

"IT IS LATER THAN YOU THINK"

by Willard Willis
Monroe, Ohio

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

The place we now reside in is

one of pain, tears and death. It is a place where the crime rate is continually rising — a place where war between nations is our daily diet. It is a place where the air, streams and the minds of men are polluted — a place where prices and taxes are continually rising and a place where the energy needed to heat our homes and run our machines is dwindling away.

The place our Lord has gone to prepare for us grows more and more precious as we behold



Willard Willis

the roof of this place falling in upon us. The place our Lord has gone to prepare is far better, because this place is a home of sin. It is a hospital of sorrow — a battlefield that has been fought over many times. Many of our fields, in fact, have been turned into grave yards for the millions who have died in battle. We have also turned thousands upon thousands of acres into grave yards for our loved ones.

There are many who travel from one corner of this earth to

the other and then want to get out of it. Man, in fact, grows tired of the very best things which this world has to offer him. One writer said:

"The earth is a stormy sea whose every wave is strewn with the wrecks of mortals that have perished in it."

I have read that every time we breathe, some one is dying some place. I understand that there are more people born every day than now live in New York City.

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MISSIONARY

PREMILLENNIAL

BIBLICAL

BAPTISTIC

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"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them"—Isaiah 8:20.

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A CHURCH WITHOUT GOD CAN ONLY WAIT

Raymond A. Waugh, Sr.
PART III
Pity

Earlier, we referenced, "And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples..." (Acts 1:15). At that time, he initially said, "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out...It is written in the book of the Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his bishoprick let another take" (Acts 1:16-20). Had this been the end of his oration, and of his evident display of his knowledge of the Word, all would have been well.

Peter, as is well known from the Word, however, was not given to being timid, or humble, or even quiet. Hence, rather than "wait for the promise of the Father," Peter had an interpretation of his own. Though God nowhere had indicated from whence He would call this one who would fulfill, "And his bishoprick let another take," Peter apparently had some ideas of his own. His words are most expressive, "Wherefore of these men which have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the immersion of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22).

Sadly or tragically, perhaps, the "brethren" — the other disciples — were so out of touch with the reality of God's omniscience and His sovereignty, as well as His omnipotence, that they went along with the oratory and the persuasive sincerity of Peter. Leastwise, we note no evidences of opposition.

Jesus, of course, had earlier said to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy



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brethren" (Lk. 22:32). Needless to say, this reference to conversion had nothing whatever to do with Peter's

salvation. That had been wonderfully confirmed as an indubitable fact, as having already been accomplished, in that hour when Peter had said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Mt. 16:16), and then had heard, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 16:17).

What we are seeing, however, is considerable evidence that Peter had not yet been "converted." Had the other disciples truly comprehended the Word of God, and if they had been at all concerned to obey the Lord's, "Wait for the promise of the Father," they doubtless would have had some rather poignant recollections. They would have remembered Peter's, "Be it far from thee,

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon By Hansford Holmes

"STIGMATIZED PICTURES"

by Hansford Holmes
Charleston, W. Va.

Such Pictures, in conjunction with worship, as an aid, is a violation of a law of God against idolatry in any form, in that it is an insult (whether intentional or not) to the honor and glory of God. Further, this is a breach and capital crime against the foundation of all true godliness of religion, as found only in Christ Jesus, and leads to other heinous sins to the displeasure and resentment of God, Who, alone, is the object of worship and adoration.

Hence, when Israel entered the land of Canaan, they were to "drive out all the inhabitants of the land... and destroy all their molten images, and (demolish) all their high places" (Num. 33:52) of worship. However, this was not to

be done at once, but gradually. Yet, in this, they were to use their utmost endeavors to wholly extirpate them to the satisfaction of God. Too, in this, as related in Leviticus 26:1, they were not to emulate them in their worship, lest they, in turn become stigmatized by their pictures.

Yet, irrespective of this admonition by God, they, finally, yielded to the veneration of such pictures in a superstitious manner and, consequently, brought upon themselves the reproach of apostasy from the virtue of true worship.

So, presently, I find it strange that some religions will condemn the use of idol statues and, at the same time, they make use of pictures of such relics of idolatry in worship, which none of the apostles used. Then, too, it was not until the fifth century

that "make-believe" pictures of Mary, Christ, and saints were made use of as objects of worship.

Also, as the pagans placed the aureole of a circle around the heads of their gods, so the false church adopted the same practice in the veneration of their saints, as objects of worship, as borrowed from heathenism. Accordingly, we find that St. Augustine was so arrayed in Catholic books; also, the same Babylonian practice applied concerning Buddha, as well as in conjunction with many other worldly religions. So, as proceeding from pagan Rome, the same symbolism continues, as evidenced in thousands of paintings and pictures of "Mary" and the "saints."

But, in particular, pictures
(Continued on Page 2 Column 1)

with certain insight into this unique and God-honoring part of His Word and now the parable of the talents (Matt. 25) in principle, exhorts me not to hide these things in my heart, but to share them.

This, then, brings me to what would be my text, if I were an ordained elder. Galatians 6:1 enjoins the Christian as to his reaction to that "man overtaken in a fault." The Christian is further instructed to hold up a weaker brother. I Thessalonians 5:14 says to support the "weak" and be patient toward all men. "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye..." (Romans 14:1).

Since our Lord has been so good to reveal the precious truths of His Sovereignty to me I have been guilty, and have had occasion to observe a like attitude in others, of turning my back to some whom we are quick to label Arminian. If this were simply a classifying name, such as, Methodist or Lutheran, it wouldn't be so harsh, but we Sovereign Grace Baptist will invariably cause it to sound like an epithet — and a derogatory and demeaning one at that. Beloved, this should not be. There is always that possibility that we are wrongfully treating one for whom Christ died — as surely saved as any of us who have a corner on the market of grace and truth. A possibility that he is one of those whom the Holy Spirit tells us in Galatians 6:1 to be on the lookout for.

In God's plan and decreed will there is no room for "what ifs" but from the human side what if Aquilla and Priscilla had decided they didn't care for the way Apollos dotted the "i" and crossed the "t" in his faulty knowledge of the gospel way. They simply could have left him alone, gone back to the house and had a prayer meeting. Instead, they "took him unto them and expounded the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26).

Without fear of contradiction I can say that too many of us have drawn a tight little circle around our "bride" assembly — to the exclusion of some tender hearted Christians whom our Lord has not, up until now, initiated into the delights of sovereign grace. As a rule, I deplore and have little rapport with testimonies and experiences in which the "I" must play a part, but in this instance, I am going to observe a sabbatical leave and departure and show how our Lord arranged a series of events, seemingly commonplace and natural, to open my heart and understanding as

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THE BAPTIST PAPER FOR
THE BAPTIST PEOPLE

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Acting Editor

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PICTURES

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that were supposed to be portraits of Christ are painted with the "golden beams" surrounding His head, as was done regarding pagan sun-gods. Thus paganism was merged with make-believe Christianity.

Consequently, even now, both Catholic and Protestant churches (including many Baptist) make use of such pictures of Christ, though the Bible gives no description of the physical features of Jesus. In fact, no pictures were made of Him during His earthly life, nor did the Church have any pictures of Him during the first four centuries. Evidently, then, the so-called pictures of Christ, like those of Mary and other saints, are only the product of the imaginations of artists. Hence, as proof of this false make-believe, we only have to make a brief study of religious art to find that, in different centuries among different nationalities, many different pictures of Christ are found. Obviously, then, all of these pictures cannot be what Jesus looked like, since they differ from each other.

Therefore, in this consideration, suppose that someone who had only known my name and had never seen me or any photo of me, and without any knowledge of my features, would decide to paint a picture of me. So, under these conditions, should I expect such a picture to be like me?

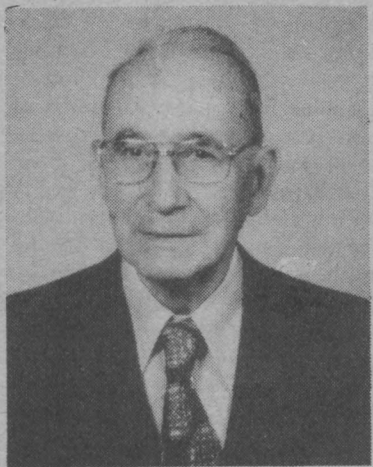
The answer is obvious. So neither should we think that Christ has ever put His approval upon men's false conceptions of what they think He looks like.

In writing this brief, I realize that such a conclusion against such "stigmatized pagan pictures" is very unpopular. Yet, in the name of common sense, I maintain that no man (not even the best of artists), apart from being inspired of God, could ever properly portray our Lord in His true essence to the glory

The Christian is not ruined by living in the world, but by the world living in him.

of God.

Hence, without such inspiration, as is currently known, any such picture, even at best, is a very poor substitute; yes, only a mere image (idol) in a modified form, which can never display how wonderful our Lord really is.



Hansford Holmes

Therefore, it must be concluded that, according to Scripture, true worshippers must worship God "in Spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24), as the only way to legitimately worship God.

Thus it must be affirmed with certainty that the veneration of such pictures can, in no way, help true worship; but, rather, hinders it, in being under the stigma of the curse of God.

STEWARDSHIP

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to His absolute Sovereignty.

I had stopped for a few minutes one evening in the showroom of an automobile dealership and a fine Christian gentleman whom I hardly knew approached and engaged me in conversation. Soon the talk revolved around our mutual desire to love and serve the Lord. Beyond doubt this gentleman could see that I was of Arminian orientation and background, thoroughly saved but not yet converted. (Yes, there is a distinction — and a difference). Now I know by experience that there are Sovereign Grace Baptists who would not have "wasted" anymore time with me, after learning that I did not believe in the preservation and/or perseverance of the saints. Not so with this dear brother. His talk and his demeanor gave witness of a Christian love and concern, and he did not immediately begin to belabor me with his doctrinal views. As a result, before we parted, he had exacted from me the promise to visit and to worship with him at his assembly. At that time I was a member of a denominational assembly and associated with some of the sweetest, gracious and most kind of folks, humanly speaking, but I wasn't hearing a dime's worth of the gospel — and somehow, even then I knew it.

The church of my new found friend and brother was baptist and just then entering into a continuing series of messages on — you guessed it, the doctrines of grace.

This pastor stayed within the boundaries and confines of God's Word as he carefully delineated on each petal of our lovely t.u.l.i.p., and soon, I became a willing captive to those precious doctrines. Those evident truths which I had so long overlooked, now began to leap out at me from a myriad of places and pages in my Bible. Without meaning any irreverence I was like a child with a new toy — or like an obedient

child, starting to school and becoming engrossed in a whole new world. Naturally, I was instructed in some of the objections and some of the charges lodged against the absolute Sovereignty of our Lord. In this regard I was instructed in a preponderance of Scriptures which more than adequately substantiate that which we hold so dear.

I realize that some of my Baptist acquaintances profess that they have always had a grasp on these doctrines, but not so with me. After my birth it was awhile before I was able to sit up. Then it was awhile before I crawled — and later yet, before I walked. Admittedly a homespun analogy but so I was led, step by step, into those most precious verities in God's Word. And the marvel, the mystery of it all, is that at no time was I pressured, coerced nor constrained to accept or believe anything; simply led along day by day, by the Holy Spirit as He judged me to be ready to receive this truth.

This then places the onus of stewardship upon my own shoulders, not only in regard to the gospel, but also, in regard to contending, in love, for the doctrines of grace. It is entirely possible that my path could cross that of one who is "faulty" of understanding, a "weaker" brother, one not rooted and grounded in the faith — one that I can assist in a "spirit of meekness," as in Galatians 6:1. God is faithful and He will have someone witness to such a one — whether or not I do it. At the same time, if I know to do right and still I wrap my robes around me and shout "unclean" at everyone who is not a Baptist, then that one becomes my sole responsibility, in God's sight.

I do not advocate withholding or diluting our doctrines in any measure. However, if we have kindly and graciously proffered our jewels to that Campbellite, Catholic or to a Congregationalist, and he rejects and spurns our witness — then shake the dust off your feet for a testimony against him (Luke 9:5). Should he yet be of the elect, then "the Lord will perfect that which concerns him" (Psalm 138:8). And if he be "joined to his idols" you will have done well to "let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8, 9).

CHURCH

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Lord; this shall not be unto thee" (Mt. 16:22) and the Lord's response. They doubtless would have recalled Peter's, "I know not the man" (Mt. 26:74). Too, if they had been truly in touch with the Word of God, they would have remembered, "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20), and they would have known that they could not defy the Lord's, "wait for the promise of the Father" and expect to accomplish any good for God or for themselves.

At that time, they apparently felt as Peter that it was time for action. Some of them, of course, may have been moved by Peter's persuasive and commanding voice, and that they could not resist such and maintain their own self respect. As some religious men in every generation — some of whom may be saved and "good" men — and as Peter, these were ready to hear Satan's, "Yea, hath God said?" (Gen. 3:1), though the Lord had said, "wait for the

promise of the Father."

Positiveness

We may notice that Peter became adamantly positive for he says, "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the immersion of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22). We shall search the Word of God in vain for one word or one line of words which Peter or anyone else can reference as the basis for this theological hypothesis of this theological conclusion.

The problem was that Peter may have come to the place that he did not "feel" he should sit around any longer! Too, he may have grown weary of praying or supplicating, as it were. We recall that he and others did so on the night that our Lord was betrayed. These words should have burned in Peter's heart and mind, even as they should burn in ours, "And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow. And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Lk. 22:44-46).

It may be that Peter had tired of praying, or that he was just tired of sitting around. In any event, he "stood up in the midst of the disciples," and they evidently could relate to a man of action. It did not seem to trouble them that he had not been "converted" yet, or that he had not learned obedience yet. Neither did it seem to bother them that he had not done his "waiting" yet.

He had not learned yet that a church without God can only wait! He had not learned yet that a people without God can only wait. Apparently, he had not learned yet that a people of God, a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, cannot defy the plain teaching of the Word of God and do anything other than wrong. He had not learned yet that religious men may indulge in religious works, but if God is not among them, and they are doing violence to the Scriptures, then even the good that they may seemingly do is evil.

There is no way that any man can ever invalidate or make in-violate the truth, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). Men may involve themselves in a thousand and one or even a million and one religious activities or even "good works," but if they are not of faith and not in the faith then they are satanic in origin and in issue. God is absolute in this, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6), and this, perhaps, must be seen in the light of "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

Men may raise their great or their small cathedrals, temples, and churches so-called, or their ornate, spacious, and impressive places of supposed religious worship, but apart from obedience to the Word of God on the part of those people, they are dens of iniquity. Even more, they are sources of evil. Verily, all such are dens of devilry peopled by "Pharisees," "Scribes," and

"Sadducees" who today are intent in their "seeking to kill" (John 8:37) Jesus, and to "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:6). Tragically, all who are deceived therein or thereby are giving themselves to evil works, or to "wood, hay, and stubble" (I Cor. 3:12).

Men may devise elaborate theological, religious, and doctrinal systems, in the context of their, "I am of Paul; and I am of Apollos; and I of Cephas" (I Cor. 1:12) carnality, but all such is for naught! They may work out the details of such theological, religious, and doctrinal systems so that they can teach and track their fellow constituents, form the cradle to the grave, and in every interim detail of their lives as well. Yet, without God and apart from His Holy, Infallible, Inerrant, and Immutable Word, they are devices of evil used of Satan to attempt to undermine the true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all that is good in that context as well.

Program

On one hand, as we have noted, a church without God can only wait. On the other hand, a church with a heavenly relationship with the Saviour precludes earthly, worldly, or human enslavement. As we may notice in connection with each of the seven churches in the book of Revelation, each church had a direct relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. In actual fact any true church of the Lord Jesus Christ is responsible only to the Lord Jesus Christ and responsible, as well, only for the Lord Jesus Christ, and that responsibility relates wholly to the Word of God and the commands therein.

In His eternal wisdom and sovereign provision, God provides a diversity of churches within the context of, "Upon this Rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18) and "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body; so also is Christ... For the body is not one member, but many... But now hath God set the members everyone of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body... Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Cor. 12:12-27).

Satan, however, masterfully employs his subtlety among men with profound expertise, and especially among these ready for "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:11-12). Thus, we have first an evidence of Satan's and men's hatred of the Word of God. Together, they devise a thousand and one or even a million and one pseudo-theological systems by which they deceive most who are not already a part of their evil conspiracies against God, against the Son of God, against the Holy Spirit of God, against the Word of God, and against the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, there is abundant evidence in every religious edifice and in all of the religious devices employed therein that both Satan and men have an un-

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CHURCH

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dying hatred of the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this connection, there is the diversity of Satan's parachurch and suprachurch denominational organizations which multiply almost unendingly in the earth. Though they are anti-Christ and anti-Church, everyone, Satan is often able to design the programs and the practices of these monstrous parachurch and suprachurch denominational organizations so as to give the appearance of unity, at least within the denominational context.

Within the context of Satan's subtle attempt to discountenance the presence of the Spirit of God in the earth and the finality of the Word of God as it exists in actual fact as the Scriptures, he provides the spectacle of denominational diversity. Then, lest men become content with that diversity — remember, "if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" — Satan raises his strongest pseudo-theological voices to cry with pseudo-scriptural and pseudo-spiritual zeal for denominational unity.

Needless to say, each generation has its own particular and peculiar voices, and Satan employs them with remarkable effectiveness. In our generation, there have been the voices of Barth, Brunner, and Bultman, and all of their evil, though often erudite, neophytes. On occasion, they will speak concerning the evil of denominational diversity, and thereby call for or encourage denominational unity. Tragically, however, all of this is done that they might attempt to cloud the omniscient wisdom of God in providing the desired diversity among the Lord's true Churches.

Satan is so very secure in this device and so very subtle with it that some brethren whose relationships are with true Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ become despairing because there is not an absolute ecclesiastical unity among their churches. Sadly, some of these observe what appears to be denominational unity among the parachurch and suprachurch religious organizations of our time and suppose, thereby, that such have a corner on God's presence as it were, which they have not yet discovered or found. Somehow, these have never comprehended that every such denominational organization is wholly satanic!

Brethren, we need to repair hastily to the wisdom of that one whom God chose to fulfill, "And his bishoprick, let another take" (Acts 1:20). We have made a reference to God's choice. We may note, too, the testimony, "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" (I Cor. 9:1). His wisdom, then, is wholly of the Lord Jesus Christ and not by means of his fleshly capability. It is he, by the grace of God, who gives us the real direction of our unity, the only unity with which we need to be concerned, really, "And he gave some, apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some pastors, and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the

Don't be too easily alarmed. The Devil does a great deal with blank cartridges.

measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).

Men who are in the service of Satan, of course, never tire of giving their all that evil might hold sway in the earth. Thus, we have the spectacle of what they call their "Universal Visible Church" or the spectacle of what they call their "Universal Invisible Church." Within the context of these "umbrella devices," if you please, these design their parachurch and their suprachurch denominational organizations within which they function at the pragmatic level. They may reference such as "ecclesiastical," but they are anti-Church everyone, and thereby anti-Christ! And, being anti-Church and anti-Christ, they, understandably, are anti-God.

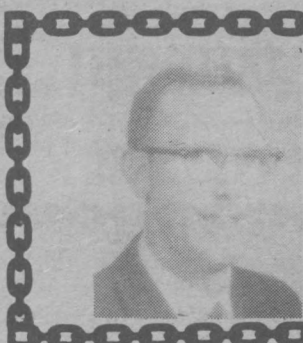
Proclivity

Though men — sometimes even, apparently, "good men" — may devise religious organizations which provide the means for both elaborate and elegant human expression or expressions, without God all such are conspiracies against the Lord Jesus Christ and the Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. It yet remains that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23), and, if we may, whatsoever is not of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the Lord Jesus Christ within the context of the Word of God which "shall not pass away" (Lk. 21:33) can have no relevance to faith. Such may seemingly be effected with the greatest of sincerity, but such have no place in the purposes of God with respect to the faith or the faithful.

Were the Spirit of God, the Living God, to have His Way by the Word of God in the hearts of men, by tomorrow morning every parachurch and suprachurch denominational or non-denominational, pseudo-ecclesiastical organization would cease to exist. However, apart from "a light from heaven... and... a voice saying... why persecutest thou me" (Acts 9:3-4), we may expect these of parachurch and suprachurch denominational and non-denominational organizations to continue on. Judas Iscariot could no more turn back the clock of his betrayal, even when Jesus, Himself, said, "That thou doest, do quickly" (John 13:27) than these — not all of whom are Judas Iscariot's, of course — who betray the Lord Jesus Christ by their religious involvement and their religious activities.

These may seem to be ecclesiastical! They may even sound ecclesiastical! They may appear to be serving in some ecclesiastical context! Nevertheless, in their parachurch and suprachurch denominational organization and pseudo-ecclesiastical involvement, they are anti-Christ! Jesus may even be saying to some of them, "Get thee behind me Satan" (Mt. 16:23), but they have no interest in His decrees or in His commands by the Word. By despising His Word, they show that their real delight is in their "cursing" and "swearing," and in their declaration, "I know not the man" (Mt. 26:74).

Some of these may be saved, truly born again and on their way to glory. But their human proclivities are such and their religious plight is such that they have no interest whatever in "waiting for the promise of



The Baptist Examiner

BIBLE STUDY LESSON

By WILLARD PYLE

Pastor — Naples Park Baptist Church of Naples Park, Florida

Psalm 26:1-5

Intro.: As we read the Psalms concerning the experience and the expressions of David, we must keep in mind the distinction between the standing and the state of the saints, as well as the fact that David foreshadowed the Person of Christ, and therefore, many of the expressions could only apply to Christ in the fullest sense. In this Psalm, David has examined his motives and methods in relation to his dealings with his enemies and now desires God, Who knows both the external and the internal perfectly, to conduct a thorough investigation.

VERSE 1

"Judge me." The child of God should ever desire to know the truth concerning his attitudes and actions, and therefore, should continually place himself before the proper authority.

"O Lord." We can truly say, "O Lord God Thou knowest" (Ezek. 37:3). The enemy had laid all kinds of accusations against David and now David realizes God alone can clear him or, if need be, correct him. Therefore, the child of God should never fear to go before God.

"For I have walked in mine integrity." David had performed no illegal act to obtain the crown nor had he acted in an unjust manner in relation to Saul. To know what we have done and why we did it is very important. The walk of a child of God is ever a daily sermon before others. We may not have the opportunity to preach a sermon by word to those about us, but we can live a sermon. How many times can we silence or nullify the false accusations of our enemies by a godly walk.

"I have trusted in the Lord." In patience, David has relied on God to remedy the situations brought about by lies

the Father" (Acts 1:4).

As Peter and the other disciples in another day, these may indulge in what the religious and the irreligious consider to be the most "sacred" deliberations. They may even follow through with those deliberations and actually give God a chance to choose or to make some choice concerning those deliberations, as it were. In finality, however, all such are "shooting craps"! Tragically, the darknesses of demonic delusion is upon them so completely that they may even suppose that God, therefore, has made His choice in accord with their determination. As we have noted before, we need to remember forever that the Lord Jesus — truly God — chose His "Apostles," and that any subsequent choice of an "Apostle" would be accomplished by the Lord! Peter and the other Disciples apparently did not comprehend this obvious truth!

Ultimately, as it was in the disciples' experience which we have referenced, it will be evident that God has had no part, and that He is having no part in the deliberations of such men. Likewise, in the course of our Lord's elaboration in time and

and threats rather than take matters into his own hands. We all recognize how easy it is to be tempted to rely on human wisdom or human resources to promote what we believe to be right. Even when things appear

cry. He is willing to be checked and double checked.

"Try my reins and my heart." David takes his case to the Judge, the Teacher, the Refiner, and now, the Physician. He was willing to submit himself to any and every test if it would bring glory to God. Can our beliefs and our practices stand these kind of tests?

VERSE 3

"For Thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes." David knew the mercy of God which had been evidenced on many occasions in the past, and he ever kept this clearly before his eyes. He knew God deals with His children as with sons (Heb. 12:7). To keep God's mercy before one's eyes doesn't lead to sin, but to obedience. It doesn't lead to false pride, but to praise. In pain and suffering, we should ever remember God's lovingkindness, for He will never leave us nor forsake us.

"And I have walked in Thy truth." Only those who walk in truth, (I John 4) can walk in integrity. To have as our guide the Word of God in all situations, is the perfect standard.

VERSE 4

"I have not sat with vain persons." Either in fellowship, or in council. The child of God must ever guard himself against being yoked together with unbelievers (II Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:11).

"Neither will I go in with dissemblers." Those meeting secretly to bring about rebellion against the state or against the church, surely is to be off limits to the child of God. We are to "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrines which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

VERSE 5

"I have hated the congregation of evil doers." The most glorious institution in this world is a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is a church or an assembly composed of the saints (I Cor. 14:33), scripturally placed together (Eph. 4:16). Carrying out the commission to make disciples, baptize disciples, and teach disciples, brings about churches. However, there are unscriptural assemblies which are composed of evil doers, or of those who are walking and working contrary to the Word of God. Every saved person should try the spirits and try the churches to see if they are of God. If not, he should stay away from them; he should not bid them God speed or fellowship them in any way, in fact, he should renounce them. The world and false religions will call you a bigot or narrowminded, but the important thing is to have God's approval.

"And will not sit with the wicked." David was determined, at all cost, to remove himself from the fellowship and friendship of the world (James 4:4).

Conclusion: It is always well for the saint to submit to the testings of God in regard to his salvation and service.

BIBLE VERSE

Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. MATTHEW 18:14



to be getting worse, the Christian should trust God (Acts 27:20).

"Therefore, I shall not slide." What a glorious truth is this to the eye of faith! "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:6). Preservation is assured because of the Preserver. God keeps His saints even on the icy roads of the Deceiver. The firm grip of the Father will not let us go (John 10:28, 29). Divine providence ever assures us of the Divine promises.

VERSE 2

"Examine me, O Lord." Self-examination involves the saint going to the classroom and to the Text Book of God while he sets at the feet of the Perfect Teacher (II Cor. 13:5; I Cor. 11:28). Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His Word. May we ever "study to shew ourselves approved unto God," and by God.

"And prove me." Manifest by testing in the crucible the gold from the dross, is David's

beyond time, in eternity, it will be evident that God has had no part, and that He is having no part in their "casting of lots" or in their "shooting craps" in order to determine His Will. In fact, it may well be evident in finality that all such borders on blasphemy. Peter — the saved sinner — as we have seen had indulged such at least twice, and it is not surprising that he should be the one to insist that they get involved in the seemingly pressing religious business or the business of religion of the moment!

Thankfully, there came that hour when he "waited"! Thankfully — though he would not always be so faithful — there came that hour when he would "stand up with the eleven. Lift up his voice, and say... this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel... Ye men of Israel, hear these words... Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up..." (Acts 2:14-24). In that hour, He did so in the power of God by the Spirit of God, and in

(Continued on Page 5 Column 1)

The Baptist Examiner Forum

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER — P.O. BOX 71 — ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41101

Please explain I John 2:2. This verse is used to explain that our Saviour's death was sufficient for all men, but only efficient for some. Could the word "Cosmos" be used for mankind?

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"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:2). "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19).

The theory that the death of Christ was sufficient for all men, but only efficient for some is contrary to the Whole Word of God and is not taught in this verse. Anyone who thus uses this verse is mis-using it. The word "propitiation" refutes this heresy. This word means: that which satisfies the claims of God. Jesus Christ, by His death paid for all the sins of those for whom He died, and perfectly satisfied the claims of God's holiness and of God's law against them. All those for whose sins His death is a propitiation will and must be saved. The death of Christ is sufficient and efficient to the eternal salvation of all those for whom it was made.

No, 'cosmos' here cannot be used for mankind, if by mankind one means every individual of mankind. Please note the words "the whole world" in the two verses I quote at the beginning of my answer. First, we see that in these two verses, in each of them there is a contrast between "the whole world" and those not included in that phrase. If the words "the whole world" meant every individual of mankind, there would be no need of the words "ours & ours only" in verse 2, or for the word "we" in I John 5:19. The mentioning of some who are not included in, and are contrasted with "the whole world," shows that the whole world does not include everyone.

Notice these two verses again. Is it not very clear that the words "the whole world" in I John 2:2 are different in whom they refer to from the same words in I John 5:19. "The whole world" in I John 2:2 is the world of the elect of God. The world for which Christ made a propitiation. The world that will be saved. "The whole world" I John in 5:19 is the world of the reprobate. The world that lies in wickedness. The world that will not be saved.

Furthermore, the contrast in I John 2:2 between "ours only" and "the whole world" is the contrast between the saved from among the Jews, for John was a Jew, and the saved from among the Gentiles who were from the

nations and peoples of the whole world. See Revelation 5:9 for a perfect commentary on and explanation of I John 2:2.

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I John 2:2 "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." The text paraphrased, "And He is the propitiation for the sins of Jewish believers; and not for theirs only, but also for the sins of all who shall believe on Him in all the Gentile world." The Apostle John was a Jew, and writes to Jews, but in his writings there are many references to the Gentiles. In the period contemporary with John it was the custom of Jews to refer to the Gentiles as the world. The "world" of John 3:16 is a reference to Gentiles, not exclusive of believing Jews, but to show Nicodemus, a Rabbinical teacher of the Jews, that the salvational distinction which the Jews tenaciously held to, and which distinction condemned all Gentiles and consigned them to the fires of eternal hell, was without Scriptural warrant.

The word "world" as used in the N.T. in connection with redemption is used in a limited or restricted sense, and can never be construed to mean Christ died for Adam and all of his posterity without exception. The Scripture which teaches there is a hell with human occupants, also teaches Christ's atoning sacrifice was limited in its redeeming scope and sufficiency. I John 2:2 plainly says, Christ suffered for all the sins of all the elect in the whole world, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. The sufficiency efficiency view of the atonement has Christ dying for people who were already in Hell at the time of His death, and has Him shedding His blood for some people whom He knew would yet go to Hell.

The "whole world" of I John 2:2 are the "little children" of I John 2:1, who have "an Advocate with the Father." Jesus Christ is not, never was, nor shall ever be the Advocate of all of mankind, neither are all of Adam's offsprings the spiritual children of God. The devil has his spiritual children (John 8:44), and they were never intended by God to be beneficiaries of the propitiation of Christ. The first Adam was the advocate of all of mankind, the old creation. He miserably failed, and plunged all whom he represented into sin and condemnation. The second Adam, Jesus Christ, is the federal Head and Advocate of the new creation, and He infallibly fulfilled

all the covenant conditions and that to the utter satisfaction of His Father.

Could the word "Cosmos" be used for mankind? Yes, See Romans 3:19, but in this reference it has to with the condemnation of all mankind, not the salvation of mankind. The word Kosmos is never used in Scripture to teach universal redemption, or that Christ tried to save all men.

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According to Young's analytical concordance the Greek word "Kosmos" is translated "world" one hundred eighty-seven times in the New Testament. By a study of these we see it is used in a variety of senses. In John 1:10 we are told, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Here we see the word used three times, each in a different sense: First, the habited earth ("In the world"); the whole universe of created beings ("world was made by Him"), and last, part of the inhabitants of the earth ("would know Him not"). This last use does not include all the inhabitants of the earth for John 1:12 tells us, some did know Him, "But as many as received Him,—". In John 17:9 the word "world" is used to indicate the wicked of the world, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given Me;" The same ones are indicated in John 15:19 where we are told, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but ye are not of the world,—"

In John 4:42 where the Samaritans having believed on Jesus said, "We have heard Him ourselves, and know that this indeed is the Christ, the Saviour of the world." As He can only be a Saviour to those whom He saved, the word "world" used here can only mean those whom Christ cleanses from sin, "and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). In Matthew 1:21 we are told that, "He shall save His people from their sins." John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). From these passages we see that the word "world" does not include all of mankind, for it is said of some, "ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). The meaning here is that it includes all who will be saved, both Jew and Gentile.

In all of the one hundred eighty-seven times the word "world" is used in the New Testament, not one time can it be shown to signify all of

Adam's race who ever lived, is living, or shall live upon this earth. For Christ's death to be sufficient for all mankind, the world "world" would have to include all mankind from the first man Adam, until the last man to be born on this earth, and no where is the word used in this sense.

"And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world:" is telling us that Christ not only died for those to whom John was writing (the saved), but there are those through out the world — both Jew as well as Gentiles, for whom Christ paid their sin debt.

It was once said that the British Empire extended over the whole world. They had a saying that "The sun never sets upon the British Empire." We can say, The sun never sets upon God's elect, the ones for whom Christ paid their sin debt, for it is said, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;" (Rev. 5:9).

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Every one who believes in Christ, and is justified through His righteousness, in being pardoned by the efficacy of His shed blood, has Him as "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (Jn. 2:1). This is because, though we are justified in Him, we still, in the flesh, have a proneness to sin.

Then, too, due to the basic fact of our position in Christ Jesus, John adds, "And He is the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I Jn. 2:2).

However, John is not speaking of all mankind in general, who sin, since Jesus Christ is only an Advocate for such, in particular, who believe (Jn. 3:16).

Consequently, when Jesus prayed to the Father, He said: "I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest Me out of the world..." (Jn. 17:6). Then, concerning "the world" from which He ransoms His God-given people, He said: "I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine" (Jn. 17:9).

These, then, are those of whom Jesus said: "I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (Jn. 17:14). This fact, then, must be distinguished from the world of "whosoever believeth," whom God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son (Jn. 3:16).

In this sense, then, John adds: "And He is the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for (the sins) of the whole world" (I Jn. 2:2).

First of all, then, in this quotation, Christ's propitiation related only to the sins of the then present believers; and, next, in a wider and more inclusive scope, John relates to the

propitiation for the sins of past and future believers, as exclusive of all reprobate unbelievers. This view is consistent with John 3:16 in regard to the world of "whosoever believeth," whom God so loved "that He gave His only begotten Son."

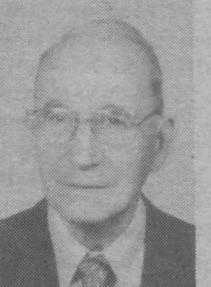
So, in this sense, all reprobate (non-elect unbelievers) constitute another world, concerning whom Jesus said: "I pray not for them; I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me; for they are thine" (Jn. 17:9).

Hence, it must be understood that, in a limited and restrained sense, Jesus Christ, only, is the Propitiation for the sins of believers, since He died only to "save His people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21), even through faith in His shed blood.

Consequently, then, He is not an Advocate for every individual person in the world, since there is a world for whom He will not pray, and, therefore, He is not a Propitiation for them, because He is the Person, "Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins... through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25).

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Frankly, I don't believe that this verse is dealing with the sufficiency and efficiency of the Saviour's death.

Christ did not die for the sins of those who are in Hades or those who will be. He said Himself as recorded in John 10:11, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." He goes on to say in verse 26, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." This passage alone shows that not all people are His sheep and that He died only for His sheep. It doesn't have to be written any plainer.

His death is sufficient for all of God's elect and works efficiently with all of them. It is sufficient for all the sins of all His elect, and that's all we need to be concerned with as far as sufficiency is concerned.

The word "world" does not always mean the same thing. Sometimes it means the earth itself, sometimes it means all the people on the earth, and sometimes it means the world of His elect or His chosen people. This particular verse is dealing with the world of His elect. John was pointing out that Christ did not just die for the Jews, but for people from all over the world. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9). You will note that it does not say every person, but out of every nation (Some out of every nation).

To know God's will is man's greatest treasure; to do that will is life's greatest privilege.

CHURCH

(Continued from Page 3)

accord with the Word of God. Peter and the other disciples had the Word, they had gotten the message.

Within the Providence and Provision of our God, I would suppose that such an experience of ultimate service is possible for any child of God who will turn from his fleshly frailty to Heaven-espoused faith! Within the sovereign purposes of our God, I would suppose that any man who truly names the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in faith can truly minister the message of our God.

It seems, then, that it is an almost incalculable tragedy that men, in their impatience, will turn instead to "weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage" (Gal. 4:9), choosing fleshly shackles of other men, that imprison them in the service of Satan. By acceding thus, they become caught in the tangles of Satan's web of service and grind at mortal mills for time, when they might have abounded in the beauties and the blessings of God's service for time and for eternity.

Privilege

The disciples came to know the wonder of service which God provides for those who will abide His command and "wait" when the Lord is not in their midst. Then, by the Spirit of God, they were understanding the Word of God in its fulness. By the Spirit of God, they understood the power of God in a measure and could cry, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). By the Spirit of God, they could understand, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" (Acts 1:11), and then could go on to declare, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). Whereas, the disciples had earlier sought to determine the will of God by "casting lots" or "shooting craps," in that holy and glorious hour, they "immersed" those "that gladly received his word" (Acts 2:41).

They knew the will of God!

And worked within it well!

That First Baptist Church in Jerusalem, if you please, was certainly and wonderfully privileged. It was some of those early members who had learned first that any truth which we, as the children of God in a Church of the Living God, may have is wholly of the Lord. "Flesh and blood," they had learned, "hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 16:17).

Within the wonder of God's sovereign provision, it was some of these chosen ones who had heard, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear he him" (Mt. 17:5). Later, some of the chosen ones would learn, "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Too, in this connection, they learned that even "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13).

If we should be looking for rationale, it, perhaps, should have been evident to the disciples why the Lord had commanded, "Wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). Apparently, however, it was not immediately evident to them. Or they, ap-

parently, had decided simply that they were not going to "sit around and wait" for God to accomplish His sovereign purposes in the earth in the midst of men. Or, as many would do in later days to justify their unscriptural religiosity, these may have considered the Lord's words, "Occupy till I come" (Lk. 19:13) as His command for them to "get busy" and to "stay busy" or "be busy"!

Nevertheless, as a church without God, they could continue "with one accord" only "in prayer and supplication" as a people who had been given the command, "Wait for the promise of the Father which, saith he, ye have heard of me" (Acts 1:4). Consequently, when, as a church without God, they were disobedient to the command, even the right which they attempted to do was wrong. They may have been right in their reading of the Word and in their recounting of the prophecy, "And his bishoprick, let another take" (Acts 1:20), but they were wrong in their interpretation. Even more, they were doubly wrong in their action which they based upon their wrong interpretation.

Needless to say, their wrong action — their calling upon God to choose between Joseph and Matthias as the twelfth Apostle, which decision they would make by "casting lots" or "shooting craps" — was a tragic waste! The evil of their action affected their concept of God, or rather, their concept of God effected their evil action. They apparently supposed they could fulfill prophecy through the process of their deliberations and the resultant action. In this, however, they had lost sight of the fact and the truth that God is sovereign, omniscient, and omnipotent. In supposing that God needed their help and that He could or would join them in "shooting craps," in order to accomplish His purposes in the earth or that they might know His will by such an action, they blasphemed both His Holy Name and His Holy Word.

If we may, herein is elaborated and dramatized the evil religious interpretations and the evil religious actions in which men in each generation indulge in the name of God or in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Herein is doubly dramatized the truth which religious men in every generation despise and defy with considerable fleshly and pseudo-spiritual passion, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away" (Isa. 64:6). It is with considerable heaven-sent wisdom and Scripturally-oriented insight, then, that the twelfth Apostle (see I Cor. 9:1-2) explains for our mortal minds, "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather (as we slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just" (Rom. 3:7-8).

Herein, perhaps, lies the source — at least in part — of the rejection or the questioning of God's sovereignty, as well as of the questioning of His omniscience and His omnipotence in which Christian men and in which Church men indulge. Herein, perhaps — at least in part — lies some of the blatant unbelief and blasphemy of the

Word of God which is the source for the idolatry which permeates the lives of most Christians and most every so-called church on earth today, both those that seemingly look to the Lord Jesus Christ and those who are enslaved to parachurch and suprachurch denominational and non-denominational religious organizations. Herein, without any doubt, lies the evil of organizational and denominational religious routines and practices borne of tradition in which a faithful Matthias might be "ordained" or chosen and a Saul who "made havock of the church, entering into every house, and hailing men and women, committing them to prison" (Acts 8:3) would be rejected for service by men, but be the chosen of God.

Conclusion

Sadly, even the most faithful among us, at times, seem to have little regard whatever for the Word of God as we pursue our own interests. We may quote the Scriptures extensively and even knowledgeably, yet, as the one who boasts himself to be "a walking Bible," we may be as far afield from the Word of God, even the commands of God, as the disciples who had no interest in waiting "for the promise of the Father."

Too often, perhaps, we stand up to speak in the strength of the flesh and pursue our religious interests and activities without any regard whatever for the sovereign purposes of our God. Such actions will not cause us to lose our salvation, and we cannot thwart thereby, God's sovereign purposes, but we become eternal losers, nonetheless. We may presume that because we seem to be one and because there seems to be some unity in our efforts that God is with us. Such thinking on our part may be wholly illusory!

God informs us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Too, God alerts us to the truth that "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" or in "the wicked one" (I John 5:19). The truth is, John was wholly and holily right in his testimony, but he lost his head to a wicked woman and her wicked and adulterous partner. Remember, too, that the Lord Jesus Christ was absolutely right in everything that He did, but we learn that He was "taken by wicked hands" and "crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).

Brethren, perhaps we need to recall with some conscious concern that a church without God can only wait, and that religious busyness accomplishes absolutely nothing for God or in the Cause of the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps we need to rethink some of our interpretations and some of our religious activities, as well. It may be that we are as fully out of touch with the sovereign purposes of God in the earth as were those disciples who could not find it within themselves to obey God and "wait for the Promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4).

We need to rejoice in the diversity of Churches which the Lord Jesus Christ has built and which He is building, remembering that in the program and provision of God no two plants are ever the same, no two creatures of earth are ever the same, and that no two individual humans are ever the same. Truly, we need to cease and desist from despairing that we cannot see a unity from Church to Church or between

true Churches such as that which we seem to see or observe within the so-called churches which are satanically enslaved within the various parachurch and suprachurch denominational and non-denominational religious organizations which seem to multiply as a plague.

We need to recognize in this spectacle of religiosity the fulfillment of the Word. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). At the same time, we should realize that the early New Testament Churches were responsible only to the Lord Jesus Christ.

By giving ourselves to the Cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be able to labor in the assurance of, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3-4). In this, we shall be able to abound every day in the wonder of "The gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

In finality, it may be noted that few men or churches will experience such a relationship with the Lord and the Word. Without any fear of contradiction, it may be declared that most men and most churches, so-called, will walk afar from the Lord, the Word, and the purpose of God.

Most men and most churches will be involved with religion which is after "the doctrines and commandments of men" and the "traditions of men" (Mk. 7:7-8). Consequently, they will never learn that all churches that look to any headquarters this side of Heaven have lost touch with God, if they ever knew Him. In reality, then, even if they are churches, they are without God and can only wait.

Anything such do apart from "prayer and supplications" (Acts 1:14) will be wasted effort. Even more, everything they do apart from "prayer and supplication" will be wrong, wrong for time and for eternity! This may explain, in part, perhaps, the abundance of worldly religious activities in which the churches, so-called, are involved today, activities that have no connection or relevance whatever to the Lord, the Scriptures, or the Gospel!

The nature of Satan's "Yea, hath God said?" (Gen. 3:1) is such, nevertheless, that all such wrongs may even seem to be right, at least for a time. God explains this anomaly which is the continuing characteristic of the religion which men employ in their attempt to counter His purposes in the earth with, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mt. 15:8).

God demonstrates His sovereignty in this regard as He sends "them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:11-12). Impossible and tragic though it may seem from the perspective of our mortal minds, I believe that every parachurch and suprachurch denominational religious organization — whether such be Roman, Synodical, Convention,

Fellowship, Pentacostal, Anglican, Association, ad infinitum — will join "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (Rev. 17:5). Further, it should be evident to all who have any knowledge of the Scriptures and the religious realities of our day that all such, conclusively, "shall give their power and strength unto the beast" (Rev. 17:13).

"If any man have an ear, let him hear.... Here is the patience and faith of the saints" (Rev. 13:9-10). Ever, brethren, we must remember that "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4:7-10).

LATER

(Continued from Page 1)

I also understand that our population will double by the year 2000 and again by the year 2020.

It seems only logical to me that we all would be looking for that better place which our Lord has gone to prepare for us.

We, in this place, as one writer said, "Meet one another, salute one another, pass on and are gone." We learn from Ecclesiastes 12:5 that "Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets."

Soon all clocks and calendars will be thrown away and time will be no more. This will be true for me whether our Lord returns within the next thirty years or not, since I will be pushing ninety, that is, if I live that long and if the Lord has not returned by that time. Let each of us, then, live each moment as if it were our last one.

It is not only true that earth's inhabitants die, but the places of earth are also passing away. I, in fact, have read that Ephesus once the metropolis of Asia — the Paris of that day, was crowded with buildings as large as our capitol building in Washington. I understand, however, that all of these great buildings are now non-existent.

Antioch is another fallen city. This city was a great metropolis when Paul preached there. There, in fact, was a street that stretched across Antioch for the distance of three miles — a street with a carved statue standing at every corner. These statues were carved in commemoration of the great men of the city — men whose names we have never heard of. There, in fact, is only one man from that city who I am acquainted with. His name was Paul — a poor Baptist preacher who preached there. You may remember that it was in Antioch that believers were first called "Christians."

It is obvious that our present place of abode is one where people and places are perishing, therefore, our Lord's promise should grow more and more precious to us — the promise which declares:

"I go to prepare a place for you..."

(Continued on Page 6 Column 1)

LATER

(Continued from Page 5)

Our hopes for a better life are not to rest in this changing world, but in that place which He has gone to prepare — that place that knows no change of person or place.

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, where ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:5).

The best is ahead for the believer in Christ. The future, as far as the believer is concerned, glitters with glory; therefore, don't grow weary with well-doing or despondent because of poor health, or old age. Set your affections more and more on things above. May you, by faith, cast your eyes beyond the present to that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. This is the procedure that Abraham followed;

"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. 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: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8-10).

The Scriptures inform us about two hundred and forty times that our Lord is coming again. We, therefore, should continually comfort ourselves with the precious thought of His soon return.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:16-18).

There is no question but that our Lord is soon to return to this earth. The question that is before us is — when will He return: The Scriptures, of course, forbid us to set dates for His return; nevertheless, we are not to be in the dark regarding those Scriptures which reveal the events that will immediately precede His return.

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (I Thess. 5:4-6).

One of the evidences of our Lord's return, according to II Timothy 3:1, is that "perilous times shall come." We, of course, are aware that perilous times are here now and it is obvious that they will grow worse and worse.

A thing becomes "perilous" when moderation is cast aside. A car, for example, traveling at a speed of 50 miles per hour, may not be considered to be dangerous, but it becomes very dangerous when the speed is increased to 90 miles per hour. The faster the car travels, the more dangerous it becomes and

Those who see God's hand in everything, can best leave everything in God's hands.

the more perilous does it become for those who are riding in the car. We see, then, what Paul meant when he said, "in the last days perilous times shall come." He meant, in fact, that the world would become like a speeding automobile. Our earth, in fact, has become a perilous place because of crime, immorality, the national debt of America, drug abuse, polluted air and water, energy crises, the break down of the home, false churches and preachers. The weather and a host of other things. We, of course, are only observing the tip of the iceberg by what we can see. The depths of the problems in the world are much too deep for us to observe them in full detail.

There have been many inspired writers who have foretold us of our Lord's soon return. His return, in fact, has been foretold by Prophets, John the Baptist, angels, the Apostles and Christ Himself. The following passages compose the witness of many. "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" (Zechariah 14:4).

"Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).

Our Lord, according to Acts 1:11, will return in the same manner that He went away. This same manner is described in I Thessalonians 4:15-17.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The Lord, at the first phase of His coming, will not come all the way down to the earth. His feet, in fact, will not set upon the earth until seven years later. He, at the first phase of His coming, will come for His people, and seven years later He will come with His people. The above verses (I Thess. 4:15-17) have to do with the first phase of His coming, while Zechariah 14:4 describes the second phase of His coming seven years later.

"And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives..."

The fact that He will come with His people at the second phase of His return is clearly seen by the following verses;

"And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azel: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (Zech. 14:5).

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints" (Jude 1:14).



QUESTION:—With what kind of fruit was the high-priest's garment decorated?

ANSWER:—Pomegranates, Exodus 28:33 — "And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof;..."

We see, then, that at the first phase of His return, He will come for His people; while at the second phase of His return He will come with His people. There is also another important fact which distinguishes the two phases of His return. I have reference to the fact that He will come as a destroyer at the second phase. This will not be the case when He comes in the air for His people.

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when 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 of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (II Thess. 1:7-9).

"And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (II Thess. 2:8).

The fact of the two phases of our Lord's return is clearly seen by the fact that the "man of sin" will not be revealed until the Lord comes in the air. The above verse (II Thess. 2:8), therefore, obviously refers to the second phase of His return, since the "man of sin" is to be destroyed "with the brightness of His coming." A further confirmation of this fact is seen from II Thessalonians 2:6 and 7 where we are informed that the Holy Spirit must be taken out of the way before the "man of sin" is revealed. We know that He the Spirit is to be removed at the rapture. The "man of sin," then, will be revealed after the rapture and run his course during the great tribulation.

We also have another important fact which distinguishes the two phases of our Lord's return. This fact being that the first phase of His return is imminent, while the second phase must be preceded by events that have not yet been fulfilled. The events I refer to are found in chapters 7 through 19 of Revelation.

Many do not believe in the two phases of our Lord's return, because the first phase is sometimes referred to as the "last day." One will find the reference to the "last day" in the following passages:

"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6:39).

"Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24).

The "last day" in the above

CHRIST all in all

CHRIST for sickness, Christ for health,
CHRIST for poverty, Christ for wealth,
CHRIST for joy, Christ for sorrow
CHRIST today, and Christ tomorrow,
CHRIST my life, Christ my light,
CHRIST for morning, noon, and night,
CHRIST when all around gives way,
CHRIST my everlasting stay,
CHRIST my rest and Christ my food,
CHRIST above my highest good,
CHRIST my well beloved, my friend,
CHRIST my pleasure, without end,
CHRIST my Saviour, Christ my Lord,
CHRIST my portion, Christ my God,
CHRIST my good shepherd, I His sheep,
CHRIST Himself my soul doth keep,
CHRIST my leader, Christ my peace,
CHRIST hath given my soul release,
CHRIST my righteousness divine,
CHRIST for me, for He is mine!
CHRIST my wisdom, Christ my meat,
CHRIST restores my wandering feet,
CHRIST my advocate and priest,
CHRIST who ne'er forgets the least,
CHRIST my teacher, Christ my guide,
CHRIST my rock, in Christ I hide,
CHRIST the everlasting bread,
CHRIST His precious blood has shed,
CHRIST has brought me nigh to God,
CHRIST the everlasting Word,
CHRIST my master, Christ my head,
CHRIST who for my sins hath bled,
CHRIST my glory, Christ my crown,
CHRIST the plant of great renown,
CHRIST my comforter on high,
CHRIST my hope is ever nigh,
CHRIST is coming in the air,
CHRIST—Come quickly is my prayer!

—Continental Press.

verses does not refer to the last day of all time, but to the "last day" of the present form of the kingdom. It is to be noted, however, that the present form of the kingdom is not the final form. This fact is indicated plainly in the following passages:

"Thy kingdom come thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).

"Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:25).

It becomes obvious from a careful study of the parables of Matthew thirteen that the present form of the kingdom contains false professors (tares and bad fish), while other passages refer to a kingdom in which only the righteous will enter.

It is true that our Lord is now head over His spiritual kingdom, but the present form of the kingdom will soon see its "last day." It will be then that our Lord will sit on His own throne — the throne of David — and thus usher in the new kingdom. This fact is clearly seen by comparing Luke 1:32 with Revelation 3:21.

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32).

"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" (Revelation 3:21).

It is to be noted very carefully that our Lord is now sitting with

the Father in His throne. It is also to be noted very carefully that the Son will eventually sit on His own throne — the throne of David. It will be at this time that the overcomers will sit with Him.

"The Lord Jesus will ascend His throne and usher in the millennium — a thousand year period in which Satan will be bound and the saints will reign with Christ (Rev. 20:1-7).

Our Lord Jesus is to ascend His throne at His second coming as is shown by the word "then" in Matthew 25:31:

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory."

It will be at this time that the future form of the kingdom will be established as is declared in Matthew 25:34:

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).

The above passage concurs with Luke 19:12 where a "certain nobleman" represents Christ.

The future form of the kingdom to which I refer will be upon this earth. This fact is established by Revelation 5:10 and Zechariah 14:9:

"And hast made us kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10).

"And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one" (Zech. 14:9).

The future kingdom, in fact, according to Matthew 19:28, will be on the new earth.

"And Jesus said unto them" (Continued on Page 7 Column 1)

LATER

(Continued from Page 6)

Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Mt. 19:28).

The regeneration referred to in the above verse refers to the new heaven and new earth. A.T. Robertson, when commenting on this verse, said, "The new birth of the world is to be fulfilled when Jesus sits on the throne of His glory." The best commentary, however, on Matthew 19:28 is Isaiah 65:17-25 and 66:22-23.

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But ye shall be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 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. There shall be no more thence and infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the works of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 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" (Isaiah 65:17-25).

"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. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 66:22, 23).

The above verses refer to the reign of Christ upon the earth — the reign which is to last for one thousand years (millennium). All of Israel who remain at the end of the great tribulation will enter into the millennium. This fact is confirmed by the following passages:

"And I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness" (Isaiah 1:25-27).

"And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called ho-

ly, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning" (Isaiah 4:3, 4).

"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: for all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:24-27).

"And so all Israel shall be saved: As it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Romans 11:26, 27).

It is thought by some that "all Israel" in Romans 11:26 refers to all the elect (including Gentiles), but if the entire chapter is considered very carefully, we will find the reference to be to literal Israel. There, in fact, is a contrast all the way through Romans eleven — a contrast between Gentiles and Israel, and it is obvious from verse twenty-five that the contrast continues. We, therefore, believe that all of literal Israel who are living at the end of the great tribulation, will enter into the millennium. We have a problem on our hands if Romans 11:26 does not refer to literal Israel. This problem arises from Isaiah 1:26 where our Lord promises to "restore the judges as at the first" and from Jeremiah 33:7 where our Lord promises to "build them as at the first."

Jerusalem, in fact, during the millennium, will become the center of government and religious life as is clearly shown from the following passages:

"And many people shall go up and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:3, 4).

"The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more" (Joel 3:16, 17).

We believe that Revelation 20:1-7 refers to the same period as is referred to in the above verses.

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and

a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 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 a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon 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. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 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. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison" (Revelation 20:1-7).

You will note from the above passages that Satan is to be bound for one thousand years. We are sure that Satan is not bound now and we do not know of a time when he has been bound, except for some individual cases (Matthew 12:29 and Luke 11:22). Satan, throughout the New Testament, is not chained, but is seen as catching "away that which is sown in the heart" and "sowing tares in the field." It is obvious, therefore, that the kingdom referred to in Revelation 20:1-7 is the same as we have been considering — the kingdom our Lord will set up when He returns and ascends His throne.

We wish to emphasize again that the passages which refer to these days as the "last" days, must be understood in the light of other passages (Matt. 13:32; Luke 18:30; Ephesians 1:21; 2:7 and Hebrews) which speak of the "world to come," "the ages to come" and "age to come." In the light of these latter passages, the former ones can only mean that we are now living in the last days and times of the present order of things. The latter passages, however, point to other ages that are yet to come.

There are some who term the age in which we are now living, "the gospel age" meaning that the gospel will not be preached after this age ends. The term "gospel age," however, is a term which man has coined. One, in fact, does not find this term in the New Testament. The Scriptures, in fact, term this age as "the times of the Gentiles." We have no ground, therefore, to teach that this is the only age in which the gospel will be preached. We even read of an angel who will preach the gospel during the great tribulation. The 144,000 sealed ones and the two witnesses will also preach the gospel during the tribulation.

"And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14).

There, as a result of the gospel being preached during the tribulation, will be a great multitude regenerated. These will come from every nation,

kindred and tongue.

"And after this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Rev. 7:9).

We know from Revelation 7:14 that this "great multitude" are to come from the great tribulation.

It has been thought by some that the term "first resurrection" in Revelation 20:5, rules out any resurrection prior to this time. They, therefore, do not believe that the Scriptures teach that there will be two phases to our Lord's return. The point these individuals are missing is that all believers will enter into the "first resurrection," but each in his own order. It should be emphasized that the terms "first resurrection" and "second death" do not mean first and second in time. The "second death" remains the "second death" to every person who enters into it and no matter when he or she enters into it. This fact is also true of the "first resurrection." All the redeemed, in fact, will enter into the "first resurrection." We are sure that the "first resurrection" referred to in Revelation 20:5 is not the first in time, since our Lord and many saints have already come forth from the dead.

"And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matt. 27:52, 53).

The two witnesses will also be resurrected prior to Revelation 20:5. It becomes obvious, then, that all believers enter into the "first resurrection," but each in his own order with Christ as the "firstfruits."

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming" (I Cor. 15:20-23).

I, when I harvest my potatoes, dig some early and some late; yet they are all a part of the same harvest. The same truth applies to the "first resurrection" or the "second death" (the false prophet and the beast will enter the second death one thousand years before the rest, and yet, both groups will enter into the second death).

Let us now look at Revelation 20:4 again and observe the pronoun "they." The first "they" in this verse looks back to the armies that follow our Lord out of Heaven (Revelation 19:14). These armies will compose the "Bride of Christ." It is very important to note that they have already been raised, raptured, judged, rewarded and married to the Lamb. All of these events will have occurred before they ride out of Heaven with the Lamb to the battle of Armageddon. How will all of these saints obtain such a glorified stature, if there are no first and second phases to our Lord's return? Will they be rewarded and married to the Lamb while many saints are still in sound churches upon the earth? Many sound Baptists would not be privileged to be in the Bride if such were true. I'm convinced, therefore, that the rapture will have

Missionary To New Guinea Eld. Fred T. Halliman



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already occurred when the armies of Revelation 19:14 ride out of Heaven. The "first resurrection" of Revelation 20:5, of course, follows Revelation 19:14 and therefore, does not prove that there was no resurrection seven years earlier at the rapture.

The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew is one of the main chapters which is used to teach that our Lord will not come in the air for His saints until after the tribulation. Their contention is that Matthew 24:29-31 and I Thessalonians 4:13-18 have to do with the same period. It will be found, however, that there is a vast difference between these two sets of passages. The difference being that those in Matthew 24 are gathered from Heaven, while those in I Thessalonians 4 are gathered from earth. We see, then, that I Thessalonians 4 has to do with the first phase of our Lord's return, while Matthew 24 has to do with the second phase at the end of the tribulation. It, in fact, is very obvious that I Thessalonians 4:13-18 does not have to do with our Lord's return after the tribulation, since I Thessalonians 5:2-4 teaches that the people will be saying "peace and safety." We all know that there will be no indication of "peace and safety" at the end of the great tribulation. We, therefore, conclude that Matthew 24 and I Thessalonians 4 have to do with different phases of our Lord's return. Let us, in order to prove our point, take a close look at Matthew 24.

Matthew twenty-four was delivered by the Lord to His disciples less than one week before He was nailed to the cross. He, when this message was delivered, had already spent His last hours in the temple. He, in fact, had already finished His public ministry. He had closed His public ministry with a very solemn announcement to the nation of Israel — the announcement being;

(Continued on Page 8 Column 1)

If you would have God's guidance, you must make spiritual things your main business.

LATER

(Continued from Page 7)

"Your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:38).

He had also declared to Israel:

"Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:39).

The disciples were puzzled by our Lord's remarks, therefore, they directed His attention to the great structure of the temple; especially, did they direct His attention to the large stones, saying:

"Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here" (Mark 13:1).

Our Lord, in response to His disciples, said:

"See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:2).

His disciples continued the discussion by asking,

"Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3).

We, if we carefully compare Matthew, Mark and Luke's account of our Lord's discourse on the subject before us, will find a notable difference in the account of each. The difference, of course, was ordered by God the Spirit. The difference between Matthew and Luke rests in the fact that Matthew's account is based upon a threefold question (Matt. 24:3) by the disciples, while Luke's account is based upon a twofold question (Luke 21:7). Luke omits the question relative to the coming of Christ.

There is also a second important difference between Matthew and Luke's account. I have reference to the time of "fleeing." This difference is seen by comparing Matthew 24:14, 16 with Luke 21:20, 21.

"When ye therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains" (Matt. 24:15, 16).

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains" (Luke 21:20, 21).

Matthew's account relates to that which is yet future, while Luke's account was fulfilled by the year 70 A.D. It was in 70 A.D. that Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by Titus.

We, in order to understand Matthew 24, must understand it in the light of Matthew 23; especially, must we join Matthew 24 with Matthew 23:38 and 39.

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate, for I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:38, 39).

The coming of the Lord here in verse 39 does not refer to His coming in the air, but the reference is to His return to Israel at the end of the tribulation. It is this fact that is the key which unlocks Matthew 24:3.

This fact makes it obvious that everything in Matthew 24 is yet future and is directed primarily to Israel. This fact is seen more clearly by considering the word "and" which begins chapter 24.

"And Jesus went out and departed from the temple."

The "and" denotes that Matthew 24 is a continuation of the same subject, without any break. Chapter 24, in fact, is a confirmation of that which our Lord prophesied in chapter 23; namely,

"...Your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:38).

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple."

We come now to take a close look at Matthew 24:3.

"And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be?"

The first question here in verse three is to be considered separately from the rest of the verse. The balance of the verse reads,

"And what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?"

The first question here in verse three ("when shall these things be"), referred specifically to the overthrow of the temple and the destruction of the city. It is to be noted carefully that only Luke records our Lord's reply to this question (Luke 21:20-24). God the Spirit guided Matthew to omit our Lord's reply from his account.

The disciples, after asking, "when shall these things be," continued by asking,

"And what shall be the sign of thy coming?"

We, in order to understand this question, must determine what the disciples had in mind when they asked this additional question. It is to be remembered that, up to this point in our Lord's ministry, He had said nothing about going to the Father's house to prepare a place for His people. He had said nothing regarding His coming again to gather His people unto himself. There, in fact, had been nothing said regarding His coming in the air and removing the saints from the earth. These facts make it very obvious that this phase of our Lord's return was not in the mind of the disciples. The only phase of His return that could have been in their minds was that which he referred to in Matthew 23:39:

"Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

This verse, of course, looks forward to the Lord's return to the very mountain on which He was sitting when He made this prophecy.

"And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives..." (Zech. 14:4).

The disciples, in Matthew 24:3, continued their questioning by asking,

"And of the end of the age?"

We, at this point, must determine what age (world) the disciples had reference to. There can obviously be only one age to which they referred, since they were Jews. It is true that they were disciples, but it was as Jews that they asked this question. They were Jews in spirit, hopes and expectations. They, at this point, had no real belief in the death and resurrection of the Lord. It is failure to recognize these facts that has caused many to believe that Matthew 24 teaches that the church must go through the tribulation.

It is to be noted carefully that our Lord, in answering the disciples, referred them to Daniel. He said,

"When ye therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place..." (Matt. 24:15).

The Lord's reference was to Daniel's seventieth week — the week referred to in Daniel 9:24-27.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks, shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Verses 4-14 of Matthew 24 have to do with the first half of Daniel's week (above) — the great tribulation, and verses 15-30 of Matthew 24 have to do with the second half of Daniel's week. It is true that verses four through seven describe conditions that have existed throughout the Christian era, but these will be greatly intensified during the tribulation.

The major portion of the book of Revelation has to do with the same period as is found here in Matthew twenty-four. The events that follow the breaking of the seals, correspond exactly with Matthew twenty-four. An accurate comparison can be made between Matthew 24: 4, 5 and Revelation 6:1, 2; Matthew 24: 6, 7 and Revelation 6: 3, 4; Matthew 24:7 and Revelation 6:5-8. We, if we were to continue our comparison, would find that Matthew 24:8-28 corresponds to Revelation 6:9-11 and Matthew 24: 29, 30 correspond to Revelation 6:12-17.

We come now to Matthew 24:8,

"And these are the beginning of sorrows," or "birth pangs."

These "birth pangs" are the travail that Israel shall suffer during the great tribulation and before her birth as a regenerated Israel.

We come now to take a closer look at Matthew 24:15,

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand)."

We, in this verse, are at the dividing line between the first three and one-half and the second three and one-half years of the great tribulation.

It may be thought by some that the Lord's use of the word "ye" ("when ye therefore shall see"), means that His prediction had to be fulfilled during the days of the disciples. Our Lord, however, was speaking to them as representatives of Israel. We find the same type language in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 where Paul said, "then we which are alive." Paul included himself since he was one of all the redeemed. He, in other words, was a representative figure.

We said, above, that Matthew 24:15 is the dividing line of the great tribulation. The "abomination of desolation," in fact, is the image of Anti-Christ (Rev. 13) which is yet to be set up in the re-built temple in Jerusalem. Titus, in 70 A.D., defiled the temple, but Daniel's reference to the "abomination of desolation" was not to Titus, but to Anti-Christ. This fact is made clear by Daniel 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11.

It is to be noted very carefully that it is in the "midst of the week" that the "sacrifice and oblation" are made to cease. It, in fact, will be at this time that the Anti-Christ will remove his disguise and openly oppose Christ the Lord. He will even demand that divine honor be bestowed upon himself.

After the "sacrifice and oblation" are made to cease and the "abomination of desolation" has come, then will come that which is recorded in Matthew 24:21, 22:

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake (i.e., the sake of the godly Jewish remnant) those days shall be shortened."

These verses do not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D., but to the deliverance of Israel as is recorded in Daniel 12:1,

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book" (i.e., God's elect from among the Jews).

We see, then, that Matthew 24:21 refers to Israel's deliverance rather than their destruction in 70 A.D.

We come now to Matthew 24:23 where we read,

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not."

This Scripture looks forward to the day when the man of sin shall sit in the temple of God "shewing himself that he is God" (II Thess. 2:3, 4).

We, in Matthew 24:27, have further proof that this chapter is directed to Israel.

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be."

The title "Son of man" cannot be found in Paul's writings. This is because his epistles are addressed to the Lord's churches. We are awaiting God's Son, but Israel is awaiting the "Son of man," or the Son of David, their King. He, when He comes at the end of the tribulation, will come as King and will reign on the earth for one thousand years.

"Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:34).

The "generation" referred to in this verse is the same generation that is referred to in Matthew 12:45 — "the wicked generation." The meaning, then, of "this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled," is that Israel, as a wicked nation ("generation"), would not cease until all these things are fulfilled at the close of the great tribulation. They, at the close of the tribulation, will cease to be a wicked nation.

"This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord" (Psa. 102:13).

The reference to the "days of Noah" in Matthew 24:37-39 are also in agreement with the interpretation we have given the rest of this chapter. Noah lived at the close of the Antediluvian age. Those described here in Matthew 24 will be living at the end of the Jewish age. Noah and his family were delivered from the utter destruction of the flood: so there will be an elect Jewish remnant who will be preserved through the tribulation.

Noah and his family, after the flood, set their feet upon the earth which had been swept clean by the flood. Israel, in like manner, is to enter the millennium.

Enoch, the type of the church, was caught out of this world before the flood came. The Lord's saints, in like manner, will be caught out before the tribulation.

(Continued next week)



The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church and Pastor Jarrell Huffman of 1204 Jefferson Street, Duncan, Oklahoma, would like to announce their upcoming Bible Conference scheduled for April 30 through May 1 and 2.

The theme of this conference is "Comforting Truths in Troublous Times." Twelve of God's choicest preachers are scheduled to preach beginning on Friday evening at 7:00 continuing through Sunday evening May 2.

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