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ESCHATOLOGICAL SUBJECTS

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01 -- WHY SOME FOLKS ARE LITERALLY WRONG

"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 4:6).

"Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him IN A FIGURE" (Hebrews 11:19).

One old adage says: -- "Figures don't lie, but liars figure"! However, when it comes to "Figures" in the Bible, many "literally" interpret them wrongly! And, often this is the case, not because they wish to lie, but because of quite the opposite: -- they feel so duty-bound to interpret God's Word literally that they feel they would be lying if they interpreted any passage figuratively that does not have (as it were) "a bold-lettered label" telling them -- "THIS IS FIGURATIVE"!

There IS a danger in interpreting things figuratively in the Bible that clearly MUST be taken literally if one is to be a Fundamental Believer in the plenary inspiration of God's Book! And it is true that many rank modernists have declared such things as the Creation, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection, and even the Return of Christ, as "figurative". Such a total

departure from fundamentalism must be roundly and soundly rejected by true Believers! "Bible Figures don't lie, but those who make "Figurative Fiction" out of "Fundamental Facts" are "Figuring Wrongly" -- in gross and abominable error!

I heard of one smart-aleck, and obviously non-Orthodox, Jew who said something quite identical to the following about the Old Testament: -- "About 10 percent of what's in the Old Testament about the Jews is true -- THE REST IS 'PR'." In other words, according to his sacrilegious concept, 90 percent of the stories and facts related in the O.T. is "Public Relations" Hooey, intended to make the Jews look good, and only 10 percent of it should be taken "Literally"!!!

God does not take it lightly when unregenerate men take His Inspired Word lightly! And, one can -- as many have -- "Go to Seed" on "Figuratively Interpreting" God's Word, and so explain it all away that it is seen as nothing but "Jewish PR" (a big collection of myths and folklore), with a dash of truth in it here and there -- written by men -- and nothing more. "Going to Seed" (figuratively) in such a way will probably mean "Going to Hell" (literally) for many highminded, modernistic, misinterpreters of God's Inspired Word!

The following would be humorous, if it was not so sadly close to what many children have come to believe these days, when coming from homes where the Bible is not revered and believed. The little attempted jest goes something like this: -- One child to another: "Do you believe in the devil?" The other replies: -- "No, its just like Santa Claus, it's your father!"

One reason our nation and our world are in the endless turmoil and violence we are now experiencing is because for too long, too many, have "Figured" wrongly that the Bible is a book of man-made "Fairy Tales"! Is it any wonder, then, that God has turned loose on our nation and world those Fierce and Fanatic Muslims who "TAKE THEIR FALSE BOOK, THE KORAN, LITERALLY!"

As a nation and western world, we are casting away as mythical, and troublesome, God's Inspired Word, and, in return, God has cast upon US those who take their Koran literally, to the point of believing that they will go directly to heaven if they destroy themselves in the process of destroying US -- a la the WTC towers, the Pentagon, and the countless other suicide bombings around the globe since 9-11!!!

2 Peter 1:21 tells us: -- "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" -- and WE HAD BETTER, "LITERALLY" BELIEVE THAT! -- or we shall always, as we now are -- PAY THE PRICE FOR DISBELIEVING GOD'S BOOK!

But, again, there is the other side to this coin, which I would like to address also: -- that of "Going to Seed Literally" -- to the point where we interpret passages of Scripture literally that ought to be interpreted figuratively -- and in the process of doing so, we make them say things that contradict numbers of other plain declarations of God's Word.

No, you probably won't go to hell for "going to seed" in this way. As a matter of fact, I think that God probably often looks right through such "literal" misinterpretations and sees the heart of a man or woman who fears erring in the other direction, and "winks at that ignorance" -- for it is not nearly so dangerous as becoming overly-figurative.

Nevertheless, while "Being Literally Wrong" won't cause you to miss heaven, it may cause you to miss some Light and some Understanding of God's Word that would sharpen your focus on "things which must shortly come to pass" and that would deepen your appreciation for all other fundamental Truths in God's Word.

The Old Testament abounds with figurative language: -- Hosea 12:10 -- "I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and USED SIMILITUDES, by the ministry of the prophets." "The voices of the prophets"(Acts 13:27) are "literally" loaded with symbolism!

Countless thousands of godly preachers have seen the "similitudes" in the O.T. as describing spiritual realities through Christ, and have heralded their true meaning throughout the world, throughout the centuries!

But "similitudes by the ministry of the prophets" not only spoke of Salvation Truth, they often spake also of the First Coming and Second Coming of Christ and of His Messianic Kingdom.

Further, the use of "similitudes by the ministry of the prophets" did not cease with the end of the O. T. times. Christ Himself, the greatest of all Prophets, often used metaphors, parables, similitudes, and such like, to illustrate Spiritual and Eternal Truths!

We should not think it strange, then, that the Revelation He gave to the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos is "SUPERCHARGED WITH SYMBOLISM"! -- and many similtudes which must be taken figuratively to be interpreted properly.

You may disagree with me, and with my conclusion here. That is your prerogative. Still, it is my strong persuasion that one is "Being Literally Wrong" to force such an hyper-literal interpretation on this book -- especially upon Revelation 20 -- so as to make it contradict many, many other clear and plain declarations of both Testaments about that which shall occur when Jesus Comes Again.

No single word, no single verse, no single passage -- not even one single book, of the Bible should be interpreted in such a way that it contradicts the overwhelming majority of the rest of the Bible Testimony on the subject. Sound exegesis ALWAYS demands that THE LESSER BOW TO THE GREATER, but certainly NOT ALWAYS that THE FIGURATIVE BOW TO THE LITERAL!

Therefore, when a figurative interpretation of occurrences in of the Book of Revelation places it in harmony prophetically with the testimony of the other 65 books on the subject, I believe it is not only permissible -- but absolutely necessary.

Again, I close with the statement of the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:7 -- "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things."

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02 -- SUDDENLY! -- ETERNAL CHANGES AT CHRIST'S RETURN

Hebrews 6:6 -- "AND AGAIN, WHEN HE BRINGETH IN THE FIRSTBEGOTTEN INTO THE WORLD, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (KJV).

Hebrews 6:6 -- "BUT SPEAKING OF THE TIME WHEN HE ONCE MORE BRINGS HIS FIRSTBORN INTO THE WORLD, He says, And let all God's angels worship Him" (WNT).

Following the above, in Hebrews 6:10-12 we read: -- "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of THE EARTH; AND THE HEAVENS are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they SHALL BE CHANGED: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

"WHEN AGAIN" OR "WHEN ONCE MORE" CHRIST IS BROUGHT INTO THE WORLD, it shall not be to bring about temporary changes lasting but 1,000 years, but IT SHALL BE TO BRING ABOUT UNIVERSAL AND ETERNAL CHANGES!

It is important to note three additional things here also:

* * *

(1) THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE SHALL BE CHANGED -- NOT ANNIHILATED

The word "changed" in Hebrews 6:12 is the Hebrew word "alasso" which means "to make different" -- not "to utterly annihilate". The Hebrew word "alasso" is also used in 1 Corinthians 15:49-51 -- "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED [ALASSO], 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 [ALASSO]."

The flesh and blood bodies of God's People shall be "changed" into their "incorruptible" and eternally glorified bodies. And, the material earth and heavens shall be "changed" into that "better and enduring substance" mentioned in Hebrews 10:34.

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(2) THESE ETERNAL CHANGES SHALL OCCUR AT CHRIST'S RETURN, NOT 1,000 YEAR LATER

The "changes" wrought upon both the bodies of the saints and upon the earth and heavens shall both occur "When Again" or "When Once More" Christ is brought into the world -- i.e., at the time of His Second Coming -- NOT 1,000 years AFTER that climactic event!

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(3) THESE ETERNAL CHANGES SHALL OCCUR "IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE"

The bodies of the saints shall be "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. 15:51-52), and the heavens and earth shall also be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"!

It is a profound error to teach that AFTER Christ's Return things will drag on, antiClimactically, for another thousand-year extension of Time! -- "For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Rom. 9:28) at His Second Coming.

"Poof"! -- the bodies of the saints will be resurrected and/or changed and rise to meet the Lord in the air. Then in short order, all of the wicked shall be slain and resurrected, and the universe as it now exists shall suddenly collapse and depart with a loud noise. All will be ushered to the General Judgment, and the wicked cast into the Lake of Fire. And "Poof" -- the New Heavens and New Earth shall appear -- "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"!

Psalms 33:8-9 -- "LET ALL THE EARTH FEAR THE LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. FOR HE SPAKE, AND IT WAS DONE; he commanded, and it stood fast."

James 5:7 says that "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it," but all should know that REAPING IS A SHORT WORK! Long weeks and months of plowing, planting, cultivating, growing, and ripening are followed by a sudden reaping!

Jesus drew the picture plainly in Mark 4:28-29 -- "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. BUT WHEN THE FRUIT IS BROUGHT FORTH, IMMEDIATELY HE PUTTETH IN THE SICKLE, because the harvest is come."

It takes long months to produce a ripened stalk of grain. It takes a split-second cut it down!

Millions in this world are going to be shocked beyond all words to discover that when the Last Trump sounds, SUDDENLY ALL THINGS SHALL BE UTTERLY AND

ETERNALLY CHANGED -- with not seven years, with not 1,007 years, with not even ONE SECOND left in which to repent and be saved!

Beware of the mistaken, Pre-Trib, Pre-Mil notion that there shall come after the Rapture, seven more years of Time, and then after the Revelation another 1,000-year extension of Time! God meant what He said through the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 4:7 -- "THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND[not a 1,007-year extension of Time] be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

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03 -- PERTINENT POINTS ABOUT "THIS WORLD" VS. "THAT WORLD"

Luke 20:34-35 -- "And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of THIS WORLD marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain THAT WORLD, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage."

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INTRODUCTION

It is remarkable that throughout the Bible, we really read of only two worlds -- THIS WORLD and THE WORLD TO COME. 2 Peter 2:5 speaks of "the old world," and 2 Peter 3:6 refers to "the world that then was," but both of these are merely past-tense references to this

present world before the Flood. Elsewhere in the Bible, we find references to only two worlds: -- this present world and to "that world" which is to come.

The Bible is completely silent about the supposed Millennial World to come. The Premillennial scenario is: (1) This World now -- (2) The Millennial World next -- and (3) The Eternal World to Come. However, there is not one verse in the Bible to support such a claim. Neither will it do to claim that a coming Millennial World is merely a variation of "this world" as was "the world that then was" before the flood, for according to the Chiliast theory "this world" will undergo profound and miraculous changes during a coming millennium that will make it completely different from what it is now. No such changes were made to "this world" by the Flood.

Various designations are used in the Bible, both for the present world and for the coming world:

The present world is variously designated as "the world" -- "this world" -- "this present world" -- "this present evil world" -- and "the whole world."

The coming world is also spoken of as: "that world" -- "the world to come" -- "the world which is to come" -- and "world without end."

Nevertheless, sound exegesis and interpretation of the Scriptures shows repeatedly that beyond "THIS WORLD" is only ONE more world: -- "THE WORLD TO COME"! -- and the fact that the Bible is completely silent about the supposed, coming Millennial World should convince honest students of prophecy that IT SHALL NOT EXIST.

Furthermore, some things which Chiliasts insist shall come during that supposed, coming Millennial World shall actually occur in the Eternal, New "World Without End" -- and, other things which they teach shall occur during that imagined Millennial World are both absurd and contradictory to many Scriptures.

In the following, I shall endeavor to make some "Pertinent Points About "This World" Vs. "That World" to come, using the various designations of each.

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A -- NO MARRIAGE IN THE ONLY WORLD TO COME

In Luke 20:35, Jesus made it exceedingly clear that in the next world there shall be no marriage: -- "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain THAT WORLD, and the resurrection from the dead, NEITHER MARRY, NOR ARE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE."

This totally destroys the notion that flesh and blood people shall dwell in the supposed, coming Millennial world who will marry and have children!

The supposed intermingling of those with glorified bodies who never marry with those who live in the flesh and who have fleshly relationships pertaining to "this world" is not only absurd -- it is totally unScriptural!

St. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 7:33-34 -- "But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. THERE IS DIFFERENCE also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband."

"THERE IS A DIFFERENCE" also between relationships pertaining to the flesh in "this world" and those spiritual relationships in the one and only "world to come" where no such fleshly marital relationships shall exist. Regarding these two very, very different types of existence: -- "NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET"!

Reinforcing Jesus' statement in Luke 20:35 above, we also have both Matthew 22:30 -- "For in the resurrection THEY neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but ARE AS THE ANGELS of God in heaven." And Mark 12:25 -- "For when they shall rise from the dead, THEY neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but ARE AS THE ANGELS which are in heaven."

Again, remember: -- Jesus said that it was in "that world" which shall next come that marriage shall not exist, just as the angels never have, do not now, nor ever shall, marry! Away with that unScriptural teaching that tells us there shall be a coming Millennial World where the fleshly relationships of marriage shall co-exist with those who do not so live in the flesh and who do not marry!!!!

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B -- NO INTERMINGLING OF ABOVE AND BENEATH IN THE NEXT WORLD

In John 8:23 Jesus "said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world."

Apparently some Chiliasts teach that the glorified saints may dwell in the New Jerusalem, suspended between Heaven and Earth during the imagined Millennium -- perhaps traversing from the Holy City to the Millennial World occasionally, where Christ, it is supposed, will be reigning in the Earthly Jerusalem.

But once again, this imaginary state of things is both absurd and unScriptural! Jesus always made precise distinctions between the above, viz., the Heavenly vs. the below, that which pertains to this world -- and made it clear that "never the twain shall meet"!

He said that those in Heaven COULD NOT descend to a nether world: -- "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16:26).

Yes, it is true, that in the above verse He was saying that the inhabitants of Heaven could not descend into Hell, and vice versa. But, I strongly assert that the Bible nowhere teaches that "things above" and inhabitants "above" shall ever descend to "this world" nor to the supposed Millennial World.

JESUS said He is from "ABOVE" and in Galatians 4:26 the apostle Paul teaches us that the New Jerusalem is "JERUSALEM which is ABOVE"!

Yes, there shall come both a New Heaven and a New Earth -- but only in the Eternal State -- not in a supposed, coming Millennial World. And, in the Eternal State everything shall be "above" -- including the Eternal, New Earth. But the intermingling of those of the "Jerusalem which is above" with those in the earthly Jerusalem, which is "beneath" shall never come about, for in the one and only "world to come" there shall not be two Jerusalems -- only one: the New "Jerusalem, which is above."

* * *

C -- NO REBELLION AGAINST CHRIST IN THE WORLD TO COME

Ephesians 1:20-22 says that when God raised Christ from the dead, He "set Him at His Own right hand in the heavenly places, FAR ABOVE all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not ONLY IN THIS WORLD, BUT ALSO IN THAT WHICH IS TO COME: And hath put all things under his feet."

Everywhere in the Bible, we read of how Christ will utterly destroy all rebellion against Himself at the time of He BEGINS His Messianic Reign -- not one thousand years AFTER it has commenced. In "this world" He now mercifully grants time for rebels to repent, but at His Second Coming He shall forever put down all rebellion with the destruction of anti-Christ, along with everyone and everything in this present evil world.

Chiliasts not only have an unScriptural teaching on this subject, they also have a confused teaching. First, they teach that the time when men shall not "learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3) shall be during the supposed, coming Millennium. Second, they then turn around and say that at the close of that Millennium earthlings will once again rise up in war against Christ.

Nay, dear heart, "in that world which is to come" Christ's Kingdom will be "FAR ABOVE all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named" FOREVER!

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D -- JUDGMENT, NOT ANOTHER WORLD, FOLLOWS THIS WORLD

1 John 4:17 -- "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world."

The Scripture here, obviously teaches that love must be made perfect "in this world" in order to have boldness -- not in a coming millennium, but boldness at the Judgment which immediately follows "this world's" destruction. The inference is also clear that perfect love "in this world" is the prerequisite preparation for the eternal "world to come" -- and that they only shall dwell in "the world to come" who have been made perfect in love.

* * *

E -- HOW THERE SHALL BE NO TRIBULATION IN THE WORLD TO COME

John 16:33 -- "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. IN THE WORLD YE SHALL HAVE TRIBULATION: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Acts 14:22 makes it clear that Christ's disciples "must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

It is only those who are "purified, and made white, and TRIED" (Daniel 12:10) who shall enter "the world to come."

According to Premillennialism, "there'll be no tempter then"! -- and, those saved and purified during that supposed "Golden Age" who die before its close shall never have endured trials and tribulations!

Such shall never be! When Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," He meant that ALL who are saved, and who live for any length of time, shall be tried.

Rev. 7:13-15 tells us that those who "are before the throne" of Christ are a tried people! -- "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."

Away with this notion that God is going to pamper the Laodicean Church with a magic carpet-ride to glory without passing through the Great Tribulation, and away with the theory that people will be born, be saved, live for long years, die never having been tried, and then be among those in the Eternal, World to Come!

There shall be "no tribulation in the world to come" ONLY because the world to come is that "world without end" where all trials are forever past. Saints "Shall have no Tempter THEN"! -- but NOT in the imagined, coming, Millennial World.

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F -- NO TARES AMONG THE WHEAT IN THE WORLD TO COME

Matthew 13:40 -- "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world."

Whether one translates the Greek word "aion" in this verse as "world" or "age" the implication is the same: -- At the end of "this world" -- at the end of "this age" all of the tares shall be gathered out of Christ's Kingdom. This clearly means that no wicked shall be intermingled with the righteous in the next "age" or "world" to come!

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G -- CHRIST'S KINGDOM SHALL NEVER BE IN THIS WORLD AS IT NOW EXISTS

John 18:36 -- "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."

As I see it, those who make much of Jesus' closing remark, "but NOW is my kingdom not from hence, asserting that it SHALL BE in this world at His Return, read more into the statement than Christ intended. His Kingdom shall NEVER be in this world as it now exists.

On John 18:36, Adam Clarke's Commentary quotes Eusebius, Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 20, which states that "The relatives of our Lord were brought before [Roman Emperor] Domitian, and interrogated whether they were of the family of David; and what sort the kingdom of Christs was, and where it would appear? They answered, that this kingdom was neither of this world, nor of an earthly nature; that it was altogether heavenly and angelical; and that it would not take place till the end of the world."

If the earthly, flesh and blood relatives of Jesus finally "got it right" after Pentecost centuries ago, it is a pity that Premillennialists, be they ever so spiritual and sincere, are still "getting it wrong" today! -- insisting that Jesus is going to reign in a temporarily patched-up Millennial Version of this world for a thousand years!

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H -- THE "TAKE-OVER" OF EARTH'S KINGDOMS = THEIR "MAKE-OVER" FOREVER!

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

Daniel 7:18 -- "But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."

Both of the above verses speak of AN "ETERNAL TAKE-OVER" -- not a "Measly Millennial Take-Over," lasting but a thousand years!!!

Christ Himself has told us that His Kingdom shall be "In The Regeneration" (Matthew 19:28) -- viz., in the "paliggenesia" -- the "anew Genesis" meaning: "In the New Heavens and New Earth"! Thus, Christ's "Take-Over" of the kingdoms of this world shall involve the complete "Make-Over" of all things, and He shall reign in that new world to come "for ever and ever"!

The Spiritual Israel of God "shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation" and "shall not be ashamed nor confounded WORLD WITHOUT END" (Isaiah 45:17).

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I -- THIS WORLD TOTALLY EVIL -- THE WORLD TO COME TOTALLY RIGHTEOUS

1 John 5:19 -- "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

Galatians 1:4 -- "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."

2 Timothy 4:10 -- "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia."

Titus 2:12 -- "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

The New Testament is replete with warnings and admonitions to God's people about the total depravity of "this world" -- which is not to say that all people are evil, but that the leaven of sin has leavened the whole lump of society around the globe -- and, the whole world, as it now exists, is swiftly moving toward its total destruction at Christ's Return: -- 1 John 2:17 "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Unmindful of the impending doom of this planet, as now constituted, "men of the world, which have their portion in this life" indulge in wicked abandon, spend much of their wealth on evil pleasure, then pass on, "and leave the rest of their substance to their babes" (Psalm 17:14), who then, in turn, follow their evil example. Psalm 73:12 -- "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches" pertaining to "this world" while being eternal paupers.

While beholding this, wrote Peter: "9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then

that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and A NEW EARTH, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, WITHOUT SPOT, and blameless. (2 Peter 3:9-14).

This totally evil world shall be totally burned up at Christ's Return, and shall be replaced with "a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" -- and NOTHING BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS. It will be totally "WITHOUT SPOT" -- inside, outside, anywhere, everywhere -- FOREVER!

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J -- NOTHING BUT ETERNAL LIFE IN THE WORLD TO COME

Mark 10:30 -- "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and IN THE WORLD TO COME ETERNAL LIFE."

Luke 18:30 -- "Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and IN THE WORLD TO COME LIFE EVERLASTING."

Please Note: -- Jesus promises "Eternal Life" in the next world! None of the inhabitants of His Messianic Kingdom shall ever die! Period.

They misinterpret "the voices of the prophets" (Acts 13:27) who insist that Isaiah 65:20 shall be fulfilled in a thousand-year extension of Time after Jesus' Return: -- "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old." The promises of long-life are figurative, and must be taken as such! They mean, in fact, that Christ's Servants in His Messianic Kingdom shall live forever!

Those promises which seem to speak of a temporal longevity and unabated vigor for many years, in fact, speak of "the powers of the world to come" (Heb. 6:5), which shall bring Eternal Life and Eternal Strength and Youth to God's People!

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K -- TOTAL AND ETERNAL SUBJECTION TO CHRIST IN THE WORLD TO COME

Hebrews 2:5 -- "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak."

In the Adam Clarke Commentary, the learned scholar writes: -- "... the administration of this kingdom has not been intrusted to angels, who were frequently employed under the law, is also evident, for the government is on the shoulder of Jesus Christ; he alone has the keys of

death and hell; he alone shuts, and no man opens; opens, and no man shuts; he alone has the residue of the Spirit; he alone is the Governor of the universe, the Spirit, Soul, Heart, and Head of the Church: all is in his authority, and under subjection to him. But some think that the world to come means future glory, and suppose the words are spoken in reference to the Angel of God's presence, Ex. 23:20, who introduced the Israelites into the promised land, which land is here put in opposition to the heavenly inheritance."

Angels shall not govern in the world to come, for, speaking of Christ, Isaiah 9:6-7 tells us: "... the government shall be upon His shoulder... and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

In "the world to come" all shall be solely, totally, and eternally "put in subjection" to the King of kings and Lord of lords! And "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" AT HIS SECOND COMING -- not one thousand years thereafter following one more hellish uprising!

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L -- NO WICKED SPARED IN THIS WORLD BEFORE THE NEXT WORLD COMES

2 Peter 2:5 -- And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."

Only Noah, and 7 other people survived the Flood! All others were drowned. And Jesus warned in Luke 17:26 -- "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man."

THE ONLY INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD TO COME WILL BE THOSE WHO WERE RAPTURED TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR!

At the close of the Tribulation, just before the Outpouring of Christ's Indignation which shall destroy both this world and this universe, the Children of God will be raptured: -- "COME, MY PEOPLE, ENTER THOU INTO THY CHAMBERS, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, UNTIL THE INDIGNATION BE OVERPAST" (Isa. 26:20).

It is THE INDIGNATION which the Church shall escape -- NOT THE TRIBULATION! And, the types shall be fulfilled! Just as only Lot and his daughters escaped the total overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and just as only Noah and 7 others escaped the global Flood -- even so, only those who go up in the Rapture will remain alive to inhabit "the world to come"!!!

This totally negates the Chiliast theory of flesh and blood inhabitants in a millennium after Jesus' Return!

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CONCLUSION

The apostle James wrote: -- "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the POOR OF THIS WORLD rich in faith, and HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM WHICH HE HATH PROMISED to them that love him?"

How long shall that "promised Kingdom" endure: -- "I will establish THE THRONE OF THY KINGDOM upon Israel FOR EVER, AS I PROMISED to David.." (1 Kings 9:5).

Where shall that Kingdom exist which God "hath promised to them that love Him"? -- Only, and Eternally in that "New Heavens and New Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" and nothing but righteousness -- FOREVER!

And, "they which shall be accounted WORTHY to obtain THAT WORLD" (Luke 20:35). shall be so everlastingly thankful, and grateful to Jesus, that the "the sufferings of this present time [shall not be] worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in" and to them, when that "world without end" first comes into view!

I shall close with the following illustration that I have long published on the HDM discs in the 2700-plus Illustrations collection:

The king of Prussia, while visiting a village in his land, was welcomed by the school children of the place. After their speaker had made a speech for him, he thanked them. Then, taking an orange from his plate, he asked: "To what kingdom does this belong?" "The vegetable kingdom, sire," replied a little girl. The king took a gold coin from his pocket and holding it up asked: "And to what kingdom does this belong?" "To the mineral kingdom," said the girl. "And to what kingdom do I belong then?" asked the king. The little girl blushed deeply, for she did not want to say, "the animal kingdom, " and thereby offend the king.

Just then, it flashed into her mind that "God made man in His own image," and looking up with a brightening eye, she said: "to God's kingdom, sire." The king was deeply moved. A tear stood in his eye. He placed his hand on the child's head and said, most devoutly, "God grant that I may be accounted worthy of that kingdom!"

THE PROMISED LAND FOR WHICH ABRAHAM LOOKED

By Duane V. Maxey

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03 -- THE PROMISED LAND FOR WHICH ABRAHAM LOOKED

Pertinent Passages Of Scripture

Before embarking upon the reading of this article, please carefully read and consider the following passages of Scripture. They are the foundation for that upon which I shall expound in this little article.

(Acts 7:2-5) -- "And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, 3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and COME INTO THE LAND WHICH I SHALL SHEW THEE. 4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. 5 And HE GAVE HIM NONE INHERITANCE IN IT, NO, NOT SO MUCH AS TO SET HIS FOOT ON: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child."

(Hebrews 11:8-10, 14-16, 34, 38) -- "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 BY FAITH HE SOJOURNED IN THE LAND OF PROMISE, AS IN A STRANGE COUNTRY, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 FOR HE LOOKED FOR A CITY WHICH HATH FOUNDATIONS, WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD... 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that THEY SEEK A COUNTRY. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, THAT IS, AN HEAVENLY: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for HE HATH PREPARED FOR THEM A CITY... 34 For ye.. took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, KNOWING IN YOURSELVES THAT YE HAVE IN HEAVEN A BETTER AND AN ENDURING SUBSTANCE... 38 (OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY)" (Hebrews 11:8-10, 14-16, 34, 38).

(Hebrews 12:18-23) -- "For YE ARE NOT COME UNTO THE MOUNT THAT MIGHT BE TOUCHED, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 22 BUT YE ARE COME UNTO MOUNT SION, AND UNTO THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD, THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

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Faith hears the inaudible, touches the intangible, and sees the invisible!

Faith hears the inaudible "voices of the prophets" -- not speaking of earthly things, but speaking of the Heavenly "Paradise -- unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" in this world -- nor even possible for mortal earthlings to speak or hear! (2 Corinthians 12:4).

Faith touches -- not the tangible substance of this world -- but the intangible, spiritual, substance "in Heaven -- a better and an enduring substance" (Heb. 10:34) -- one that shall exist only in the New Heaven and New Earth.

Faith sees the invisible "City of the Living God" -- not the earthly Jerusalem, which is but a paltry, visible foreshadow of the Glorious, New Jerusalem.

It was such a faith that Abraham had and exercised relative to the Land and City that God had Promised him. Although when he first left Haran, and eventually entered the earthly Canaan, he may have thought that the fulfillment of God's promise consisted of the Earthly Canaan and the Earthly Jerusalem, his faith finally saw that those earthly things were but a faint foreshadow of the Heavenly Land and City that really fulfilled the Divine Promise. Thus it was, Abraham "looked for A CITY which hath foundations, WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD" (Hebrews 11:10).

Is it not a pity, that while many spiritual Christians realize that "the voices of the prophets" (Acts 13:27) speak of a Spiritual, Heavenly, and Eternal Salvation, at the same time they fail to recognize that those same "voices of the prophets" speak of a Spiritual, Heavenly, and Eternal fulfillment of promises to the true "Israel of God" -- Christ's Church?!

Saint of God -- fellow citizens with all in "the Israel of God" -- your next dwelling shall not be where there is "a mount that might be touched" by mortal man! It shall be in a land that shall forever be intangible to mortal "flesh and blood"! -- and your next "Home-Town" will not be "Mount Sion" in this world, but "the City of the Living God, THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM"!

Furthermore, you are not going to be assembled with a motley mixture of mortal, unregenerate earthlings, still in the flesh, along with glorified saints and angels! Instead, you shall join that vast, and wholly pure, glorified throng, consisting of "an innumerable COMPANY OF ANGELS" at "THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN, which are written in Heaven," and you shall be in the company of "GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL" and with "THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT." These Holy and Glorified beings alone -- shall be the companions of God's saints in Christ's Eternal, Messianic Kingdom!

Away with this totally unScriptural, Chiliast, Premillennial teaching which insists that the next thing on God's agenda after Christ's Return shall be the Strange Menagerie of a Thousand Year Extension Of Time on a tangible and visible earth, co-inhabited by flesh and blood human beings, some of which shall be unregenerate and unholy, along with "the spirits of just men made perfect"! What a complete contradiction this teaching is of all that is taught in the New Testament!

Regarding Second Coming Prophecy, it is not so much, "How do you FIGURE?" as it is, "Why do you NOT FIGURATIVE, when sound exegesis demands it?!" Yes, ONE CAN OVERDO FIGURATIVE INTERPRETATION, but ONE CAN ALSO OVERDO LITERAL INTERPRETATION -- to the extent that it opens up a Pandora's Box of "literally" scores of

palpable contradictions of the Scripture and absurd contradictions of all sane and sanctified sense!

Figurative and Spiritual interpretations must OFTEN be placed upon both O.T. and N.T. prophecies if one is to arrive at their correct meaning -- one which does not contradict every other clear declaration of the Bible on the subject -- and especially is this true regarding a correct interpretation of the Book of Revelation and the Thousand Years of Revelation 20.

So invisible, so inaudible, so intangible, and so inconceivable, to those now in the flesh, are the Land and City promised to "the Israel of God" that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

They cannot be heard by mortal ears, touched by mortal hands, nor seen by mortal eyes, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:10). Though they cannot be seen with "observation" (Luke 17:20), nor by any who are not "born again" (John 3:3), through faith, God's Spirit brings them into view. All of those "who also walk in the steps of that faith of Abraham" (Rom. 4:12) can, and should, see that God's promises to Abraham, and to his offspring, Spiritual Israel, shall be fulfilled in that Land and City which are mortally inaudible, intangible, and invisible. Like Abraham, the Church should look for that "City Whose Builder and Maker is God" -- not for a spruced-up version of "the Jerusalem which now is," whose builders and makers were men!

Where shall he (or she) next dwell "that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly -- that despiseth the gain of oppressions -- that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes -- that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil" (Isaiah 33:15)?

Answer: -- "HE SHALL DWELL ON HIGH: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure" (Isaiah 33:16).

The "voice of the prophet" Isaiah here speaks not of a dwelling in this present, evil world, nor of a dwelling in a refurbished version thereof -- not for a thousand years, nor for even one second! The "ON HIGH" promised in that prophecy obviously refers to Heaven and the Heavenly Jerusalem -- the promised "bread" is the "Bread of Life" -- and those "sure waters" are the Eternally sure "waters of Life" for "the Israel of God" in that everlasting dwellingplace!

Follow in the steps of Abraham's faith, and you will see what HE SAW as the fulfillment of God's promises TO HIMSELF and TO HIS SPIRITUAL OFFSPRING: -- "Thine eyes shall see the KING IN HIS BEAUTY: they shall behold THE LAND THAT IS VERY FAR OFF" (Isaiah 33:17). And, that "land that is very far off" is indeed "very far off" from the Mundane Messianic Kingdom envisioned by Chiliast interpreters! For "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). It is that Heavenly Land beyond all mortal seeing, hearing, or touching -- in the New Heavens and New Earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13) and nothing but righteousness, -- not for a thousand years, but FOREVER!

Once again, I shall neither debate the subject of this article, nor respond to any criticism nor attempted refutation thereof. We need not agree on the matter, and should not engage in debate which creates more Heat than Light on the subject.

That said, I shall conclude this little article with the suggestion of the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:7 -- "CONSIDER WHAT I SAY; AND THE LORD GIVE THEE UNDERSTANDING IN ALL THINGS."

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04 -- THESE ARE NOT THE CHILDREN OF GOD

"Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are THE CHILDREN OF THE FLESH, THESE ARE NOT THE CHILDREN OF GOD: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Romans 9:7-8).

Either God's Word means what it plainly says here, or it doesn't. I choose to take it exactly for what it says: -- viz., that those born only naturally -- Israel in the flesh -- are "NOT the children of God." God does NOT have TWO TYPES OF CHILDREN" -- (a) His Flesh and Blood Children -- Israel born after the flesh; and (b) His Spiritual Children -- born after the Spirit.

Consider the types of Galatians 4:22-31:-- Hagar typifies Earthly Jerusalem, and her son, Ishmael, born naturally, typifies Earthly Israel -- born only after the flesh. Conversely, Sarah typifies the Heavenly Jerusalem, and her son, Isaac, born Supernaturally, typifies Spiritual Israel, born of God's Spirit.

God's Only, True Children are typified by Isaac: -- "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Romans 9:7). "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise" (Galatians 4:28). God's Children are only those of His Spiritual "Israel of God" -- "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. (Galatians 6:15-16). "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh" (Romans 2:28). "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

The so-called "Replacement Hypothesis" as characterized by Premillennialists is a misrepresentation of the Biblical Facts. Romans 11:1-2 makes it exceedingly clear that God has not cast away the people whom He foreknew, and never shall: -- "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." The paramount question here is: -- Who ARE the people whom God foreknew?

In Ephesians 1:4-5 we can see who God's foreknown Children and People are: --
"According as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

God has not cast away His foreknown people, because **THE PEOPLE WHOM HE FOREKNEW ARE THOSE OF SPIRITUAL ISRAEL!** -- which Spiritual Israel, foreknown and foreordained of God, is comprised of both Jews and Gentiles who are washed in Jesus' blood and born of His Spirit! It would be impossible for God to cast away Spiritual Israel, for this is the Holy Nation whom He foreknew before the foundation of the earth! "For whom he did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29). God shall NEVER cast away those, His foreknown people, who are born of His Spirit and "conformed to the image of His Son"!

On the other hand, it is NOT impossible for God to cast out Earthly Israel as His Peculiar Nation and People. Indeed, Earthly Israel HAS BEEN "cast out" as such: -- "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" (Galatians 4:30).

"Cast out the bondwoman" (Hagar) means that the Jerusalem that now is, and which is in spiritual bondage, has been cast out. "And her son" (Ishmael, born after the flesh) means that Israelites born only after the flesh, are cast out as God's Children, God's People, God's Israel, God's Nation.

NOTHING -- ABSOLUTELY NOTHING -- COULD BE PLAINER in the New Testament than these facts! -- unless one chooses to misinterpret them, or is blinded by a prejudicial interpretation of the Scriptures. The so-called "Replacement Hypothesis" is a misnomer and misrepresentation of the facts. Spiritual Israel has NOT replaced Earthly Israel, for Spiritual Israel has always been the people whom God foreknew.

While Earthly Israel was the flesh and blood nation -- the seed of Abraham and offspring of Jacob through whom Christ came, **EARTHLY ISRAEL** was but **A FORESHADOW** of **THE FOREKNOWN** people of God -- Spiritual Israel.

Bear with me: -- **THIS IS "NOT" TO SAY THAT GOD IS THROUGH WITH EARTHLY ISRAEL.** It is merely, while agreeing with what the Bible plainly says, to see that **THE ONLY WAY ANY OF EARTHLY ISRAEL CAN BECOME PART OF THE TRUE, SPIRITUAL CHILDREN OF GOD IS BY THE SAME ROUTE ALL OTHERS MUST TAKE: -- REPENTANCE AND FAITH IN THE BLOOD OF JESUS.**

Israel in the flesh does NOT now constitute God's Nation, God's Israel, God's People, God's Children! But, a remnant of them shall be grafted back into the True Vine on the Day of The Lord.

Through Moses, God said: -- "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with

those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation" (Deuteronomy 32:21).

Romans 10:19 echoes this same prophecy, which is obviously fulfilled by Spiritual Israel, The Church: -- "But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you" (Romans 10:19).

The Apostle Peter is another who makes it exceedingly clear that Spiritual Israel, God's Church is "now the people of God" -- "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God" (1 Peter 2:9-10).

In Romans 9:1-3 the Apostle Paul expresses his deep burden for Earthly Israel thus: -- "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." And in Romans 11:14, he voices his desire to "provoke" (as prophesied through Moses) his brethren in Earthly Israel to be saved through Christ, and to thus become part of "the Israel of God": -- "If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them."

And though Paul's dissertation in Romans 9-11 makes it clear that God is not through with Earthly Israel, and that a remnant of them will be grafted back into The True Vine, it is a mistake to interpret this passage to mean that there are two Israels now recognized by God.

Paul recognized that God has only one Israel, Spiritual Israel -- Romans 9:6 -- "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." What could be plainer? He is saying that only those in Earthly Israel who are born again "are Israel" -- are part of God's True, Spiritual Israel!

Furthermore, even when expressing the glorious fact that a remnant of Earthly Israel shall be saved on The Day of the Lord, Paul recognizes that they have been cast away as God's Israel:

Romans 11:15 -- "For if THE CASTING AWAY OF THEM be the reconciling of the world, what shall THE RECEIVING OF THEM be, but life from the dead?"

I believe that the statement suggesting that "the receiving of them" shall be "LIFE FROM THE DEAD" indicates that the conversion of the final remnant of Earthly Israel shall occur just before the Resurrection of the righteous -- (which shall be followed in rapid succession by the Resurrection of the wicked). Then, as part of the Church, the final remnant of Earthly Israel will be Raptured to meet the Lord in the air at His Return.

"Where is boasting then" -- on the part of the Church? "It is excluded" (Romans 3:27). And, Romans 11:25-26 warns against such: -- "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is

happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved..."

God has not, and shall never, cast away the Spiritual Israel of God which He foreknew to be conformed to the Image of His Son. But NONE within that Holy Nation has any right to boast of anything! The great Apostle Paul, who had once gloried in being part of Earthly Israel, expressed the sentiments that everyone of God's True People feels deeply within:

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:14-16).

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THE END