Charlie, if you want to be a good man I am telling you here and now that I will be the last man in this world to lay a straw in your way. You go on and be a good man, if you can." I fell over on his neck and wept like a baby and told him goodbye and went over to his father's and mother's home.

They had said they would like to tie me to a stake, strike a match and set me on fire and laugh at me while I burned at the stake. I walked up the path to that country home, rapped on the door. The mother came to the door. She turned pale and said, "What are you doing here?" thinking that I was looking for some of the boys. I said, "I want to ask you to forgive me for shooting your son. I am trying to get religion. If I could exchange places with him I would, but all I can do is to repent and ask forgiveness. Will you forgive me for shooting your boy?" She closed the door in my face but let me digress here long enough to tell you among the first converts God ever gave me was the dear woman who wanted to burn me at the stake.

I went on and on, making one confession and restitution after another. The first at the altar in the day service and the last to go away in the night service, until one night, one never to be forgotten night, thank God when I made an end of resistance, was lying flat on my back and they were singing, "I'd rather walk with Jesus alone," when my faith took hold. Pardon was written upon my wicked heart. The glorious salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ broke into my sin-benighted soul, dispelling the darkness with such splendor and grandeur that it made the chandeliers in that old Methodist church hide their faces in shame, thank God. I was a new creature in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Now, there are two spots I always visit when I go back home. I go up to the graveyard in the outskirts of the little town and get on my knees between two mounds that hold all that is mortal of my father and mother. I held their hands as they crossed the great divide, and there on my knees I long for the eastern skies to split and these graves give up their dead that I might be changed in the twinkling of the eye and join them in the rapture. And then, I go and hunt up the janitor of the old Methodist church and borrow the key. On one occasion I took my precious boys and showed them the spot and told them about the great transaction. But usually I go alone and turn the key gently in the door, and walk softly down that aisle, for I am treading on holy ground and down to that old mourner's bench where I find

"A spot to me more dear
Than native vale or mountain,
A spot for which affection's tear
Springs grateful from its fountain.
'Tis not where kindred soul's abound,
Tho' that is almost heaven,
But where I first my Saviour found,

And felt my sins forgiven."

"O sacred hour! O hallowed spot!
Where love divine first found me;
Wherever falls my distant lot,
My heart shall linger round thee.
And when from earth I rise, to soar
Up to my home in heaven,
Down will I cast my eyes once more,
Where I was first forgiven."

Thank God, if it is possible I could take old split foot and rub his dirty nose on the very spot where God for Christ's sake pardoned my sins.

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FROM (HDM0501) "MY LIFE'S STORY" -- By Reuben A. (Bud) Robinson

Then I began to attend church and tried to pray every time they called on me. About that time the call to preach came up before me and my, my, what burdens I had over my call to preach. I had no education, no money, and it looked like I had no friends. I was a bad stutterer and at that time fearfully afflicted. Of course the devil got busy and told me that I could never preach and I would agree with him. Then the devil would feel good and I would feel bad. I felt so miserable that I went to see an old Methodist steward. I tried to tell him that God had called me to preach and he said, "No, God never called a man to preach that had as little sense as you." He said that if I tried to preach I would disgrace the cause and bring reproach on the ministry, that it was all a mistaken idea of mine, and, said he, "Don't you ever try to preach." My telling him that I would not seemed to relieve him somewhat but my burdens became so heavy that it looked like I was going to die.

I started back home and tried to tell the Lord that if He would find somebody else to preach I would help him all I could, but that I couldn't do it. By that time I was getting into darkness and it seemed like all the salvation in the world wouldn't get me to heaven if I did not preach. I finally went to see a man about it and as he talked worse to me than the other one, I left broken-hearted.

About that time a new preacher came on our circuit. I went to hear him preach one Sunday morning and went home with him for dinner. After dinner, I took him down on the hillside below the little parsonage to tell him about my calling to the ministry, but I broke down and began to cry.

He said to me so kindly, "Brother Bud, I know what your trouble is. God has called you to preach and you don't think you can do it. Isn't that your trouble?" All I could do was to nod my head and he said, "I know what it means. I refused to preach until God had to nearly kill me and my family in order to get me into the ministry."

He said, "Brother Bud, God knows whom He wants to preach and if God wants you to preach, He will help you to do it. This afternoon I will put your name before the church and we will recommend you to the quarterly conference for license to exhort."

Well, glory to Jesus! That afternoon as he preached, I think I made more noise than he did. Once more my burdens were gone and the light of heaven was flooding my soul. I was getting back into God's purpose and plan for my life.

I want to say right here that a poor, ignorant boy has a hard time getting into the ministry because many of the best people seem to know that God did not call him to preach. If the poor fellow does not suit the folks, they do not think God called him. But the Lord sometimes calls people to preach that no one but the Lord would have called.

About two weeks from that time the presiding elder came around and I appeared before the quarterly conference. Never before was an examination conducted just like mine. That is, I have never heard of one like it. The good old elder asked me so kindly about history and of course I had never read one. He asked me about the English grammar and I had never seen one. He asked me about the discipline, and to his surprise, I didn't know that we had one. They talked a little bit and then sent me out. I must have been out for nearly an hour when they called me back and the presiding elder told me that they had granted me license to exhort. Later on I was told they kept me out so long on account of one young man making a speech against granting me license. He told them that I had no sense and if I was licensed to preach, I would never use it. Furthermore, my brothers were the worst men in the country, therefore he was convinced in his own mind that God had not called A MAN LIKE ME to preach.

After taking a vote they turned me down. But before they could proceed very far with the business, the Lord spoke to an old gentleman on the board who made a speech in which he said, "Brethren, we have done wrong in turning down this little boy. If God has called him to preach and we stand in his way, he may backslide and God may require his blood at our hands at the judgment. I move that we reconsider and grant this little boy license to exhort."

After reconsidering, they granted me the license which the elder wrote out. They were signed by the Rev. E. L. Armstrong, presiding elder of the Corsicana District of the Northwest Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. I rolled up my license and put it in my breeches pocket and started for home, one of the happiest boys in the land. Ten years later the young man who voted and made a speech against me, came before my quarterly conference for license to exhort and I recommended him and shouted while the elder licensed him to exhort. You know the old country folks used to say that chickens come home to roost and surely it looked like it. He has long since gone to heaven for he was God's man.

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11 -- A MAN CONVINCED AGAINST HIS WILL

By Duane V. Maxey

There is a saying, old in time

That speaks the truth, not just a rhyme:
"A man convinced against his will
Is of the same opinion still."

Though logic and your facts be clear
Yet he will turn a deafened ear,
And stoutly say, "I disagree!
What you declare just could not be!"

His thoughts are set on narrow tracks,
Do not confuse him with the facts!
Inflexible in self-conceit,
His views are set in hard concrete.

His mind is fixed, and will not bend
And if you keep him for a friend,
You must always with him agree
Or you will get "The Third Degree"!

You dare not doubt what he declares,
Or he will blister you with flares
Of hot inflammatory speech,
And angry words that loudly screech!

The more your reasoning makes sense,
The more that he becomes intense,
In his denial of what's true,
Especially when said by YOU!

While deep within, he knows he's wrong
He will not budge, but still stand strong,
And evermore he will reside
Within the rampart of his pride.

The facts he will not entertain
Though they are crystal-clear and plain
To those who have no axe to grind,
Or prejudice within their mind.

How true, but sad, when this is so,
But everyone should surely know,
"A man convinced against his will,
Is of the same opinion still!"

A Christian with some introspect
Should look within, try to detect:

Could it be ME that fits this shoe?
Am I the one whose wrong, not YOU!

May God help all who claim to be
His people with humility
To own the Truth when it's in sight:
It's I who err -- and YOU are right!

* * * * *

12 -- DANGERS WHEN SOME THINGS BECOME COMMONPLACE

"And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of SILVER: IT WAS NOTHING ACCOUNTED OF in the days of Solomon" (1 Kings 10:21).

"And the king made SILVER TO BE in Jerusalem AS STONES, and CEDARS made he to be as the SYCAMORE TREES that are in the vale, for abundance" (1 Kings 10:27).

* * *

INTRODUCTION

I shall use the above verses as launch-pads for jumping into the general thought of my subject: -- i.e., that there are great and grave dangers that often accompany a thing when it becomes commonplace. According to 1 Kings 10:21 and 27, SILVER and CEDARS became commonplace because of their abundance during the reign of king Solomon, but there are many, many things which can, and have, become commonplace down across the centuries, right up to the present time. Below I will enlarge upon the dangers related to a few of these things.

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A -- THE DANGER TO ONE'S VALUES -- WHEN PRECIOUS THINGS BECOME COMMONPLACE: -- Things once considered precious when they were scarce are often undervalued and unappreciated when they are in abundance. Just as "silver.. was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon," even so today, many things which are were once scarce and rightly considered to be precious are now considered of little value amidst our abundance! Give folks too many material things, and they will begin to lose their appreciation for them.

When I was a lad, most high school students did not have cars, and one-car families were the general rule. If a high schooler DID have a car, the chances are it was an old flivver. Today, millions of spoiled-brat, young teenage punks drive to school in brand-new, or nearly new autos, and take it for granted that this is the way it ought to be! What a huge need there is today for many ingrates to pray the prayer of Proverbs 30:8-9 -- "Give me neither poverty nor riches; 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." Yes, "too little" can become a curse, but I think that "too much" is much more likely to become such!

Sodom had too much! Ezekiel 16:49 says, "Behold, this was the iniquity of.. Sodom, pride, FULLNESS of bread, AND ABUNDANCE of idleness..." And Jesus said it was going to be just as it was in the days of Lot (in Sodom) preceding His Return. People have too much! and that abundance is causing them to undervalue things precious materially, and most of all, things precious spiritually -- including "THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST" (1 Peter 1:19)! Like pearls cast before swine, millions of spiritual ingrates in our proud and pampered society trample under their dirty feet the most precious things found in God's Word and in His Eternal Gospel. By them, these invaluable and imperishable spiritual treasures are "nothing accounted of"! However, at the Judgment, millions of these ingrates shall see that they have mistakenly cast down and cast away God's Silver and Gold and Precious Stone, while they highly valued and grasped for the eternally perished "Wood, Hay, and Stubble" of the Arch-Deceiver!

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B -- THE DANGER TO ONE'S -- VIEW OF VICE -- WHEN EVIL BECOMES COMMONPLACE. It has been written:

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
That, to be hated needs but to be seen:
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Commenting on the truth of this poetic observation, W. B. Godbey wrote in his Autobiography:

"These poetic lines tell the sad story of millions now in Hell. It is awfully dangerous to hear recitals of atrocious wickedness, and [they] should be avoided whenever possible.

"Once when a circuit rider, I happened to be at home chopping wood at the pile in the yard, when a stalwart man that lived in the neighborhood came along on his horse cursing like a demon. I said nothing, but picked up my hat and started out of the gate. My wife, surmising that I was going to do something with the man, said: 'Mr. Godbey, do you let Bill Heddleston alone, for he is worth fifty thousand dollars, and will kill you if you interrupt him.' I said nothing, but crossed the street to where I had seen the Campbellite pastor at the window reading, and said to him: 'Brother, come with me to the police judge; we must arrest that man.' He refused to go, saying: 'It is not worth while.' I said:

"If you do not go with me, I will send an officer for you,' as I knew he had heard it all, and would have to witness to it. Then he picked up his hat and went with me. Fortunately, passing a couple of squares, we met the judge. I at once told him about the man passing our house cursing and swearing like a demon eloped from the bottomless pit and that I wanted him prosecuted. Turning on his heel and seeing a policeman at a distance, he roared to him to go into the livery stable, which was directly before him, mount a horse and go after Bill Heddleston with

all his might and bring him back to him. So he did. What was the result? He paid his fine of forty-five dollars for cursing in the presence of my wife and children.

"Afterwards I lived in that house six years, directly on that man's way to and from the county seat, but he ever afterward passed by like a gentleman."

What a tremendous difference between the way both the World and the Church once viewed the vice of profanity and the way it is viewed by both today! To Godbey, cursing was viewed (i.e., heard) as "a monster of frightful mien" which he "hated" and he did his utmost to eradicate it from the hearing of his wife and children. But today, cursing and millions of other evils have become so commonplace that "seen too oft" millions have become "familiar with their face," and even among professed Christians, many of those evils have been first "endured" then "pitied"-- and finally "embraced."

One should be cautious that his or her views concerning vice are not formed by the "Vox Populi" -- viz., "Popular Opinion" -- for in most cases the Popular Opinion in this world is degenerate and very wrong! Too often when one's views concerning vice change, it is for the worse, and seldom is it for the better. Furthermore, none should foolishly deny the fact that evil "seen to oft" can blind the willing beholder to its horribly filthy and sinful character!

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C -- THE DANGER IN ONE'S -- VICARAGE AND VESPERS -- WHEN THEY BECOME COMMONPLACE. The preacher's vicarage (or ministry) and the worshipper's vespers (or religious services) can become rote -- done more as matters of habit than they are done with relish, vitality, and alacrity. Neither preaching by the pastor, nor church-going by the parishioner is any guarantee of heaven. Ecclesiastes 8:10 declares: "I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity." The world is full of vanity these days as all sorts of vile sin have become commonplace, but there is vanity in the professed Church as well -- on the part of countless numbers of religious people whose Vicarage and Vespers are nothing more than an habitual "coming and going" from their pulpits and/or places of so-called worship. "This also is vanity."

In Ezra 3:4 we read: -- "They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOM, AS THE DUTY OF EVERY DAY REQUIRED." But God wants more than the CUSTOMARY PERFORMANCE OF DUTY by His people! In John 4:23-24 Jesus said, "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Real spiritual Vitality and Alacrity must accompany the routine performance of one's religious duty, or else it is nothing more than Ritualistic Rote!

Again, Jesus declared in Luke 17:9-10 -- Doth he [a Master] thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have

done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

Parts of the Eagle Scout Pledge are: "On my honor, I will do my best, to do my duty to God" and "On my honor, I will do my best, to do my duty to my country."

Back during World War II, there seemed to be an attitude that I have heard voiced again in just the recent past: -- viz., that if soldiers die in combat while "doing their duty for their country" they will go to heaven. But the fact is, **NOBODY IS GOING TO HEAVEN BECAUSE THEY DID THEIR DUTY!** -- not even professed "Christian Soldiers"! -- and especially not so, when they "did their duty" by rote and only because they felt obligated to do so. Only those who go "beyond the call of duty" for Christ, and who "do by nature" (and with real spiritual vitality and alacrity) "the things contained in the Law" (Rom. 2:14) shall enter in through the gates into New Jerusalem.

They shall never enter into the Holy City who have merely "done their duty" by rote as a commonplace custom and routine, and who have had no real spiritual life and vitality. And none can "earn" a place at Christ's side by performing ever so many works, even ever so many **GOOD**, works! Titus 3:5 makes it clear that Heaven cannot be gained "by works of righteousness which we have done" -- and that this blissful and eternal abode comes only to those who enter it "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

The "renewing of the Holy Ghost" -- the New Birth experience -- must be, and continue to be, the most vital part of every Vicarage of the preacher and of all Vespers of the worshippers while their duties are done, if they are to avoid becoming "unprofitable servants" who are unrewarded with the Heavenly Prize they hope to receive.

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D -- THE DANGER IN ONE'S -- VYING AND VICTORIES -- WHEN THEY BECOME COMMONPLACE. Goliath gloated in the fact of his great size and imposing presence, and he became accustomed to seeing his enemies cower before him. Then little David came along -- one whose diminutive figure compared to his own Gargantuan frame filled Goliath with both unbounded confidence and utter disdain for the one about to encounter him! Why! He could wipe out this little gnat with one swat! How dare this little, weak stripling challenge his awesome might! "Then one little stone went up in the air, and the giant came tumbling down!"

Christians love this story -- but, ironically, many spiritually triumphant Christian warriors have unconsciously taken unto themselves the same attitude as that of Goliath: -- "I AM INVINCIBLE"! Oh No! they would not voice those words -- but that attitude has crept in. And again, Oh No! they will not claim that apart from Christ they can win any spiritual battle -- but, they have come to believe that, having Christ within, and having won so many victories in the past -- **NOTHING CAN NOW DEFEAT THEM!** -- especially "little things"!

But Zechariah 4:10 asks: -- "Who hath despised the day of small things?"

"Where's the brook?" said the willows to the bridge one day. "Where indeed!" replied the bridge, looking down contemptuously on the threadlike stream beneath its massive arch. "Why, its quite dried up!" said the willows. "Yes," said the bridge; "the poor, contemptible thing! I am really ashamed of standing over it. Anyone might step across it. I ought to occupy a position where my value would be felt."

Presently the rain fell, and the hills sent down their streams into the little brook and swelled it to a torrent. "Where's the bridge?" asked the willows. "Ah," replied the brook as it rushed foaming by them, "I have carried it away in ruins. I thought the other day, when he and you despised me, that, POOR AS I WAS in your eyes, when my own simple worth was concerned, you ought to have remembered WHAT I MIGHT BECOME when I was helped from the hills." (W. E. Rice -- Caps Mine)

Little things can defeat the spiritually high and mighty Christian -- particularly when that one's past victories have become commonplace, and when that Christian imagines that past trophies of triumph merit a higher position in the Church than is now held!

Benhadad, king of Syria was another who had an "I CAN'T BE DEFEATED" ATTITUDE much like that of Goliath. He boasted in advance how his great and invincible force would defeat the king of Israel -- to which boast, the latter replied: "LET NOT HIM THAT GIRDETH ON HIS HARNESS BOAST HIMSELF AS HE THAT PUTTETH IT OFF."

But Benhadad paid no mind to this wise warning from his "pip-squeak" enemy, and proceeded to go and get drunk in the celebration of his coming victory! But when the actual encounter came, ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND OF BENHADAD'S ARMY WERE SLAIN "IN ONE DAY"! -- and this proud and presumptuous Syrian King who supposed himself invincible was utterly defeated! -- by the much smaller force of the king of Israel. (See 1 Kings Chapter 20).

Both Goliath and Benhadad provide striking Biblical examples of "him that thinketh that he standeth" -- and against their backdrop 1 Corinthians 10:12 stands out quite strikingly: -- "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

In regard to my point here, I shall not enter upon a doctrinal debate of Arminianism vs. Calvinism. I will simply say that according to repeated examples and statements in the Bible, it IS possible for victorious saints to fall, and it IS dangerous for a long-triumphant Christian to begin to think that "he or she has it made" and can never fall.

Years ago, while waiting to have my hair cut in a Coeur d' Alene, Idaho barbershop, I found the following story about Jose (Yiyo) Cubrero in the February, 1986 issue of the National Geographic magazine. I was immediately impressed with the story about this young Spanish Bull-Fighter, and soon thereafter I used facts therefrom as an illustration in one of my articles. Below, I shall again present some of those facts with brief quotations from the magazine article:

"Pali, este toro me ha matado!" "Pali, this bull has killed me!" So saying to a friend, twenty-one year old Jose Cubrero collapsed and died! Well known as "Yiyo" to Spanish

bull-fighting fans, just three months earlier, in May of 1985, "he cut a splendid figure in his suit of lights in Madrid's plaza de las ventas," and seemed destined for greatness as a matador. Suddenly, and unexpectedly, a tragic error ended his spectacular career!

At what proved to be his last bullfight, "after his final sword thrust he turned to the crowd, thinking the bull slain." "But the animal rallied and lunged, piercing Yiyio through the heart."

Jose Cubrero THOUGHT he had victoriously dispatched the bull -- but, sadly, contrary to his mistaken notion, IT revived, and HE died! He thought the engagement with that powerful brute was "OVER" before it was "really OVER"!

Yogi Berra, a well-known baseball catcher, gave one reason why he likes that game: -- Because "It ain't OVER till it's OVER!" Even so, the Christian's warfare "Isn't OVER till it's OVER"! Ecclesiastes 8:8 says: -- "There is no discharge in that war"! -- and one commentator gives an alternative meaning of the word "discharge" as "casting off of weapons".

Jose Cubrero died because he mistakenly took a victory-bow after he discontinued using his weapon -- TOO SOON! Even so, when victory has become a commonplace occurrence to a long-triumphant Soldier of the Cross, it is possible for that one to let down the guard and lay down the spiritual weaponry TOO SOON! -- and thereby fall in sudden and unexpected defeat!

Martin Luther warned Christians thus in his hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God":

"For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and pow'r are great,
And armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

"Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing."

* * *

IN CONCLUSION

One might list many more things which have dangers inherent to them when they become commonplace, but here I forbear, and I would like to conclude this article on a positive note. Millions of finally-victorious saints who have discerned and avoided the dangers involved in things which have become commonplace, shall triumphantly march through the gates into that very UNCOMMON PLACE -- NEW JERUSALEM! And Jesus' pronouncement upon them shall be much like that penned by Charles Wesley, when he wrote:

"Servant of God, well done!
Thy glorious warfare's past;
The battle's fought, the race is won,
And thou art crown'd at last;
Of all thy heart's desire
Triumphantly possess'd,
Lodged by the ministerial choir
In thy Redeemer's breast."

* * * * *

13 -- FLOCCINAUCINIHIPIPILIFICATION

Floccinaucinihilipilification -- is a REAL word!

Floccinaucinihilipilification -- is a REAL LONG word!

Floccinaucinihilipilification -- is the act or habit of esteeming or describing something as worthless, or making something to be worthless by said means.

I herewith plead guilty of floccinaucinihilipilification regarding the word floccinaucinihilipilification!

I might, with long practice, learn to spell it... There are, I understand, several ways to pronounce it... Here is the easiest way: -- WORTHLESS!

Dr. Singh brought the word to Chandler Hospital where Dorothea works, and she brought it home. I found it in neither of my computer dictionaries, but when I went online I found it. Perhaps it is generally found only in the longest, unabridged dictionaries -- maybe like the ones which, in hard copies, stand about 10 inches high as well as having large width and length dimensions!

Words of such length as floccinaucinihilipilification are often as useless as "a glass-eye" peering into a telescope. I doubt that I would ever use this 29-letter monstrosity in normal conversation 29 times, if I should live to be as old as Methuselah! Care to add floccinaucinihilipilification to your vocabulary?

* * * * *

14 -- GOD'S ELEPHANTS -- IN PHUKET THAILAND -- AFTER THE TSUNAMI

I just received this story from Gene Long -- one that I think has been circulating since shortly after the Tsunami Disaster hit Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. However, perhaps some of my readers have not yet read it -- so, here it is below:

* * *

No one is insignificant in God's eyes, and His care for sparrows, finches, eagles, and elephants is a constant reminder that He cares for you, and for me. What He makes, He cherishes.

Consider the elephants of the Pavilion Hotel in Phuket, Thailand, where one of the most popular attractions is elephant rides. As many as eight people on one elephant, first into the surrounding forest, then down to the beach, to lunch at a fresh water lagoon, then back to the hotel.

"Our nine elephants," writes Pavilion Hotel Group manager Jim France, "are kept chained to in-ground posts, not because they need to be, but because it makes the tourists feel better because their children seem safe from a tromping when they're feeding the beasts."

"About twenty minutes before the first wave of the recent Tsunami hit, the elephants became extremely agitated and unruly. Four had just returned from a trip and their handler's had not yet chained them. In a desperate panic, the four elephants helped the other five tear free from their chains. They all then climbed a hill and started bellowing.

Many people followed them up the hill. Then the waves hit."

"After the waves subsided, the elephants charged down from the hill, and started picking up children with their trunks and running them back up the hill. When all the children were taken care of, they started helping the adults."

"God's elephants" rescued forty-two people that day. Then, they returned to the beach and carried up four dead bodies, including one of a child. Not until the task was done did they allow their handlers to mount them. Then, with handlers atop, they began moving wreckage.

So remember, whatever God makes, He cherishes. Including elephants, sparrows, and you.

* * * * *

15 -- HOW GOD HAS BLESSED THE MEMORY OF THE JUST

Written and Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

"The memory of the just is blessed" (Proverbs 10:7).

INTRODUCTION

In his book, "The Divine Response" (hdm0697), James Blaine Chapman wrote:

"In the days of feudal Europe, it is said, a certain old castle had changed hands so frequently that former owners and tenants were forgotten. On the wall in the great hall of the old castle hung a curious old harp, retained now as a relic, seeing no one had been found who knew

how to play it. But one day a stranger who asked to warm before the huge log fire, espied this old harp, took it down, tuned it up, and then with trained hand brought from it such music as had not rung through the castle halls in the memory of any present. Asked how it was that he could play this harp when so many had tried and failed, the stranger answered, "I made this harp. I know what all its strings are supposed to do." There is a harp of life that is like that: It has hung there on the walls of time so long that many imagine it incapable of harmony. But God who made it can cause the chords 'that were broken to vibrate once more.'"

God made the Harp of the Human Heart, and He has a way of using the memory of departed saints to re vibrate long broken chords in one's heart and thereby help and revive the rememberer. This is a compilation of stories about how God has done that -- in some instances bringing revival, like one touching the bones of Elisha, and in every instance bringing a blessing through "The Memory of the Just."

* * *

A -- THE MEMORY OF OLD BROTHER LASLEY

The following is from "The Healing Shadow" (hdm0204), by Raymond Browning:

One of the greatest and most majestic preachers of holiness I have ever known was Dr. Henry Clay Morrison of Louisville, Kentucky. He was for more than fifty years editor of a holiness periodical. He was also president of Asbury College for many years. One summer I attended a school for Methodist preachers at Trinity College, now Duke University, and heard him preach a sermon in which he told this story that burned itself into my memory and has been used in blessing thousands of people.

A cousin of Dr. Morrison's lived in the blue-grass section of Kentucky. He was a handsome, attractive man but pleasure-loving and ungodly. He owned a fine farm, had a good home, and kept a string of race horses. One day he was riding on a spirited saddle horse when he came to one of those fine old country churches you often see in central Kentucky. They are usually painted white and have a tall steeple. Nearly always there is a large graveyard adjoining, and the place is enclosed with a white limestone fence. Suddenly he reined up his horse and dismounted and walked into that churchyard. He had thought of a friend who had recently passed away and whose funeral he had been unable to attend. It occurred to him that he would like to see the grave. Soon he located it and there before him was the fresh-turned dirt, the withered flowers, and the new tombstone. He read the inscription. It was in the early fall. Flowers were still in bloom and the mockingbirds were singing, and as he stood there in the quietude of that lovely churchyard he began to talk aloud.

He said, "Bill, old boy, I'm sorry for you. I'm afraid you've missed it. The trouble with you, Bill, is that you drank whiskey and played the races and went all the gaits -- just like I'm doing. Then you died -- just like I'm going to die; and you've gone to hell -- where I'm going. I'm sorry, Bill, but you've missed it."

He turned to walk away, and his eye fell on a tombstone that was tilted over a bit. The grave had sunk down and was matted over with honeysuckle vines. Out of curiosity he stooped to read the inscription. It was the grave of an old minister named Lasley. The man said, "I remember old Brother Lasley. It seems only yesterday, but it has been twenty-five years since he held a revival in that old church. I was just fifteen years old and I remember that I went to the altar one night. That seems strange now; but I was young then, and my heart was tender, and I cried. I haven't been to church in years, and I couldn't cry if I wanted too. My heart is as hard as a rock. I don't care for God nor man. I cried that night. Old Brother Lasley saw me and came around and put his hands on my head and prayed for me, and all the burden left me and I was happy. But all that is in the past and I just don't care. Life's a strange thing. I thought when I got my race horses that I would be happy, and now I sometimes wish they were all dead. I've got a good farm and a good wife and children, and yet I'm not happy -- but I know I was happy that night. I know I'm wrong and on my way to hell; but, bad as I am, I'd give every foot of Kentucky land that I own, every race horse on my farm, and every dollar I've got in the bank if I could go back twenty-five years and could get down at that altar once more and if old Brother Lasley could once more put his hands on my head and pray for me. If I could once more feel in my heart what I felt that night, it would be worth it all, but I can't. My heart is dead. I couldn't shed a tear if I wanted to."

He put his hand to his face and then looked at it in astonishment. "O Lord," he said, "just look at this. I'm crying." He started to take a step and his foot caught in the honeysuckle vines and he sprawled across that grave. He buried his face in his arms and prayed, "Lord, if I haven't gone too far, if there is any hope for a fellow like me, please take me back and let me feel once more what I felt in my heart when old Brother Lasley prayed for me."

Soon his wife heard him coming through the house like a storm. She had started into the dining room carrying a tray of dishes, when he met her and seized her in his arms, scattering chinaware all over the floor. He jumped and shouted and, as soon as his wife could get her breath, she said, "Husband, what in the world is the matter with you? Have you gone crazy?"

"No, honey," he said, "I'm not crazy. I've got religion."

She said, "Dear, I'm so glad, but I didn't know there was any revival going on."

"Oh, yes, honey, a wonderful revival! Old Brother Lasley and I had one down yonder in the graveyard."

The people had laid Brother Lasley to rest many years ago, but somehow they couldn't bury his shadow. No tomb can ever intern a good man's influence.

Do you remember that there is something like this in the Bible? In II Kings 13:21 we read about a time when the Israelites were burying a man and suddenly they saw in the distance a marauding band of Moabites approaching. Someone said, "We can't stop to dig a grave. What are we going to do with this dead man?" Another said, "Let's put him in Elisha's sepulchre." The Scripture says, "And when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived,

and stood upon his feet." I imagine he beat his pallbearers home because he didn't have to walk to the funeral as they did.

Friends, if Jesus tarries, one of these days you and I will be carried to the graveyard and laid to rest until there comes that trumpet call of the first resurrection; but, if we have lived in the will of the Lord, the precious healing shadows will remain. Hallelujah!

* * *

B -- THE MEMORY OF AN UNSPEAKABLY PRECIOUS DAUGHTER

This story is from "Food For Lambs" (hdm1616) by Aaron Merritt Hills:

Rev. E. P. Hammond, the children's evangelist, tells of a little girl who had lived on a mountain in Switzerland, near a deep chasm, across which was a narrow bridge formed by a rock that had fallen from the high mountain above and lodged across the chasm. Her mother had often told her about the Savior who pitied us and poured out his life's blood that he might wash away the black stains of sin on our souls, and she had given her heart to Jesus. But her father was not a Christian. He never gathered his loved ones around the family altar. He was kind to provide for the good of his children in this world, but he seemed to care nothing about their laying up "treasures in heaven." One day when about to cross over the deep ravine by means of the rock, the mother saw that it was just ready to fall. The frost had loosened it. She told her little girl that if she ever crossed it again it would fall, and she would be dashed in pieces. The next day the father told his child that he was going over to the other side across the bridge. She said to him that it was not safe, but he only laughed at her. He said he had been across it before she was born, and that he was not afraid. When the dear child saw that he was determined to go, she asked if she could not go with him. While they were walking along together, she looked up full in her father's face, and said: "Father, if I should die will you promise to love Jesus, and meet me in heaven?" "Pshaw!" said he, "what put such a wild thought into your head? You are not going to die, I hope. You are only a wee thing, and will live many years." "Yes, but if I should die, will you promise to love Jesus just as I do, and meet me in heaven?" "But you are not going to die. Don't speak of it," he said. "But if I should die, do promise, father, you will be a good Christian and come up and live with Jesus and me in heaven." "Yes, yes," he said at last. When they came near the crossing place she said: "Father, please stand here a minute." She knew that her father was not prepared to die. She loved him dearly, and was willing to run the risk of her dying for him. Strange as it may seem, she walked quickly over the loosened rock, and down it went with the little girl! She fell and was crushed to death in the bottom of the deep chasm. The trembling parent crept to the edge, and with eyes dim with tears, gazed wildly upon the wreck. Then he thought of all his little child had told him about how Jesus had died to save us. He thought he never loved his child so much. But he began to see that he had far more reason to love Jesus who had suffered much more to save him from the "bottomless pit." And then he thought of the promise he so carelessly made to his daughter. What could he do but kneel down and cry to God for mercy on him? How precious now to the father's heart was the memory of the dear little daughter who deliberately accepted death that she might save her father's life, and save his soul forever. O, how wicked he would have been if he had not felt a tender, grateful love for such a child. But we all have a thousand times more reason to praise and adore Jesus with all the tender

love of grateful and obedient hearts. And it is a thousand times more wicked not to love and trust the blessed Son of God, who left heaven and came down to die for us, that a way might be made whereby we could be saved.

* * *

C -- THE MEMORY OF A LOVING AND GENEROUS FATHER

This little story comes from "D. L. Moody And His Work" (hdm2396), by W. H. Daniels:

I remember to have heard a story, somewhere, of a bad boy who had run away from home. He had given his father no end of trouble. He had refused all the invitations which his father had sent him to come home and be forgiven, and help to comfort his old heart. He had even gone so far as to scoff at his father and mother. But one day a letter came telling him his father was dead, and they wanted him to come home and attend the funeral. At first he determined he would not go, but then he thought it would be a shame not to pay some little respect to the memory of so good a man after he was dead; and so, just as a matter of form, he took the train, and went to the old home, sat through all the funeral services, saw his father buried, and came back with the rest of the friends to the house, with his heart as cold and stony as ever. But when the old man's will was brought out to be read, the ungrateful son found that his father had remembered him along with all the rest of the family in the will, and had left him an inheritance with the others, who had not gone astray. This broke his heart. It was too much for him, that his old father, during all those years in which he had been so wicked and rebellious, had never ceased to love him. That is just the way our Father in Heaven does with us. That is just the way Jesus does with people who refuse to give their hearts to Him. He loves them in spite of their sins, and it is the love which, more than anything else, brings hard-hearted sinners to their knees. Now this man confessed his sins.

* * *

D -- THE MEMORY OF ONE MORE PRECIOUS THAN HIS FORTUNE

This story is taken from "Consolation" (hdm0193) by Mr. Charles E. Cowman:

In one of our magazines, the writer tells of a visit she once paid to the home of a man who had for years given himself to the development of a great mine in the mountains of the West. Fortune had favored him; he was now worth millions. With evident delight he showed his visitor through the rooms of his beautiful mansion, dwelling with peculiar pleasure upon the many pieces of furniture he had gathered at great cost from lands far and near.

At last he led the way to his private study; and now a marked change came over his manner. No longer was he a man of millions. For a moment he seemed to forget the mines of which he was master: it was nothing to him, now, that his wealth had made his name known far and wide; he was only a pilgrim on life's way resting for a while by a singing-brook.

"I wish to show you something," he said, a peculiar glow of joy lighting up his face, at the same time opening the door of a safe at the side of the room. Then he took out a little box, heavily bound with steel. Surely, the visitor thought, this must contain precious jewels. Such care would not otherwise be given to this casket. But when the lid was lifted, not sparkling gems from faraway mines, not glittering jewels, costly, and rare, met the lady's gaze, but a little, old gray shawl, fringed with black! As if the thing were prized beyond all he had shown his visitor, he carefully unfolded the shawl.

"My Mother's shawl!" he said, softly. "She wore this about her shoulders; and when she died and the things were divided among us, I asked for this as my share! It never has left me. When I had nothing in which to carry it, during the hard days out there, I wore it folded across my chest, under my shirt! It kept me straight! It is going to lead me to Heaven! I do not know how nor when, but I can bank on it as a certainty. It is so full of home-memories that I never have been able to get away from them! It is mother's whole personality concentrated! She always made the best of me, even in my wrong-doing! She has kept on making the best of me ever since! Mother has fallen asleep, but I expect to meet her some day!"

"Ah, golden yesterdays now laid to sleep,
What everlasting fragrance still ye keep!"

* * *

E -- THE MEMORY OF A YOUNG PREACHER'S MESSAGE AND REVIVAL

We found the following in "Pentecost, Its Scope, Power And Perpetuation" (hdm0209) by Willis G. Bennett:

Shotts in Scotland has long been noted for a remarkable revival in the seventeenth century. A young man by the name of John Livingston was converted very early in life, and from his youth was remarkable for his deep spirituality. His first desire was to serve Christ as a physician, but after a very remarkable call to preach, he began to prepare himself at Glasgow College. He had remarkable gifts as a preacher, but his fiery spirit was offensive to the Bishop who constantly refused to allow him to be settled as a pastor. With a Divine call, with many who desired to hear him, he found the door closed for several years. Finally through the influence of some wealthy friends, a Pastor permitted him to preach on his parish. Mr. Shearer, in "Old Time Revivals," gives the following account of the remarkable outpouring of the Spirit:

"The communion was fixed for June 20, 1630. Great interest was aroused, and from all parts a vast assembly was gathered together. Rich blessing followed the Word at the Sabbath services, so rich indeed that it was felt they could not part without an added day of thanksgiving. And it was on this added day that God outpoured the superabundant blessing. After much persuasion Livingston consented to preach on the morrow. Finding their hearts too full of joy for sleep, many formed themselves into little companies, and spent the whole night in fervent devotion, in praise and supplication. The young preacher was one of these praying bands, and when the morning came a sore trial beset him. As he thought of the great, expectant multitude, he was overwhelmed by a sense of utter unworthiness, incompetence, and insufficiency. All

strength seemed to leave him, and he was brought down to the dust of death. So real and painful was the abasement that he gave up all thought of preaching, and was preparing to steal away through the fields when his friends gathered about him, and constrained him to remain.

And so, on June 21, in the Churchyard of Shotts, John Livingston stood up amongst the people, feeling himself the weakest and least of God's creatures. Then was fulfilled the saying of the prophet Hosea, "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel." God uplifted him and perfected His strength in the young man's weakness. His text was Ezekiel 36: 25, 26: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." As he expounded it, burning thoughts and burning words filled his heart and lips.

For an hour and a half he preached to a people who seemed rooted to the ground in a great stillness. Then when he thought he must close, again the Spirit filled him with a fullness that must be outpoured, and for another hour he continued with a melting heart and liberty of utterance he never experienced before and never after. Five hundred men and women, some from the high ranks of society, some poor wasters and beggars, were converted where they stood, and lived from that day as those who had indeed received a new heart and a new spirit. The memory of that day has never died, and the very telling of its story, as at Kilsyth, has proved a fount of revival.

* * *

F -- THE MEMORY OF DAVID BRAINERD

In his book, "The Weapon Of Prayer" (hdm0425), Edward McKendree Bounds writes:

Dr. A. J. Gordon speaks thus of Brainerd:

In passing through Northampton, Mass., I went into the old cemetery, swept off the snow that lay on the top of the slab, and I read these simple words:

Sacred to the memory of David Brainerd, the faithful and devoted missionary to the Susquehanna, Delaware and Stockbridge Indians of America, who died in this town, October 8th, 1717.

That was all there was on the slab. Now that great man did his greatest work by prayer. He was in the depths of those forests alone, unable to speak the language of the Indians, but he spent whole days literally in prayer. What was he praying for? He knew he could not reach these savages, for he did not understand their language. If he wanted to speak at all, he must find somebody who could vaguely interpret his thought. Therefore he knew that anything he could do must be absolutely dependent upon God. So he spent whole days in praying, simply that the power of the Holy Spirit might come upon him so unmistakably that these people would not be able to stand before him.

What was his answer? Once he preached through a drunken interpreter, a man so intoxicated that he could hardly stand up. This was the best he could do. Yet scores were converted through that sermon. We can account for it only that it was the tremendous power of God behind him.

Now this man prayed in secret in the forest. A little while afterward, William Carey read his life, and by its impulse he went to India. Payson read it as a young man, over twenty years old, and he said that he had never been so impressed by anything in his life as by the story of Brainerd. Murray McCheyne read it, and he likewise was impressed by it.

But all I care is simply to enforce this thought, that the hidden life, a life whose days are spent in communion with God, in trying to reach the source of power, is the life that moves the world. Those living such lives may be soon forgotten. There may be no one to speak a eulogy over them when they are dead. The great world may take no account of them. But by and by, the great moving current of their lives will begin to tell, as in the case of this young man, who died at about thirty years of age. The missionary spirit of this nineteenth century is more due to the prayers and consecration of this one man than to any other one.

* * *

G -- THE MEMORY OF A GIRL FROM THE STREETS OF HAYLE

This beautiful story comes from "Commissioner John Lawley" (hdm1613) by Mrs. Colonel Carpenter:

During that bitter winter which he spent with his Corps on the streets of Hayle, a girl, who might never have entered an Army Hall, heard the message of Salvation in the open air. In a little room packed to discomfort, and lit by a tallow candle, she heard the way of life more perfectly, and sought and found the Lord. A few weeks later she was convicted of her need of a clean heart. She yielded herself- body, soul, and spirit-to Christ. When Lawley asked her, 'Do you feel that Jesus fully saves you now?' she answered, 'No, but I can trust Him.' For some days no ray of light or assurance honored her surrender. Then Christ said to her soul, 'Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon Thee.'

Her spirit, and also the very expression upon her face, reminded the people among whom she moved of an angel. After about two years she became ill and developed consumption. She continued to attend the meetings, until she could no longer stand alone; then two sisters would support her in the open-air ring, while she testified to the wondering crowd that Jesus could save and keep to the uttermost. At last she was not able to leave her room; it became an antechamber of Heaven. People at variance with God fled before the sense of purity and brightness of glory reflected there. With a wonderful radiance illuminating her face, she would testify, 'I am safe in Christ, safe for evermore! Sing "Bright angels are from Glory come. All is well!

Second to her passionate love for Christ was her devotion to The Army. 'Let me die, holding the Colors,' she asked. An Army Flag was placed over the foot of her bed. As long as she could lift her hand, she loved to stroke the Colors that held for her their true meaning,

forgiveness and purity through the Blood of Jesus; power for service through the fire of the Holy Spirit. With her hand holding them, her face shining with the light from Heaven, she passed into the presence of her King. Lawley visited her on her deathbed, and the memory of that white, triumphant soul never faded.

In the years that lay ahead, he was to urge people of many nations to seek cleansing from all sin. Satan does not leave such souls unmolested; he attacks them with his fiercest darts; he brings against them great, heaving billows, and fogs of doubt. But however he might rage, declaring the impossibility of human nature to be saved from all sin, Lawley could for ever point him to a shining witness, that unanswerable miracle of grace in the girl of Hayle.

* * *

H -- THE MEMORY OF A MISSIONARY IN MESOPOTAMIA

The following comes from "2700-Plus Sermon Illustrations, F-Topics (hdm2043), compiled by Duane V. Maxey:

A missionary in Urfa, Mesopotamia, labored thirteen years before he baptized a single convert. Everything was discouraging, even hopeless, to human appearance. Then came an epidemic of cholera. People fled in panic, deserting the sick and the dying. The missionary, forgetful of self, waited upon the sufferers, tenderly and tirelessly. The living and the dying blessed his name. Worn and weary he at last himself fell a victim to the disease.

All the survivors carried his body reverently and sorrowfully to a little grove outside the city walls. It now seemed that the work of the missionary was at an end. A successor was appointed, however, and he was met nine miles away by a large company and conducted to Urfa with honors. Large numbers turned to Christ, and a substantial house of worship was built and dedicated to the memory of "The man who died for us." The "corn of wheat" had fallen into the ground, and precious was the harvest.

* * *

I -- THE MEMORY OF MELVILLE B. COX

Taken from two different sources in the HDM Digital Library:

As a number of the early settlers who were sent by the [African] Colonization Society had been members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, a desire was expressed to have missionaries sent out to them, and Oct. 6, 1832, Rev. Melville B. Cox sailed as the first missionary, from Norfolk, Va., arriving in Liberia on March 8, 1833. He was cordially received by the then acting governor Mr. Williams, who was a member of the Methodist Church, and a local preacher. Mr. Cox had scarcely commenced his work with great earnestness before he was seized with the fever incident to that climate, and died July 21, 1833. Before leaving for that country he had been asked what he would have written on his tombstone should he die, and he

replied, "Let a thousand fall before Africa be given up." Before his death he had purchased missionary premises at Monrovia, and had organized a Methodist Episcopal church.

Through the influence of the Rev. Mr. Spaulding, who succeeded brother Cox as a missionary to Africa, some generous individuals in Boston contributed a sum for the purpose of erecting a monument over his grave. This was transported to Monrovia, and there it stands, with the following inscription engraven on three sides, in the words prepared by Mr. Spaulding:--

To the Memory of
the Rev. MELVILLE B. COX,
the first Missionary from
the Methodist Episcopal Church
in the United States to Liberia, Western Africa.
He arrived in Monrovia on the
9th of March, 1833, where, having
organized a branch of the same
Church, he died in the triumphs
of the Christian faith
on the 21st of July of the same year,
aged 33 years.
He was a truly amiable man,
a devout Christian, and an
able and successful minister of Jesus Christ.

* * *

J -- THE MEMORY OF MARTIN RUTER

The following is from "A History Of The Methodist Episcopal Church, Volume 4 -- 1829-1840" (hdm0011), by Nathan Bangs:

We have already seen that the Texas mission was placed under the superintendence of Dr. Martin Ruter. Here he ended his days. He commenced his itinerant career in the early days of Methodism in New England, when he was only sixteen years of age, and was admitted on trial in the New York conference in 1801. In 1804 he went as a missionary to Montreal, in Lower Canada, where he gave great satisfaction to the people by the diligence and ability with which he discharged his duties. Though young in the ministry, he evinced a thorough acquaintance with the truths of the gospel, having applied himself with great assiduity to study, and particularly to the study of the Bible...

He entered upon the hazardous enterprise of carrying the gospel and establishing Methodism in the republic of Texas in the month of October, 1837, and soon laid plans for systematizing the labor and enlarging the boundaries of that extensive vineyard of the Lord, so is to comprehend as much as practicable within the several circuits which were formed by him and his colleagues in the missionary work. In these various labors he was incessantly engaged from the time he entered Texas until sickness compelled him to desist. His sufferings were somewhat

protracted and severe. He bore them, however, with patience and submission to the divine will, and finally ended his days upon earth in peace, and the hope of eternal life.

Divine grace had done much for him. Having been made a partaker of justification by faith in Jesus Christ in the days of his youth, and having entered upon the duties of an itinerant minister ere he had attained maturity of age and experience, he won for himself, by the blessing of God on his exertions, the character of a faithful servant of God, living and dying in the confidence and affection of his brethren. As a preacher of righteousness he was "in doctrine uncorrupt," "in labors abundant," and in success considerable. His forsaking the inviting fields of literature and science, in which he had moved with so much ease to himself and satisfaction to his friends, to encounter the hardships and privations of a missionary of the cross in the wilds of Texas, evinces at once the strength of his faith, and of his sincere devotion to the cause of Christ.

He was now about fifty-two years of age, was surrounded with domestic comforts, lived in the midst of his friends, and might therefore have spent the remainder of his days in comparative ease and comfort; but the wants of the sons and daughters of Texas came up before him, accompanied with those impressive motives which, to a heart like his, were irresistible; and he obeyed the call and ran to the rescue of those who were ready to "perish for lack of knowledge." He went; and before he fell, he had established a reputation among the people of Texas as imperishable as the town of "Rutersville," which name was designed to perpetuate the memory of the man who sacrificed his life for their salvation.

* * *

K -- THE MEMORY OF HOLY ANN

This account is taken from "An Irish Saint, The Life Story of Ann Preston, Known Also As 'Holy Ann'" (hdm0016) by Helen E. Bingham:

Rev. John Salmon, in writing a few reminiscences of this remarkable life, opens with the statement, "The memory of the just is blessed," Prov. 10: 7. "This was the verse impressed on my mind as I thought of our departed friend and sister in the Lord, Ann Preston, familiarly known by the very suggestive name, 'Holy Ann,' or as the Catholics would say, Saint Ann -- for she was a saint in the truest sense of that word.

"The memory of her prayer life has often been a benediction to me; so intimate was she with God that when one heard her pray there came a feeling of nearness to the Author of our very being, reminding us of what Moses said when he asked the question, 'What nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?' --Deut. 4: 7. I have often heard Ann, when speaking in public, quote a passage of Scripture that was brought to her mind in the following way: The passage or verse she wanted seemed not to be in her memory just at the time she wished to give it out. She would stop and say aloud, 'Father, give me that verse,' and the next instant would exclaim, 'I have got it,' and then she would repeat it verbatim, so that a person could tell at once that our sister was living in constant communion with God. Like Enoch of old, she walked with God.

"I remember on one occasion at a Salvation Army camp meeting, a number of us were on the platform when Ann was speaking out of the fullness of her heart. I happened to turn around to my next neighbor, the (late) honored and lamented William Gooderham, and I saw great tears rolling down his cheeks as that dear woman poured forth her torrents of living truth from a heart overflowing with love and praise to our God. I cannot at this time recall her words, but they were words of wonderful power sent forth by the Holy Spirit which indwelt that feeble body of clay which was lighted up by the life Divine so that her face used to shine with joy and gladness.

* * *

L -- THE MEMORY OF A PRAYING FATHER

This final story comes from "Nuggets Of Gold" (hdm0521) by George Brubaker Kulp:

The children were playing "Hide The Handkerchief." I sat and watched them a long while, and heard no unkind word, and saw scarcely a rough movement; but after a little while Jack, whose turn it was to hide the handkerchief, went to the opposite end of the room, and tried to secrete it under a big chair. Freddie immediately walked over to him, and said in a low, gentle voice, "Please, Jack, don't hide the handkerchief there; that is father's kneeling-place."

"Father's Kneeling-Place!" It seemed like sacred ground to me, as it did to little Freddie; and, by and by, as the years roll on, and this place shall see the father no more forever, will not the memory of this hallowed spot leave an impression upon the young hearts that time and change can never efface, and remain as one of the most precious memories of the old home? Oh, if there were only a "father's kneeling-place" in every family! The mother kneels in her chamber, and teaches the little ones the morning and evening prayer, but the father's presence is often wanting. Business and the cares of life engross all his time, and though the mother longs for his assistance and co-operation in the religious education of the children, he thinks it is a woman's work and leaves it all to her.

* * *

IN CONCLUSION

In Revelation 14:13 we read: -- "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

This little compilation certainly illustrates how that one way the works of the dead in Christ follow them is through their memory by those still living. I wonder? -- How many faithful saints of God will be happily surprised to discover that their posthumous influence for Jesus added SO GREATLY to their Heavenly Reward? Through the preservation and use of "the memory of the just," is not God, even now, still adding to the rewards of those who lived for Him on earth and "loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 12:11)? I believe He IS.

I have related "How God HAS Blessed The Memory Of The Just," but happily that blessing of shall never cease -- both from, and to, God' finally triumphant saints. Psalm 112:6 tells us that "the righteous shall be in EVERLASTING remembrance." They shall never be forgotten of God -- either in this world, or in that "world without end" which is to come -- and their rewards shall both continue and increase throughout an endless ETERNITY!

Do I hear someone shouting, HALLELUJAH!?

* * * * *

16 -- I COULD NOT BELIEVE MY EYES!

A common expression of incredulity about what one has beheld is: "I could not believe my eyes!" But the fact is -- I SHOULD NOT ALWAYS BELIEVE MY EYES! The Good Book tells us that Christians must "walk BY FAITH, and NOT BY SIGHT" -- and this is necessary for several reasons -- one of them being that the human eye can be fooled: -- Optical Illusions and Mirages can cause one to see what does not exist in reality. When the anti-Christ comes on the scene, among other things, he will dazzle and deceive the human eye "with.. lying wonders."

As a lad, I recall hearing "The Sons of the Pioneers" singing a song which I suppose depicted an old miner crossing the hot, dry desert with his pack mule, "Dan":

"All day I've faced a barren waste
Without the taste of water -- cool water,
Old Dan and I with throats burned dry
And souls that cry for water
Cool, clear, water."

After the old miner spotted what appeared to be a pool of cool, clear water, and says to his pack mule:

"Dan, can ya see that big, green tree?
Where the water's runnin' free
And it's waitin' there for me and you?"

But, to his dismay he finally discovered that it was an optical illusion a tormenting mirage! -- and the old miner says:

"Keep a-movin, Dan, don'tcha listen to him, Dan
He's a devil, not a man,
And he spreads the burning sand with water!"

Probably many have died of dehydration in deserts after in futility chasing after a mirage that appeared to be an oasis with thirst-quenching water.

The following is a item that I have long published. I have altered the spelling of "Peary" to what I think may be the correct spelling of "Perry" in the first story:

* * *

MIRAGE MAGIC

Things are often not as they appear. What you see can fool you. Optical illusions and mirages can cause you to see what is not there, or what is a grossly distorted view of things. Christians should beware of jumping to conclusions too quickly, even after they have seen something. What you see can lead you to believe something about another which is really contrary to the facts. Consider the following stories about mirages:

The American Museum of Natural History once spent \$300,000 and wrecked a ship on an expedition sent out to explore a land which turned out to be nothing more than a mirage. It was because of a "discovery" by Perry, when returning from his 1906 Arctic expedition. Twice Perry had seen "the white summits of a distant land, above the ice horizon." He called this new found land mass Crocker Land, and the excited Museum organized an expedition under Donald MacMillan to explore it.

The ship was wrecked on the trip North, but later MacMillan traveled out on the ice far beyond where Crocker Land should have been. It wasn't there. MacMillan suspected now that Perry had been fooled by a mirage. He returned to the point where Perry had seen the supposed land. "The day was clear," MacMillan reports, "and there the land was. Our glasses brought it out so clearly that we might have staked our lives on its existence."

That mirages have been responsible for much faulty map making seems incredible, but I came close enough to mapping one to understand how it happens. We were traversing an unexplored part of the Gobi Desert. The temperature stood at 145 degrees F. From a slight rise we saw in the distance a beautiful lake, apparently a half mile in diameter. At the left was a small island, thick with vegetation. A flock of birds were skimming over the surface of the water. "You had better sketch the outlines from here," I said to Major Roberts, our topographer. "I'll go on to the lake."

As I went down the slope the lake became less distinct. The island wavered, then disappeared. The birds proved to be a herd of antelope, all but their heads obscured in the stratum of shimmering heat waves lying on the sand. I drove back to where Roberts was working. The lake appeared again, perfect in every detail. Roberts wouldn't believe it was a mirage until he had gone down to see for himself.

A few days later we were sitting in our tents. One of the men walked out 100 yards. He seemed to be wading into water. First his ankles disappeared, then he was in up to his knees. Actually he was wading into a heated stratum of air lying two feet thick on the burning plain, shimmering so that it was almost opaque.

Most mirages occur when layers of air of different density are super-imposed. Also, somewhere on the earth's surface, perhaps a few miles, a hundred or even a thousand miles away, there must be objects similar to those we see in the mirage. The light waves are bent and refracted irregularly instead of traveling a normal course as they pass from these objects through the layers of air. It is much the same as when you thrust a stick into clear water. The part below the surface appears to be bent, because the water is denser than the air and the light waves are bent as they pass through the unequal media.

The type of mirage that deceived Perry is known as a "looming." It is most frequent upon the water and it makes objects appear to be raised above their natural elevations. The kind seen on deserts and plains, creating phantom lakes, is called "inferior." In the Nubian desert one may travel the whole day apparently encircled by lakes which accurately reflect the mountains round the horizon. Usually the inferior mirage varies with atmospheric conditions but a few are permanent, being identical day after day. In southeastern Arizona, the highway crosses the bed of an ancient lake, now bone dry. Yet motorists driving along it see a broad sweep of sparkling water which recedes before them and then closes in behind them.

Another type of mirage, the "lateral," makes objects appear to be displaced sideways. It is not often seen, but has been known to cause a vessel cruising along a mountainous coast to exhibit the strange spectacle of dividing into two identical craft which sail away in opposite directions.

In the even more startling "superior" mirage, the erect or inverted images of objects are seen suspended above the horizon. A ship actually beyond the bulge of the earth may be seen sailing along the sky, its image usually so clear that the details can be made out with a telescope. During the Crimean War, the whole British fleet was once seen inverted at considerable height above the horizon. From the lower harbor of New York, the city has been seen projected into the air in duplicate, "standing on its own head," as one observer put it.

In 1869 the city of Paris appeared to distant observers suspended upside down in the sky. In 1900 Parisians saw a second Eiffel Tower inverted on top of the original. A weird case of "superior" mirages is recorded of a ship that was expected to arrive in New York from England during Colonial days. One afternoon after a violent storm she was observed floating in the air, every spar represented so clearly that there was no question of the identity of the vessel. That vision, however, was the last ever seen of her.

During the Franco-Prussian War, a number of scattered and independent observers in northern Sweden and Norway saw mirage armies marching through the air, equipped like the real ones which were fighting a few hundred miles to the south. Mirages have, in fact, played their role in the fortunes of war. In 1916 the British were attacking the Turks on the hot plains of Mesopotamia. G. E. Hubbard, a member of General Maud's force, tells of the incident:

"Our men had reached the Turkish trenches and put the Turks to flight. The enemy provided a splendid target for our artillery. A gunboat was lying in the river and the men on it were watching the proceedings when they were surprised to see our guns stop firing, although the Turks were still within range. It transpired that to the eyes of the gunners, on the desert level,

the target had disappeared into a mirage. Fortunately the Turks stopped firing for the same reason." -- Roy Chapman Andrews, Reader's Digest, December 1938

* * *

Both the human eye and the human mind can be deceived. Before GPS (Global Positioning Systems) it was not uncommon to hear of those who were lost in wooded mountains whose inward sense of direction told them that when their compass pointed North it was mistaken -- perhaps thinking that it was exactly 180 degrees backward -- when, in fact, the compass was right, and it was their own, mistaken, sense of direction was 180 degrees backward!

The world has often said, "SEEING IS BELIEVING!" -- but often the believing that comes through seeing is a believing of what is not so! The Christian's faith must be in God's Word: -- the only Reliable Compass that points the soul in the right direction spiritually, and the Only Window Of Perception of things as they really are spiritually.

In John 20:29 Jesus told Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." One reason why they are blessed who believe God's Word without seeing is because SEEING IS OFTEN DECEIVING! Selah.

* * * * *

17 -- NEVER SAY "THANKS"!
By DVM

You should never say, "Thanks"!
For there may be some cranks
Who might think you're sincere
If that word they should hear.

So be sure to keep mum
Lest you sound sorta dumb
If that word you relate
When you are an ingrate.

With a heaping big plateful
Never say you are grateful;
Just gobble it down
With a burp and a frown!

After all, it's your RIGHT!
To have all that's in SIGHT!
And to GET and not GIVE
So in comfort to live!

While all others must work,
It's your priv'ledge to shirk,
And to be "on the take"
From what all others make!

If denied your appeal,
Then, just go out and steal!
Others must be forgiving,
For they owe you a living.

For whatever you yearn,
Take, and never return;
And as long as you live,
Bite the hand that doth give.

The word THANKS never utter!
You're no bum in the gutter!
Just live "High on the Hog"
Without turning a cog!

And complain when denied
That folks wounded your pride!
And most loudly declare
That they owe you a share!

From the wealth they have earned
Poor, YOU must not be spurned!
If they just won't hand out,
It's your right to go pout!

Never say, Thanks a Lot!
For the Food Stamps that bought
All the meat on your plate;
Without grace that you ate.

Keep this proud attitude;
Never show gratitude,
Keep a stiff upper lip;
Never dole out a tip!

You are owed a free ride
Till the day you have died.
In the best limousine
And the finest cuisine!

But you won't live in Glory

With such a Life-Story!
And with saints you won't dwell;
You will languish in Hell!

The Unthankful while living
On earth without giving,
Shall never abide
Where the Thankful reside!

If you're Thankful, then SAY IT!
And your debt -- always PAY IT!
If you think Heaven's free,
Then it won't be for thee!

For in Heaven to live,
On this earth you must give
Both yourself and your Thanks
In the unselfish ranks.

Give to God and to others,
Give to sisters and brothers,
And to all that have need
From YOUR larder to feed.

It's the Thankful and Giving
That with Christ shall be Living;
Only THEY get free grace,
And in Heaven a place.

Freely ye have received
If on Christ you believed,
But God's grace is not cheap;
What you sow, you must reap.

Be ye Thankful, says God,
If in Heaven you'd trod.
You must give to the End
To have Christ as your Friend.

Give your Thanks, and your All
And you never shall fall!
Dwelling where all is pure,
And forever secure!

* * * * *

18 -- THAT'S THE WAY THEY WANT THEM!

This little article, while not primarily religious, does speak of things that should concern every Conservative Christian in America. And, please do not let the humor cause you to think that this writer is making light of the truth behind the humor -- FAR FROM IT!

Someone sent me an humorous item the other day that told of a woman at a restaurant who ordered a Breakfast Special for \$1.99 that included eggs.

"I'll take the Special," she told the waitress, "but I don't want the eggs."

"Then it will cost you \$2.49," replied the waitress, who explained that the other items in the Breakfast Special, when purchased as side-orders would total that amount.

"Well, then I'll take the Special with eggs," replied the woman.

"How do you want the eggs?" asked the waitress.

"Uncooked, and in the shell!" replied the woman -- and she got them that way and took them home.

It struck me that that's just the way today's Liberals in the Senate want the next two Supreme Court Justices: -- UNCOOKED, AND IN THE SHELL! -- so they can fix them to be just the kind of Judges they want them to be!

(A) No, they don't want them to be "HARDBOILED" JUSTICES! -- They don't want Justices that are hard on crime and criminals, hard in their stand against abortion, hard in their position against so-called Gay-Rights, hard in their positions against the entire Liberal Agenda, and hard in their position FOR The Right To Life, the Right to be Religious (especially as a Christian), hard in their position FOR everything on the Conservative Agenda. NO SIR! -- They will not take them that way!

(B) Yes, they would like to be able to make them "OVER-EASY" JUSTICES! -- over-easy on everything evil and bad for this nation, and over-easy in being persuaded to entirely abandon their supposedly "moderate" position on everything and swing over-easy into the Liberal Camp!

(C) Yes, they would like to be able to make them "SCRAMBLED" JUSTICES -- Justices whose decisions (like the one on Property Rights just rendered) are so confusing that nobody really knows what they mean -- including the Justices themselves!

(D) Yes, they would like to be able to make them "SOFT-BOILED" JUSTICES -- Justices who are soft-hearted toward Serial Murderers and Brutal Criminals of every sort -- Justices who will allow teenagers to commit multiple murders with impunity, and go home free because they were not quite 18 yet! -- Justices who pity pedophiles and pad the cells of those who DO stay in prison with all of the comforts of a Luxury Motel, along with free Medical

Attention and free Legal Defense, even when their repeated claims cause the cost of their legal defense to exceed the life-income of many hardworking taxpayers. Yes, they want "Soft-Boiled" Justices, who would be better named "Injustices"!

(E) Yes, they would like to be able to make them "POACHED" JUSTICES -- and of course in this case I speak of the word "poach" in this shade of its meaning: "To take or appropriate something unfairly or illegally." They would like Justices who will "appropriate" rights for Liberals that do not exist in the Constitution. They would like "Poached" Justices who can be bought for a price, and who will sell their integrity to please the likes of the Kennedy and Kerry crowd!

SO LISTEN UP! MR. PRESIDENT! LISTEN UP, YOU "OUT OF THE MAINSTREAM" CONSERVATIVES (even though you are in the majority)!

WE LIBERALS WANT THE NEXT TWO SUPREME COURT NOMINEES TO BE "UNCOOKED, AND IN THE SHELL"!

YA HEAR NOW?!! Don't try foisting off on us some judge who is an "Originalist," who believes in sticking with the strict interpretation of the U.S. Constitution, as it was written by those ancient old framers of the document who had no idea what our needs would be in modern America!

No Sir, -- You had better nominate a couple of Judicial Egg-Heads that we can fix up to be Over-Easy, Scrambled, Soft-Boiled, or Poachers! We'll take the Special, but only OUR WAY!

If the Judicial Egg-Heads you put up for the Supreme Court are not so's we can fix 'em the way we want them, then LOOK OUT! -- we're gonna Filibuster and Shut Down the Senate! And your nominees will stand no more chance of being placed on the Supreme Court than a hen can hatch wooden eggs! Mark our words! -- and Remember, we've got enough Liberal Republicans like John McCain on our side to make it happen!

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19 -- THE RECOMPENSE OF RAPA NUI (EASTER ISLAND)

Compiled and Edited By Duane V. Maxey

INTRODUCTORY FACTS ABOUT RAPA NUI (EASTER ISLAND)

Before embarking particularly upon my subject, "The Recompence of Rapa Nui," let me first present some of the facts about Rapa Nui, more commonly known as Easter Island.

ITS LOCATION: -- Rapa Nui (aka Easter Island) is considered the most isolated inhabited island on the planet, located approximately 2,680 miles northwest of Santiago, Chile. The nearest inhabited island (Pitcairn) is almost 1,200 miles to the west. The precise coordinates on the global map are: -- 27 degrees 07 south, and 109 degrees 22 west.

ITS STATUS AND HISTORY: -- Rapa Nui (Easter Island) is a province of Chile, having been annexed by Chile in 1888. It was discovered on Easter Sunday, 1722, by Admiral Jacob Roggeveen, thus the common name. It's famous for the huge, prehistoric stone statues that dot the hills, which to this day remain a popular tourist attraction.

ITS CITIZENSHIP: -- The Rapanui people have Chilean citizenship. Most Islanders over the age of 15 years have at least visited the "Conti" (South American Continent) and some have lived there for some time attending school and university. There is some sensitivity locally about the distinction between "Chileans" and Rapanui, those with family and background on the island and those whose roots lie elsewhere in Chile.

ITS SIZE: -- The total land area of Rapa Nui is 166 square kilometers = 64 square miles.

ITS MOST SIGNICANT TOWN: -- Hanga Roa

ITS CLIMATE: -- Local weather is buffered by a cool ocean current which keeps the average annual temperature just over 70 degrees. Some level of rain falls over 200 days a year.

ITS TERRAIN -- Rapa Nui is a grassy, volcanic island, that rises to a high plateau pitted with numerous craters, complete with lakes. The coastline is mostly rugged, with few sandy beaches.

ITS LANGUAGES: -- Spanish is the most commonly spoken language, with Rapanui, an Eastern Polynesian tongue related to Cook Islands Maori, being the mode of daily communication for most Rapanui. Owing to extensive contacts and the importance of tourism, some Rapanui and their outsider born employees speak English, some French and German.

ITS RELIGION: -- Roman Catholicism is the prevailing religion.

ITS CURRENCY: -- The official currency the Chilean Peso, but the US Dollar is also commonly used.

THE POPULATION TODAY: -- The population of Easter Island is 3,010. Perhaps a third of this figure are temporary residents, being public servants and their families, who are employed in the armed forces and various public institutions. The remainder are native Rapanui and their spouses, some of whom were born on Mainland Chile, called "El Conti", or elsewhere. Several hundred Rapanui live off their island, mainly in other parts of Chile, but also in North America, Europe and notably about one hundred in Tahiti.

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THE RECOMPENSE OF RAPA NUI (EASTER ISLAND)
Compiled and Edited By Duane V. Maxey

"Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 26:1).

"They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols" (Isaiah 45:16). "They became fools, and changed the glory of... God into an image made like to corruptible man... receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (Rom. 1:22-23, 27).

God hates idolatry, and those who persist in worshipping idols eventually "receive in themselves that recompense of their error" that is sure to spring forth from their particular form of idolatry. The history of "Easter Island" -- otherwise known as "Rapa Nui" -- is quite a striking illustration of this truth.

"Easter Island" was discovered by Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen, on Easter Sunday, April 5, 1722 -- thus inheriting its name. Later, in the 1860's, it was dubbed "Rapa Nui" (Great Rapa) by Polynesian sailors because it reminded them of the Island of Rapa in French Polynesia. Sometimes the two words are seen joined together as "Rapanui". "Rapa Nui" or "Easter Island" is quite small, about the size of Staten Island, roughly triangular in shape, and has an area of only 64 square miles. It is said to be "the worlds most isolated scrap of habitable land" and "the most remote spot on earth."

It is located in the Pacific Ocean more than 2,000 miles west of the nearest continent (South America), 1,400 miles from even the nearest habitable island (Pitcairn). The map of Easter Island shows that the terrain is dominated by volcanoes that rise about 1000 ft above the sea level and 3,000 ft above the sea floor. Its subtropical location and latitude -- at 27 degrees south, it is approximately as far below the equator as Houston is north of it -- help give it a rather mild climate, while its volcanic origins make its soil fertile. In theory, this combination of blessings 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: "We originally, from a further distance, have considered the said Easter Island as sandy; the reason for that is this, that we counted as sand the withered grass, hay, or other scorched and burnt vegetation, because its wasted appearance could give no other impression than of a singular poverty and barrenness."

The island Roggeveen saw was a grassland without a single tree or bush over ten feet high. Modern botanists have identified only 47 species of higher plants native to Easter, most of them grasses, sedges, and ferns. The list includes just two species of small trees and two of woody shrubs.

With such flora, the islanders Roggeveen encountered had no source of real firewood to warm themselves during Easter's cool, wet, windy winters. Their native animals included nothing larger than insects, not even a single species of native bat, land bird, land snail, or lizard. For domestic animals, they had only chickens. European visitors throughout the eighteenth and

early nineteenth centuries estimated Easter's human population at about 2,000, a modest number considering the island's fertility.

As Captain James Cook recognized during his brief visit in 1774, the islanders were Polynesians (a Tahitian man accompanying Cook was able to converse with them). Yet despite the Polynesians' well-deserved fame as a great seafaring people, the Easter Islanders who came out to Roggeveen's and Cook's ships did so by swimming or paddling canoes that Roggeveen described as "bad and frail." Their craft, he wrote, were "put together with manifold small planks and light inner timbers, which they cleverly stitched together with very fine twisted threads... But as they lack the knowledge and particularly the materials for caulking and making tight the great number of seams of the canoes, these are accordingly very leaky, for which reason they are compelled to spend half the time in bailing." The canoes, only ten feet long, held at most two people, and only three or four canoes were observed on the entire island.

With such flimsy craft, Polynesians could never have colonized Easter from even the nearest island, nor could they have traveled far offshore to fish. The islanders Roggeveen met were totally isolated, unaware that other people existed. Investigators in all the years since his visit have discovered no trace of the islanders' having any outside contacts: not a single Easter Island rock or product has turned up elsewhere, nor has anything been found on the island that could have been brought by anyone other than the original settlers or the Europeans. Yet the people living on Easter claimed memories of visiting the uninhabited Sala y Gomez reef 260 miles away, far beyond the range of the leaky canoes seen by Roggeveen. How did the islanders' ancestors reach that reef from Easter, or reach Easter from anywhere else?

Easter Island's most famous feature is its huge stone statues, more than 200 of which once stood on massive stone platforms lining the coast. At least 700 more, in all stages of completion, were abandoned in quarries or on ancient roads between the quarries and the coast, as if the carvers and moving crews had thrown down their tools and walked off the job. Most of the erected statues were carved in a single quarry and then somehow transported as far as six miles -- despite heights as great as 33 feet and weights up to 82 tons. The abandoned statues, meanwhile, were as much as 65 feet tall and weighed up to 270 tons. The stone platforms were equally gigantic: up to 500 feet long and 10 feet high, with facing slabs weighing up to 10 tons.

Roggeveen himself quickly recognized the problem the statues posed: "The stone images at first caused us to be struck with astonishment because we could not comprehend how it was possible that these people, who are devoid of heavy thick timber for making any machines, as well as strong ropes, nevertheless had been able to erect such images." Roggeveen might have added that the islanders had no wheels, no draft animals, and no source of power except their own muscles. How did they transport the giant statues for miles, even before erecting them? To deepen the mystery, the statues were still standing in 1770, but by 1864 all of them had been pulled down, by the Easter islanders themselves. [Quite obviously then, many of them have now been set back up. -- DVM] Why then did they carve them in the first place? And why did they stop? The statues imply a society very different from the one Roggeveen saw in 1722. Their sheer number and size suggest a population much larger than 2,000 people. What became of everyone? Discoveries in recent decades have helped answer some questions.

Easter Island is a truly fascinating place with a quite unique history. It was home to an amazing culture of Polynesian settlers who developed a "statue cult". These settlers arrived in Easter Island after an epic voyage in about AD 400. The Easter Island statues (or moai) [The proper name for them is "Idols". -- DVM] are 2-10 meters high and each weigh between 20-50 tons. There are between 800 and 1,000 statues placed around the island -- gazing out to sea. [I was unable to get the straight of this; one other writer said that most of them faced inward, supposedly to protect the island's dwelling-places. -- DVM]

We can reconstruct much of the history of Easter Island from historical records. For example, we know from pollen records that the island was covered with large palm trees, suitable for making ropes. The original settlers were part of an epic expansion of Polynesian peoples across the Pacific Ocean, originating near Indonesia and radiating across the Pacific in waves of exploration and colonization. By AD 800, these people had colonized a vast area, corresponding to about one-fourth of the world's circumference. How did they do it?

The Polynesian explorers used large catamarans, laden with people, animals, seeds, etc. -- everything that would be needed to start up a new island. The vessels were made of wooden planks, stitched together using ropes made from coconut trees. Two canoes, up to 100 feet long, were lashed together and a superstructure, or bridge, built across the two, forming the catamaran shape. With these vessels and their detailed understanding of primitive navigation -- winds, waves, stars, sun and bird activity, they discovered and populated the islands of the Pacific.

On arrival at Easter Island, the Polynesians would have celebrated at finding such a beautiful and bounteous island. They brought sweet potato seeds (probably deriving from trips to South America), taro, and other foodstuffs to use for agriculture. They also brought with them the Polynesian rat as a food resource. It is estimated that the first party had about 40-50 people. They began to develop a successful culture that lasted over 1,000 years. The population initially remained relatively low until AD 1100, then doubled each century until 1600 when about 10,000 Easter Islanders inhabited the island. This corresponds to a population growth rate of about 0.3% per year (a doubling time of 230 years. This growth rate is typical of pre-industrial developing countries. After about 1680, a decline set in of about 2.3% per year. When Dutch traders discovered Easter Island in 1722 (200 years after Magellan's voyage passed through the area without seeing land), there were probably about 6,000 people. By 1786, Jean Francois de Galaup, who visited the island, estimated a population of 2,000. By 1877, the population of Easter Island was 111 people!

What happened at Easter Island? The human story at Easter Island is one of rags-to-riches and then to-rags again. The people there simply ran out of resources sufficient to sustain their culture. The environment was degraded by human activity to the point that it could no longer sustain a large population -- and there was nowhere else to go.

The evidence for this comes from many sources. There is evidence, for example, that small pox (possibly brought back to Easter Island by fleeing slaves from Peru) decimated the population. Certainly deforestation occurred on a massive, complete scale. The pollen records show the palm (rope tree) forest gradually disappearing. The Polynesian rats would have eaten the palm seeds, making it hard for the forest to naturally regenerate. The trees would have been

felled for lumber to make buildings, to clear land for crops and to make ropes that were needed to move the statues around the landscape from their volcanic quarry to their final resting sites.

The trees would also have been harvested to build the canoes needed to obtain food from the offshore islets. More and more mouths to feed could have led, ultimately, to a collapse of the fishing potential and, possibly, to a reduction of the sea-bird nesting population used for eggs. Significantly, archaeological finds dated to the 1500's show the presence (for the first time) of obsidian weapons -- warfare came to Easter Island, probably due to increased societal pressures, competition for land, scarce food and other natural resources.

While early visitors in 1722 did not mention any fallen statues, by 1774, when Captain Cook visited the islands, numerous statues had been toppled, indicating inter-tribal struggles. Although we will never know the full story, it is safe to say that there was famine, warfare, collapse of civilization and devastating population decline in Easter Island. A limited resource base and overpopulation led to disaster.

[From one source, I gathered that one of the big reasons that the land was denuded of virtually all of its trees was that they were cut down to use in moving the quarried stone idols to their various places. Thus, their passion for idolatry directly contributed to the destruction of all the trees on the island, which in turn brought on famine -- and famine brought on CANNIBALISM which became rampant on the island -- perhaps part of the inevitable curse falling upon its idolatrous inhabitants. -- DVM]

On this subject, one writer stated: Every Easter Islander knows that his ancestors were kai-tangata, 'man-eaters'. Some make jokes about it, others take offense at any allusion to this custom which has become in their eyes barbarous and shameful. According to Roussel, cannibalism did not disappear until after the introduction of Christianity. Shortly before this, the natives are said to have eaten a number of men, including two Peruvian traders. Cannibal feasts were held in secluded spots, and women and children were rarely admitted. The natives told Zumbohm that the fingers and toes were the choicest morsels.

The captives destined to be eaten were shut up in huts in front of the sanctuaries. There they were kept until the moment when they were sacrificed to the gods. The Easter Islanders' cannibalism was not exclusively a religious rite or the expression of an urge for revenge: it was also induced by a simple liking for human flesh that could impel a man to kill for no other reason than his desire for fresh meat. (Man was the only large mammal whose flesh was available) Women and children were the principal victims of these inveterate cannibals. The reprisals that followed such crimes were all the more violent because an act of cannibalism committed against the member of a family was a terrible insult to the whole family. As among the ancient Maoris, those who had taken part in the meal were entitled to show their teeth to the relatives of the victim and say, 'Your flesh has stuck between my teeth'. Such remarks were capable of rousing those to whom they were addressed to a murderous rage.

[Thus, can we not see that the idolatrous inhabitants of "Rapa Nui" received in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet: Idolatry led to famine, and eventually famine led to cannibalism, and cannibalism led to bloody revenge! and, in effect, Idolatry

destroyed its worshippers. -- I shall conclude this compilation with some material pertaining to "Rapa Nui" or "Easter Island" in modern times. -- DVM]

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20 -- RATTLESNAKE RIGHTEOUSNESS

A Poem By Duane V. Maxey

Explanation: This was written to be first published for the Power Point file, "Rattlesnake Righteousness.pps." The background for the text contains a sign-picture that reads as follows: "RATTLESNAKES -- Rattlesnakes may be found in this area. They are important members of the natural community. They will not attack, but if disturbed, or cornered, they will defend themselves. GIVE THEM DISTANCE AND RESPECT." The first 13 lines of the poem are on 13 separate screens, with the line of text was accompanied with the sound of a rattlesnake shaking his rattlers. The 14th screen contains the last 3 lines of the poem, and is accompanied with a portion of "The Hallelujah Chorus.

Line 01 -- Turn up the sound and you will hear the rattlesnake we all to fear;
Line 02 -- The sign above, if you will read, relates Environmental Creed.
Line 03 -- The Rattler is "IMPORTANT" now, so when you meet him, take a bow,
Line 04 -- And when you do that genuflect, just give him distance and RESPECT!
Line 05 -- Kill unborn babies? -- That you MAY! -- But Rattlers you must NEVER SLAY!
Line 06 -- They're so "IMPORTANT" -- you must see -- in natural community.
Line 07 -- They feed on rodents in their nests, and certain other kinds of pests.
Line 08 -- They maintain balance on the earth! They're need much, and of great worth!
Line 09 -- Kill one, and you are not KIND! -- and if you're caught, you will be FINED!
Line 10 -- It's RIGHTEOUS to protect a SNAKE, but unborn HUMAN LIFE -- JUST TAKE!
Line 11 -- Yes, BABIES you may just ABORT, BUT KILL A SNAKE, AND YOU'RE IN COURT!
Line 12 -- Such are, by Fallen Man, the LAWS, which many think are without FLAWS.
Line 13 -- The world, they have turned up-side-down! and under foot they trod Christ's Crown!
Line 14 -- But Christ will turn things right-side-up, When He pours out his wrath-filled cup,
Line 15 -- And when He splits the Eastern Skies, He'll say these men -- so Serpent-wise!
Line 16 -- HE is earth's Savior, and not they! This shall be known on that GREAT DAY!

* * * * *

21 -- HIGHLY THOUGHT OF -- BY THEMSELVES

Romans 12:3 -- "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, NOT TO THINK OF HIMSELF MORE HIGHLY THAN HE OUGHT TO THINK; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Ever since the sin of Adam, conceit has been part of the fallen nature of man, and it has been recognized and noted in various ways and words:

"There is no conceit in his family HE has it all!"

"He struts like a peacock."

"He is a legend in his own mind."

"He thinks the world revolves around him."

"I'd make a million if I could buy him for what he is worth and sell him for what he thinks he is worth."

It is said that President LBJ told those under him, "There's ants around here, and there's elephANTS, and I'M THE ONLY ELEPHANT!" Quite a statement to make for a Democratic President, using an elephant as part of his comparison, when an elephant is the symbol of the Republican party! But beyond that, I think it may well have revealed that he was one of those "Highly Thought Of -- By Themselves."

Whatever the case about LBJ in the above, down through the ages people of all parties, all creeds, all races, all nationalities, and all ages, have thought more highly of themselves than they ought. Though not always so, perhaps this tendency has been most noticeable among those of rank and wealth. If I recall correctly, I once heard Jaqueline Kennedy's daughter Caroline say during a radio interview that her mother would tell her children: "Remember who you ARE." JFK's widowed wife apparently wanted her children to dignify the "Highly Thought Of" name of the family. There are legitimate applications of that advice, but it is sinful and wrong when "Remembering who you ARE" involves the snobbish notion that you are better than others because of your social position or your wealth.

There is a whale of a lot of snobbery out there among the wealthy. No wonder St. Paul told Timothy: -- "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17). No wonder also, that we read in Proverbs 18:11 -- "THE RICH MAN'S WEALTH IS his strong city, and AS AN HIGH WALL IN HIS OWN CONCEIT."

Those "walled up" in wealth are indeed often "welled-up" with an inflated notion of their own importance. The following is rather humorous, but makes the point:

"An 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 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.'"

Some who are not, or cannot be, inflated by their riches are self-conceited by their supposed "respectability" and think themselves to be not only a peg above all others in this world, but also too good to go to hell. Years ago I wrote and began publishing an article titled: -- "Ya Can't Get To Hellven From Here," from which I have taken the following paragraph:

I read another story something like this: A man who was not a Christian was dying, but refused to believe that hell must be his lot and said to the one who was endeavoring to help him get saved: "There must be some better place for a man of my respectability." Perhaps he realized that he did not qualify for heaven, but apparently he felt that he was too good to go to hell. It sounds like he was hoping for some place like hellven... above the torments the lake of fire while somewhat beneath the bliss of the blood-washed in the New Jerusalem.

There is a ton-load of Truth in the Bible which either deals directly with, or has a bearing upon, conceit and people who are conceited. Let us consider some other scriptures on this subject.

From the book of Esther, Haman comes to mind. Inflated with highminded notions of himself, he was inflamed when Mordecai refused to bow before him. And, when "Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?" (Esther 6:6). He thought more highly of himself than he ought, and he did reach an high place all right, but it was only to dangle from a noose! And, no doubt history would show that down through the centuries other have also hung because of highmindedness.

Nevertheless, the apostle Paul said that in the last days there would come those who are "Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4), and heady highmindedness is certainly rampant today. Turn across a radio dial for a bit and listen to talk-program hosts, and it is most likely that you will soon discover that they think more highly of their own notions than of the Word of Almighty God! As never before, our world is filled with "Heady" and "Highminded" big-mouths who think they know more than the Omniscient God! The world is flooded with those who think more highly of themselves than they ought, and like the erstwhile boxing champion, Cassius Clay (aka Mohammed Ali), many of them are not a bit hesitant to declare, "I'M THE GREATEST!"

In Acts 5:36 we read: -- "For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to BE SOMEBODY; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought."

Theudas is another who was "Highly Thought Of -- By Himself"! He wanted to be SOMEBODY, but he was "brought to nought" to such an extent that this one verse is all God bothered to note about him. He who wished to be SOMEBODY became a NOBODY. When the Soviet Union existed, the progressive history of their leaders was once described in but three words: -- "HERO, NERO, ZERO!"

I once asked a dear old preacher about what had become of his married son. He let me know that this son and his wife had gone in a direction of which he disapproved because "She wanted to BE SOMEBODY." And, when folks set out to "be somebody" they usually think that the ARE SOMEBODY, even when they are, in fact, ZEROES. In their highmindedness they cannot see how much of a "nothing" they really are. In Galatians 6:3, Paul wrote: -- "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

Sometimes, the self-conceit of Human Zeroes would be funny, if it were not so repugnant. I have long published the following in the 2700-plus Sermon Illustration collection:

* * *

I'd Better Take Over

A noted brain surgeon, Dr. Bronson Ray, was taking a stroll when he saw a boy on a scooter smash head-first into a tree. Realizing that the boy was seriously injured, the doctor told a bystander to call an ambulance. As he proceeded to administer first aid, a boy not much older than the injured one nudged through the crowd that had gathered and said to Dr. Ray, "I'd better take over now, sir. I'm a Boy Scout and I know first aid."

As ridiculous as that sounds, it's no worse than someone in the church trying to do something for which someone else is better qualified.

* * *

This illustration is a natural lead into the following verse: -- "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrefes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not" (3 John 1:9). This man was another who was "Highly Thought Of -- By Himself." I looked up the Greek meaning of his name, and "Diotrefes" means "Jove-Nourished." Here was a professed Christian whose name tagged him as one nourished by the mythical, Roman god Jove, and who entertained the myth that he was qualified to be the "Bell-Sheep" of the flock -- when he was, in fact the "Billy Goat" of the flock who butted in where and when he should have butted out! He thought himself a Hero, he became a Nero, and thus made himself a Zero in God's Book!

Another verse dealing directly with this subject is Romans 12:16 -- "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."

Those "Highly Thought Of -- By Themselves" not only imagine that they are "King Of The Hill" but often think they are the "Head Of The Class" -- when, in fact, they should be sitting upon the "Dunce Stool"! A self-imagined Somebody is generally a "Know It All" as well. Let me couple together two of St. Paul's verses in my assertion that "Somebodies" are generally "Know It Alls":

"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."
"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know"
(Gal. 6:3 and 1 Cor. 8:2). Those two verses fit together so smoothly it almost seems like the
apostle might have said them in the same breath.

A "SOMEBODY" who is "NOTHING" and a "KNOW IT ALL" who "KNOWS
NOTHING" -- What pitiful, but proud combination -- but often that's it, "in a nutshell" -- and the
"Nut" has surrounded himself with such an hard shell of haughty highmindedness that nobody
can crack into his conceit and reveal to him what a Zero and what a Duncie he really is.

"Down by the station, early in the morning,
See the little Puffer-Billies all in a row."

But not all of the "Puffer-Billies" are "down at the station." Many of them are "down at
the Church" as well. That's no doubt why there are 6 verses in the N.T. dealing with being
"puffed":

1 Corinthians 4:6 -- "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself
and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is
written, that no one of you be PUFFED UP for one against another.

1 Corinthians 4:18 -- "Now some are PUFFED UP, as though I would not come to you."

1 Corinthians 4:19 -- "But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not
the speech of them which are PUFFED UP, but the power."

1 Corinthians 5:2 -- "And ye are PUFFED UP, and have not rather mourned, that he that
hath done this deed might be taken away from among you."

1 Corinthians 13:4 -- "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity
vaunteth not itself, is not PUFFED UP."

Colossians 2:18 -- "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and
worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly PUFFED UP
by his fleshly mind."

Every balloon must have an aperture through which it can become "puffed up" -- and
there is also an opening through which Satan "puffs up" people. It's called carnal pride. And
while many proud people think that it is an "open mind" that has made them such intellectual
giants and such hugely important persons, it was actually an "empty mind" -- opened to the devil
through their carnal pride that has gotten them bloated with the expansive gas of self-conceit.
One little pin-prick of Divine Truth at the Judgment will explode their inflated notions and
deflate them to their actual, and tiny size.

In light of this fact, Romans 11:20 is good advice to all who are "Highly Thought Of --
By Themselves": -- "Be not highminded, but fear."

Another fact regarding the self-important is that those who merely "seem to be somebody" but who are not, can never add anything to one who is sincerely and genuinely spiritual. Paul wrote in Galatians 2:6 -- "But of these who SEEMED TO BE SOMEWHAT, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for THEY WHO SEEMED TO BE SOMEWHAT in conference ADDED NOTHING TO ME."

This verse seems to be closely related to Proverbs 25:14 -- "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain." Clouds without rain may boom with thunderous boasting, but they will pour forth no life-giving moisture and thus they add nothing to refresh and revive the parched earth beneath them.

Joseph Smith was one who boasted himself of false gifts. I once read of how this false prophet declared that he, like Christ, could walk on water, and that he would demonstrate this to his followers. But, when they gathered at the stream or body of water upon which "Sly Old Joe" said he would walk, instead of stepping right out onto the water, he asked his followers, "Do you REALLY believe that I am able to do this?" "YES!" they replied. "Then that is as good as if I actually DID IT," he replied. The boast was not performed, and he wanted them believe that their FAITH that he could do it was all that was needed. If they DID believe him, it was FAITH IN A FRAUD who added nothing to them but one more lie and deception!

SELF-IMPORTANT NOTHINGS NEVER ADD ANYTHING to those who believe them! But, often they are very good at SUBTRACTING MUCH from the pocketbooks of those they deceive. And this is true of such people whether it be in the religious, secular, or political world.

Another person in the Bible who was "Highly Thought Of -- By Himself" is mentioned in Luke 18:11 -- "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican."

Like this Pharisee, those who think more highly of themselves than they ought generally THINK LESS OF OTHERS THAN THEY SHOULD. This runs totally contrary to the commandment set forth by the apostle Paul in Philippians 2:3 -- Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind LET EACH ESTEEM OTHERS BETTER THAN THEMSELVES."

Romans 14:10 asks two questions: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or WHY DOST THOU SET AT NOUGHT THY BROTHER?" Both questions can be answered with one, brief statement: -- "Because your attitude is Pharisaical, and not Christian."

Just as the penitent publican was "set at naught" by the disdainful Pharisee of Luke 18:11, even so Pharisaical, Professed Christians "look down" upon all who do not "line up" to their legalistic precepts and practices. But, while they are thus "looking down" on those not "lining up" to their rules they are, at the same time, "loop-holing" themselves out of the necessity of "lining up" to the weightier matters of the Law!

Jesus told the Pharisees in Mark 7:11-13 -- "Ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."

The word "Corban" in the above means "Consecrated as an Offering to God." And the gist Jesus' accusation seems to be that the money-grubbing Pharisees would insist that their followers give THEM (a religious group) the money that those followers should have given to their needy parents.

God's Word demanded that these followers of the Pharisees honor and financially aid their needy parents, but the greedy Pharisees said to their followers who would have done this, "You must give that money to US, and if you do you will be free from your obligation to help your parents because giving money to us is Corban -- Consecrated to God."

Thus, these Self-Important, Legalistic Pharisees who "looked down" upon all who would not "line up" to their rules, "Loop-holed" their followers out of the Law's demand that they aid their needy parents, so that THEY, instead of the needy parents, got the money.

I will conclude this point with the following observation: -- A religious group is sinning against God that demands money of its members to the point where those members cannot adequately and properly care for their children, their needy parents, or themselves. And, those who thus "seem to be somewhat" really "add nothing" to the cause of God by such Pharisaical demands. In fact, Legalism actually "robs God" and the needy of their just due.

An attitude of Self-Importance can creep in subtly. Therefore, some good advice to every sincere Christian is: -- "Forget who you ARE, and remember what you WERE!" That advice is reinforced by the following scriptures that make it clear that God does not want His people to forget how low, and how lowly, their condition was when they were redeemed:

Isaiah 51:1 -- "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: LOOK UNTO the rock whence ye are hewn, and to THE HOLE OF THE PIT WHENCE YE ARE DIGGED." I think this could be correctly applied thus: -- "Christian, you were not highminded in that 'hole of the pit' from which Christ dug you; and you must not become highminded after being lifted out."

The following 5 verses from Deuteronomy can be used to preach a similar message:

Deuteronomy 5:15 -- "And REMEMBER THAT THOU WAST A SERVANT IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm.."

Deuteronomy 15:15 -- "And thou shalt REMEMBER THAT THOU WAST A BONDMAN IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee..."

Deuteronomy 16:12 -- "And thou shalt REMEMBER THAT THOU WAST A BONDMAN IN EGYPT: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes."

Deuteronomy 24:18 -- "But thou shalt REMEMBER THAT THOU WAST A BONDMAN IN EGYPT, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee thence..."

Deuteronomy 24:22 -- "And thou shalt REMEMBER THAT THOU WAST A BONDMAN IN THE LAND OF EGYPT: therefore I command thee to do this thing."

Just one more paragraph in Conclusion:

Psalm 36:1-2 says that "The.. wicked.. flattereth himself in his own eyes." But, Christians must always remember that they were lowly nobodies when Christ saved them and they should still consider themselves to be nobodies in their own eyes. Thus, the apostle Paul admonished the Colossian Christians: -- "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col. 2:6). One must feel and acknowledge his, or her, own utter nothingness and unworthiness to "receive Christ" and those who are highminded cannot really "receive Christ". Therefore, those who are "Highly Thought Of -- By Themselves" can neither become Christians nor can genuine Christians who begin to take that attitude continue to "walk in Him".

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THE END