

WRITINGS OF JOHN R RICE

by John R. Rice

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by John R. Rice, compiled for study and devotional reading.

48 Chapters

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01.00. How Great Soul Winners Were Filled With the Holy Spirit

How Great Soul Winners Were Filled With the Holy Spirit

by

John R. Rice

John R. Rice (1895 - 1980) Although Dr. Rice served as pastor of Baptist churches in Dallas and Shamrock, Texas--in addition to starting about a dozen others from his successful independent crusades--his primary work was as an evangelist. He was a friend and peer of Billy and Ma Sunday, Bob Jones, Sr., W. B. Riley, Homer Rodeheaver, H. A. Ironside, Robert G. Lee, Harry Rimmer and other leaders of that era. He himself held huge citywide crusades in Chicago, Cleveland, Buffalo, Seattle and numerous other key metropolitan centers.

Called "The 20th Century's Mightiest Pen," Dr. Rice authored more than 200 books and booklets circulating in excess of 60 million copies before his death, about a dozen of which were translated into at least 35 foreign languages.

Preached in union revival campaign in Seattle, Washington, November 7, 1945.

Note: In addition to converting Scripture references to tool tips for the top format, his original section titles were modified.

01.01. Introduction

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." -- Acts 1:8

".. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." -- 2Co 13:1

SOMEONE HAS SAID that one example is worth a thousand arguments. We do not believe that one human illustration is worth more than any statement of Scripture, and yet illustrations help us to understand the statements of Scripture; and often one illustration does more to show what the Bible really means by what it says than much human logical explanation.

It is not wise to base a doctrine upon human experiences. For example, thousands of people have been converted to God, really saved, at mourners' benches. But that is not any reason for anybody to say that a mourners' bench is essential to salvation. Some people delight in their "experience," remembering that they felt a great ecstasy and shouted the praises of God when they were born again. But it would be foolish for us to thereby conclude that one cannot be saved without shouting the praises of God. It is never wise to make a doctrine out of our human experiences. Nevertheless, when the Bible clearly teaches a truth, it is refreshing and helpful to have human experiences testify to the truth of the Bible doctrine. So in this chapter I want to tell the story of how great soul winners were filled with the Holy Spirit. And we will find that the experiences of the greatest soul winners verify the clear statements of Jesus Christ in Acts 1:8, given above. When great men of God were filled with the Holy Spirit they received power for soul-winning witness and testimony. The best soul winners did not talk in tongues, they did not claim to have the carnal nature eradicated, but they did receive power from God for soul-winning work.

In that great book, *The Holy Spirit: Who He Is, and What He Does*, Dr. R. A. Torrey in chapter five gives three defining statements as to what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is. So, before we consider the experiences of great soul winners and how they were filled with the Spirit, let us consider Dr. Torrey's definition. Dr. Torrey says the following:

In the first place, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a definite experience of which one may know whether he has received it or not

In the second place, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is a work of the Holy Spirit distinct from and additional to His regenerating work

In the third place, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is a work of the Holy Spirit always connected with and primarily for the purpose of testimony and service.

While we do not insist on the term, "the Baptism with the Holy Spirit," we believe Dr. Torrey has given a good definition of this special endowment of power from on high. With this in mind, we will do well to consider the testimonies of great men who were filled with the Holy Spirit and see that the fullness of the Holy Spirit is indeed a special endowment of power fitting Christians to win

souls, and we will see how other Christians received this enduement of power.

01.02. D. L. Moody

In *The Life of D. L. Moody*, written by his son, is a very simple but striking account of the secret of D. L. Moody's power. Here is the story of Mr. Moody's endowment of power, as given on pages 146, 147, and 149. The year 1871 was a critical one in Mr. Moody's career. He realized more and more how little he was fired by personal acquirements for his work. An intense hunger and thirst for spiritual power were aroused in him by two women who used to attend the meetings and sit on the front seat. He could see by the expression on their faces that they were praying. At the close of services they would say to him:

"We have been praying for you."

"Why don't you pray for the people?" Mr. Moody would ask.

"Because you need the power of the Spirit," they would say.

"I need the power! Why," said Mr. Moody, in relating the incident years after, "I thought I had power. I had the largest congregations in Chicago, and there were many conversions. I was in a sense satisfied. But right along those two godly women kept praying for me, and their earnest talk about anointing for special service set me to thinking. I asked them to come and talk with me, and they poured out their hearts in prayer that I might receive the filling of the Holy Spirit. There came a great hunger into my soul. I did not know what it was. I began to cry out as I never did before. I really felt that I did not want to live if I could not have this power for service."

Then the book tells of the great Chicago fire, of D. L. Moody's relief work, the building of the north side tabernacle, and of his visiting in the East to secure funds for his work. Then the narrative continues:

During this Eastern visit the hunger for more spiritual power was still upon Mr. Moody.

"My heart was not in the work of begging," he said. "I could not appeal. I was crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit. Well, one day, in the city of New York -- oh, what a day! -- I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it; it is almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of which he never spoke for fourteen years. I can only say that God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand. I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different; I did not present any new truths, and yet hundreds were converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience if you should give me all the world -- it would be as the small dust of the balance."

Notice in the above account, in the words of D. L. Moody himself, that while he had great joy in the coming of the Holy Spirit upon him in power, yet the principal result was: "The sermons were not different: I did not present any new truths, and yet hundreds were converted."

D. L. Moody himself made much of this doctrine that Christians should be filled with the Holy Spirit, or baptized with the Holy Spirit, as he himself often put it. In the book, *Moody, His Words, Work*,

and Workers, edited by Rev. W, H. Daniels, are given representative doctrinal messages by D. L. Moody. I want to quote here from one message, beginning on page 396 of that book, to show Moody's clear doctrine on this matter of an endowment of power from on high.

D. L. Moody's Article on THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR SERVICE In some sense, and to some extent, the Holy Spirit dwells with every believer; but there is another gift, which may be called the gift of the Holy Spirit for service. This gift, it strikes me, is entirely distinct and separate from conversion and assurance. God has a great many children that have no power, and the reason is, they have not the gift of the Holy Ghost for service. God doesn't seem to work with them, and I believe it is because they have not sought this gift. In the opening of Luk 11:1-54 we find the disciples asking Christ to teach them how to pray. After doing so he goes on to explain it, and in Luk 11:9-10, and Luk 11:13 says: "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!" (Luk 11:9-10; Luk 11:13)

Now the lesson to be learned from this is, that we must pray for the Holy Spirit for service; pray that we may be anointed and qualified to do the work that God has for us to do. I believe that Elisha was a child of God before Elijah met him; but he was not qualified for the work of a prophet until the spirit of Elijah came upon him. We have to ask for this blessing, to knock for it, to seek for it, and find out why it does not come. If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we have some hidden sin, God is not going to give us the baptism of power. We are not as "an empty vessel"; we are not ready to receive the blessing, and so it doesn't come. In Luk 3:1-38 we find that Christ was baptized by the Holy Ghost before he entered upon his ministry. This should teach us to get anointed before starting out to do the Lord's work. Christ was the Son of God just as much before his baptism as afterward, but even he needed this power; and if the Son of God, who never had sinned, needed it, how much more do we need it, and how hopeless it will be if we attempt to work before we get it.

Again you will notice Mr. Moody's teaching that the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Christians, what Moody and Torrey and most other great soul winners have called "the baptism of the Holy Spirit," is simply an endowment of power for soul-winning service; that Christians should pray for this endowment of power from on high. That Moody's work was done in the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, that he really had upon him the power of Pentecost, was obvious to all who knew him well. At Moody's funeral C. I. Scofield, then about 56 years old, spoke. And though later -- when there was such a hue and cry raised by the followers of Darby against the terminology of Moody and Torrey and other great soul winners on this matter of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or the fullness of the Spirit -- Scofield avoided it, yet on this occasion he used the terminology of Moody and of Torrey and of Finney. Here are Dr. Scofield's words over the body of the great soul winner, Moody: The secrets of Dwight L. Moody's power were: First, in a definite experience of Christ's saving grace. He had passed out of death into life, and he knew it. Secondly, he believed in the divine authority of the Scriptures. The Bible was to him the voice of God, and he made it resound as such in the consciences of men. Thirdly, he was baptized with the Holy Spirit, and he knew it. [Italics supplied] It was to him as definite an experience as his conversion (The Life of D. L. Moody by his son, page 561).

Oh, how earnest was Moody in his burden to keep the power of the Spirit of God upon him! He said once, in his sermon on "Hindered Power," in the book, *Secret Power*, "I have lived long enough to know that if I cannot have the power of the Spirit of God on me to help me to work for Him, I would rather die, than to live just for the sake of living." In Dr. R. A. Torrey's great message on *Why God Used D. L. Moody*, he named seven qualities that made Moody the wonderfully used man that he was. And the seventh, last and most important was that Moody was "definitely endowed with power from on high." Listen to what R. A. Torrey said (pages 51-55) about Mr. Moody: The seventh thing that was the secret of why God used D. L. Moody was that, he had a very definite endowment with power from on high, a very clear and definite baptism with the Holy Ghost. Mr. Moody knew he had the "baptism with the Holy Ghost"; he had no doubt about it. In his early days he was a great hustler, he had a tremendous desire to do something, but he had no real power. He worked very largely in the energy of the flesh. But there were two humble Free Methodist women who used to come over to his meetings in the Y.M.C.A. One was "Auntie Cook" and the other Mrs. Snow. (I think her name was not Snow at that time.) These two women would come to Mr. Moody at the close of his meetings and say: "We are praying for you." Finally, Mr. Moody became somewhat nettled and said to them one night: "Why are you praying for me? Why don't you pray for the unsaved?" They replied: "We are praying that you may get the power." Mr. Moody did not know what that meant, but he got to thinking about it, and then went to these women and said: "I wish you would tell me what you mean," and they told him about the definite baptism with the Holy Ghost. Then he asked that he might pray with them and not they merely pray for him.

Auntie Cook once told me of the intense fervour with which Mr. Moody prayed on that occasion. She told me in words that I scarcely dare repeat, though I have never forgotten them. And he not only prayed with them, but he also prayed alone. Not long after, one day on his way to England, he was walking up Wall Street in New York (Mr. Moody very seldom told this and I almost hesitate to tell it) and in the midst of the bustle and hurry of that city his prayer was answered; the power of God fell upon him as he walked up the street and he had to hurry off to the house of a friend and ask that he might have a room by himself, and in that room he stayed alone for hours; and the Holy Ghost came upon him filling his soul with such joy that at last he had to ask God to withhold His hand, lest he die on the spot from very joy. He went out from that place with the power of the Holy Ghost upon him, and when he got to London (partly through the prayers of a bedridden saint in Mr. Lessey's church) the power of God wrought through him mightily in North London and hundreds were added to the churches, and that was what led to his being invited over to the wonderful campaign that followed in later years.

Time and again Mr. Moody would come to me and say: "Torrey, I want you to preach on baptism with the Holy Ghost." I do not know how many times he asked me to speak on that subject. Once, when I had been invited to preach in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York (invited at Mr. Moody's suggestion; had it not been for his suggestion the invitation would never have been extended to me), just before I started for New York, Mr. Moody drove up to my house and said: "Torrey, they want you to preach at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York. It is a great, big church, cost a million dollars to build it." Then he continued: "Torrey, I just want to ask one thing of you. I want to tell you what to preach about. You will preach that sermon of yours on 'Ten Reasons Why I Believe the Bible to Be the Word of God' and your sermon on 'The Baptism With the Holy Ghost.'" Time and again, when a call came to me to go off to some church, he would

come up to me and say: "Now, Torrey, be sure and preach on the baptism with the Holy Ghost."

Oh, if we had more men filled with the Holy Spirit, endued with power from on high as Moody was, we would have more men showing Moody's results!

01.03. R. A. Torrey

Already you know, by what Dr. Torrey said about D. L. Moody, that he believed, as Moody did, that one to win souls for Christ must have the power of God. a special endowment of power, that is, must be filled with the Spirit of God. Torrey was in some sense the successor of D. L. Moody. He was certainly Moody's most trusted helper. In one world-wide tour R. A. Torrey's campaigns resulted in a hundred thousand souls saved. So says George T. B. Davis in his book, *Twice Around the World With Alexander*. Mr. Davis says that Torrey and Alexander were the "successors of Moody and Sankey." Telling of Torrey's and Alexander's campaigns in England, Davis said, "In Birmingham during a single month's campaign 7,700 confessed Christ; while in London, in a five months' Mission, held in Royal Albert Hall, England's finest auditorium, and in two specially erected iron buildings, about 17,000 made public profession. In all, during the three years' work in the British Isles, about 80,000 converts were recorded . . ." Thousands of others were saved in Australia; and of course many, many thousands in campaigns in America. So the scholarly Torrey walked in the steps of the uneducated Moody. Both of them alike were filled with the Holy Spirit. And let us read what Dr. Torrey says about himself.

In his book, *The Holy Spirit: Who He Is, and What He Does*, in the chapter, "The Baptism With the Holy Spirit," pages 107-108, Dr. Torrey says:

The address of this afternoon, and the addresses of the days immediately to follow, are the outcome of an experience, and that experience was the outcome of a study of the Word of God. After I had been a Christian for some years, and after I had been in the ministry for some years, my attention was strongly attracted to certain phrases found in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles, such as "baptized with the Holy Spirit," "filled with the Spirit," "the Holy Spirit fell upon them," "the gift of the Holy Spirit," "endued with power from on high," and other closely allied phrases. As I studied these various phrases in their context, it became clear to me that they all stood for essentially the same experience; and it also became clear to me that God has provided for each child of His in this present dispensation that they should be thus "baptized with the Spirit," or, "filled with the Spirit."

As I studied the subject still further, I became convinced that they described an experience which I did not myself possess, and I went to work to secure for myself the experience thus described. I sought earnestly that I might "be baptized with the Holy Spirit." I went at it very ignorantly. I have often wondered if anyone ever went at it any more ignorantly than I did. But while I was ignorant, I was thoroughly sincere and in earnest, and God met me, as He always meets the sincere and earnest soul, no matter how ignorant he may be; and God gave me what I sought, I was "baptized with the Holy Spirit." And the result was a transformed Christian life and a transformed ministry.

Torrey, too, was filled with the Holy Spirit. He did not talk in tongues, he never claimed to have the carnal nature eradicated, but he did receive a mighty endowment of power from on high. It came after he was saved and made him a mighty soul winner.

In the book, *Holiness and Power*, pages 337-338, Rev. A. M. Hills tells of a letter from Dr. Torrey in the following words:

I wrote a letter to Brother Torrey of Chicago, a month ago, asking him to tell me how he came to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and what the blessing had done for him. He replied as follows: "I was led to seek the baptism with the Holy Spirit because I became convinced from the study of the Acts of the Apostles that no one had a right to preach the gospel until he had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. At last I was led to the place where I said that I would never enter the pulpit again until I had been baptized with the Holy Ghost and knew it, or until God in some way told me to go. I obtained the blessing in less than a week. If I had understood the Bible as I do now there need not have passed any days.

"As to what the blessing has done for me, I could not begin to tell. It has brought a joy into my soul that I never dreamed of before; a liberty in preaching that makes preaching an unspeakable delight where before it was a matter of dread; it has opened to me a door of usefulness, so that now, instead of preaching to a very little church, I have calls every year to proclaim the truth to very many thousands, being invited to conventions in every part of the land to address vast audiences; and I have a church today, in addition to my work in the Institute, that has a membership of upwards of thirteen hundred, with an evening audience that sometimes overflows the auditorium of the church, into which we can pack twenty-five hundred people, into the lecture-room below."

This letter by Dr. Torrey was written before he made his world-wide tour and before he was in a life of evangelistic campaigns. Yet he knew that he had been definitely endued with power from on high. He had had a definite time of seeking the power of God and knew that he had found that which he sought. God gave him power in preaching the Word and teaching and it resulted in multitudes saved.

01.04. J. Wilbur Chapman

Rev. A. M. Hills was state evangelist in Michigan for the Congregational church. His book, *Holiness and Power*, is a good book, though we do not vouch for Brother Hills' position on holiness. But Hills tells in the following words, page 336, of a time when Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman went before God and sought His power and found it:

Dr. Wilbur Chapman tells us how he went before God and consecrated himself and then said in faith, "My Father, I now claim from Thee the infilling of the Holy Ghost," and he says: "From that moment to this He has been a living reality. I never knew what it was to love my family before. I never knew what it was to study the Bible before. And why should I, for had I not just then found the key? I never knew what it was to preach before. 'Old things have passed away' in my experience. 'Behold all things have become new.'"

Even more revealing of Dr. Chapman's teaching and practice and experience in the power of the Holy Spirit is the following passage by Dr. Chapman:

"I had," said Dr. Chapman, "an ignorant man in my church, in Philadelphia, by the name of S., who utterly murdered the king's English. When he first stood up to talk, and you heard him for the first time, you would be amazed, and would hope that he would not speak long. But soon you would begin to wonder at the marvelous power of his words. I will tell you the secret of it. I once called thirty of the workers of my church together to pray for the baptism of power for a special work. He rose and left the room. I afterward found him alone in a little room of the church pleading in prayer: 'O Lord, take all sin from me. Teach me what it is that hinders Thy coming. I will give up everything. Come, O Holy Spirit, come and take possession of me, and help me to win men.' He arose from his knees and met me face to face, and said: 'Pastor, I have received the Holy Ghost.' To my certain knowledge, since that time (about three years) that ignorant man has led more than a hundred men to Jesus." (*Holiness and Power*, pages 329-30).

The marvelous ministry of J. Wilbur Chapman can be explained only by the fact that he, like Moody and Torrey, was filled with the Holy Spirit, definitely endued with the Holy Spirit, or filled with the Holy Spirit, or baptized with the Holy Spirit, whichever term you care to use. Chapman was associated with Moody, was selected by Moody to be vice-president of Moody Bible Institute and was the author of the book, *The Life and Work of D. L. Moody*. In fact, Dr. Chapman tells us that it was Moody himself who led Chapman to the first full assurance of salvation.

In the biography of J. Wilbur Chapman by Ottman, is this striking statement: "He had witnessed such marvelous manifestations of the Spirit of God in so many of his meetings that he felt a keen disappointment when the tide failed to reach the full flood." He was a mighty, heart-moving preacher, filled with the Holy Ghost. Chapman himself had prayed for the fullness of the Spirit He taught others to pray for "the baptism of power for a special work."

01.05. Billy Sunday

Mr. Homer Rodeheaver, Billy Sunday's song leader for the most powerful years of his ministry, has the following to say about Mr. Sunday:

Mr. Sunday was criticized as few men. He could stand criticism. Put the spotlight on Mr. Sunday from any point of view. The result is to expose the pitiable smallness of his critics. He did things that were epic. Under his ministry more lives were changed than by any man who has preached the gospel. More than a million men and women "hit the sawdust trail." He was responsible for multitudes of ministers, missionaries, revived churches, Bible schools, and Christian activities that reach to the four corners of the earth (Twenty Years With Billy Sunday, p. 24).

It seems probable that in a harder day and with greater competition, Billy Sunday won more souls than did D. L. Moody, or any other single man who ever lived, as Mr. Rodeheaver says. Again Mr. Rodeheaver says, "No doubt he spoke directly to more people in the course of his career than any other man in the world. He did this without amplifiers or mechanical devices to carry his voice" (Twenty Years With Billy Sunday, p. 18).

Now was Billy Sunday himself filled with the Holy Spirit? Did he have a special anointing of God, an enduement of power from on high such as made possible the ministry of Moody and of Torrey and of Chapman and of other great soul winners? Beyond any shadow of doubt, Billy Sunday did have such an enduement of power, such a definite filling of the Spirit!

When I first considered this matter I was disappointed that we did not have from Billy Sunday's lips the naming of a certain date and the description of a certain experience, when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in a special enduement of soul-winning power. I rather wanted it down in black and white in Billy Sunday's own words, some account of a wonderful period of emotion and crisis and glory to which we could point. I do not know of any such statement by Billy Sunday or of any published record of a time when Billy Sunday was definitely endued with power. And the more I think about it and pray about it the more clearly God has seemed to speak to my heart in this matter, and to show me His infinite wisdom in not allowing us to have a definite description of the time when Sunday was first filled with the Holy Spirit. I cannot describe the first time I myself was filled with the Holy Spirit. For one thing, I began soul winning when I was fifteen years old. For another thing, I had the mighty power of God upon me in soul winning before I understood the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. I prayed for power before I knew the Bible terminology for the power I needed and wanted. I made the surrender to the will of God and gave myself wholly to soul-winning work before I knew that these were the requirements which God made for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. So I cannot describe a certain climax and crisis of emotion and glorious assurance to mark the first time I was filled with the Holy Spirit. And the same thing seems to have been true about Billy Sunday and of thousands of other remarkable soul winners. No doubt God in His mercy wanted us to see that the evidence that He himself describes in Acts 1:8 : "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you..." is enough. Soul-winning power is enough.

But was Billy Sunday conscious of being filled with the Holy Spirit? Did he meet the requirements for a special enduement of power as other soul winners have, the same conditions? Was he conscious of a supernatural enabling that turned the hearts of sinners to Christ when he preached? Assuredly, beyond any shadow of doubt, he not only had met God's requirements, the same requirements that other men met, and had the same supernatural enabling, the same enduement of power; but he was definitely conscious of that fullness of the Spirit and relied upon the Holy Spirit to do His wondrous pentecostal work through him, Mr. Sunday, in saving souls.

We would not need further evidence on this matter than the million souls, and more, who turned to God under Mr. Sunday's preaching. Souls are saved by the power of the Holy Spirit. No one ever wins souls through any other power. Not human zeal, not human personality, not scholarship nor even the preaching of the Word of God in human wisdom can save souls. Even of the Word of God itself we are told, "the letter killeth..." (2Co 3:6). So if I never had a word from Billy Sunday, never had any indication of his doctrinal position on this matter, I would know that Mr. Sunday was mightily filled with the Spirit of God for winning souls.

But the evidence is overwhelming that Billy Sunday knew what God's conditions were, that he consciously met those conditions, and that he knew he was supremely filled with the Spirit of God.

Remember, first, that Billy Sunday was a disciple of J. Wilbur Chapman. He worked with the famous evangelist three years when Mr. Chapman was having great union revival campaigns. Then when Billy Sunday started his own work as an evangelist, it was sermons by Dr. Chapman which he preached. "Seven sermons given him by Dr. Chapman, plus his own testimony, made the eight with which he started his evangelistic career" (Twenty Years With Billy Sunday, p. 21). His three years under J. Wilbur Chapman molded his doctrine on the power of the Holy Spirit just as Moody's influence molded Dr. Chapman's. Billy Sunday always gave more credit to Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman for his preaching than to anybody else. Hence, Billy Sunday believed in and preached a definite fullness of the Holy Spirit as Dr. Chapman believed and preached it.

Billy Sunday's position on this matter is made clear all the more by his own preaching. I have, for example, his printed sermons preached in the Omaha, Nebraska, campaign in 1915. He preached one time on "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:2); once on "But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until. ye be endued with power from on high" (Luk 24:49); once on "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8); and once on "The Revival at Pentecost." Those sermons upon those texts and subjects indicate the importance Billy Sunday himself placed upon a definite enduement of power from on high for soul winning.

But there is an even more remarkable evidence that Billy Sunday felt he was endued with power from on high and that he preached in a wonderful anointing from Heaven. Every time Billy Sunday preached he opened his Bible to one text of Scripture that declares, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach...", laid his sermon notes upon that Scripture and preached with the fire and power of God! On this matter Mr. Rodehearer, his assistant for twenty years, says:

"Invariably he opened the Bible and placed his sermon notes upon the passage in Isaiah, first verse of the sixty-first chapter, which reads: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prisons to them that are bound.' (Isa 61:1)

"Many people wanted to possess the Bible Mr. Sunday had used during a campaign. When he granted the request it would be found that these pages in the book of Isaiah were almost worn out" (Twenty Years With Billy Sunday, by Homer Rodehearer, p. 10).

What experience with God did Billy Sunday have that made him always open the Bible to that one verse of Scripture? What holy vow, what compact with God moved this mighty soul winner that always when he preached the Gospel his Bible lay open on the pulpit with these words, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach..."? Surely Mr. Sunday knew beyond a shadow of doubt that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. And he surely knew that he was anointed to preach. I have no doubt he treasured, beyond any other knowledge, the knowledge that his power was the power of God and that he dare not trifle with it. Knowing that he had a holy anointing, he pleased God instead of men, he preached without any compromise, preached in a way that offended, that cut, that burned and that assaulted and captured the castles of men's hearts for Christ. If Billy Sunday had told me with his own voice, looking me in the face, that he knew he had a definite endowment of power from God for soul winning and that it was a holy trust with which he dared not trifle but must keep its conditions always in mind, it would not be more certain in my mind than it is. When Mr. Sunday and I were on a radio program together, sat on the same platform, and were once guests at the same table he did not tell me of such a definite secret experience. But he was filled with the Holy Ghost and knew it, and claimed this as his treasure above all treasure, his one indispensable equipment for soul winning. That we certainly know by his own emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit in his preaching and by the fact that he always opened his Bible to this one text in Isa 61:1 before preaching the Gospel.

Other people may not have known where Billy Sunday got his power. But he knew, he knew! And he reminded himself of the one source from which he could have blessing and power every time he ever preached! And we are justified in supposing that every time Billy Sunday opened his Bible to Isa 61:1 and laid it on the pulpit before him before beginning his sermon, he made a fresh covenant with God, relying upon the power of the Holy Spirit for that sermon and humbly beseeching God for His blessing. A definite endowment of power from on high is the only possible explanation of Billy Sunday's ministry.

01.06. Charles G. Finney

The Autobiography of Charles G. Finney is one of the most helpful books in print. It was one of four books that have had the greatest influence on my Christian life and ministry. The others were George Muller of Bristol by A. T. Pierson, How to Pray by R. A. Torrey and In His Steps or What Would Jesus Do? by Charles M. Sheldon. But for a pungent and powerful revelation of how God works in soul winning and revival, few if any books ever written can exceed the Autobiography of Charles G. Finney. Finney won multiplied thousands of souls. Although he preached in a smaller area, and though he was handicapped by some errors in theology, Finney probably had as powerful a manifestation of the power of God upon his ministry as did D. L. Moody or any other preacher since the days of Paul, and in the smaller area which he covered in his revival work a larger proportion of the population was saved than has been true, we suppose, in the ministry of any other great evangelist. How he was filled with the Holy Spirit is told on pages 19-23 of the autobiography. Elsewhere Charles G. Finney writes, as quoted by Dr. Oswald J. Smith, in *The Revival We Need*:

I was powerfully converted on the morning of the month of October, 1822. In the evening of the same day I received overwhelming baptisms of the Holy Ghost, that went through me, as it seemed to me, body and soul. I immediately found myself endued with such power from on high that a few words dropped here and there to individuals were the means of their immediate conversion. My words seemed to fasten like barbed arrows in the souls of men. They cut like a sword. They broke the heart like a hammer. Multitudes can attest to this. Oftentimes a word dropped without my remembering it would fasten conviction, and often result in almost immediate conversion. Sometimes I would find myself, in a great measure, empty of this power. I would go and visit, and find that I made no saving impression. I would exhort and pray, with the same result. I would then set apart a day for private fasting and prayer, fearing that this power had departed from me, and would inquire anxiously after the reason of this apparent emptiness. After humbling myself, and crying out for help, the power would return upon me with all its freshness. This has been the experience of my life. This power is a great marvel. I have many times seen people unable to endure the Word. The most simple and ordinary statements would cut men off their seats like a sword, would take away their strength, and render them almost helpless as dead men. Several times it has been true in my experience that I could not raise my voice, or say anything in prayer or exhortation, except in the mildest manner, without overcoming them. This power seems sometimes to pervade the atmosphere of the one who is highly charged with it. Many times great numbers of persons in a community will be clothed with this power when the very atmosphere of the whole place seems to be charged with the life of God. Strangers coming into it, and passing through the place will be instantly smitten with conviction of sin and in many instances converted to Christ. When Christians humble themselves and consecrate their all afresh to Christ, and ask for this power, they will often receive such a baptism that they will be instrumental in converting more souls in one day than in all their lifetime before. While Christians remain humble enough to retain this power, the work of conversion will go on, till whole communities and regions of country

are converted to Christ. The same is true of the ministry.

It is important to notice that Charles G. Finney uses the term, "baptisms of the Holy Ghost." We do not insist upon the term, but sensible people ought not to scoff at the term, a scriptural term, as understood and used by Finney, Moody, Torrey and Chapman. Note also that this fullness of the Spirit comes, says Finney, in answer to prayer. He says that when he found himself losing power, "I would then set apart a day for private fasting and prayer...." Then he says, "After humbling myself, and crying out for help, the power would return upon me with all its freshness. This has been the experience of my life."

Note again that Charles G. Finney is not talking about the eradication of the carnal nature. He did not talk in tongues. He was not seeking some special feeling, though he did have a wonderful sense of God's presence upon him. He sought and found an endowment of power from on high that made him a mighty soul winner!

01.07. Evan Roberts

Dr. Oswald J. Smith, in his book, *The Revival We Need*, pages 42,43, has the following quotation from Evan Roberts, Welsh evangelist:

"For thirteen years," writes Evan Roberts, "I had prayed for the Spirit; and this is the way I was led to pray. William Davies, the deacon, said one night in the society: 'Remember to be faithful. What if the Spirit descended and you were absent? Remember Thomas! What a loss he had!'

"I said to myself: 'I will have the Spirit' and through every kind of weather and in spite of all difficulties, I went to the meetings. Many times, on seeing other boys with the boats on the tide, I was tempted to turn back and join them. But, no. I said to myself: 'Remember your resolve,' and on I went. I went faithfully to the meetings for prayer throughout the ten or eleven years I prayed for a Revival. It was the Spirit that moved me thus to think." At a certain morning meeting which Evan Roberts attended, the evangelist in one of his petitions besought that the Lord would "bend us." The Spirit seemed to say to Roberts: "That's what you need, to be bent." And thus he describes his experience: "I felt a living force coming into my bosom. This grew and grew, and I was almost bursting. My bosom was boiling. What boiled in me was that verse: 'God commending His love.' I fell on my knees with my arms over the seat in front of me; the tears and perspiration flowed freely. I thought blood was gushing forth." Certain friends approached to wipe his face. Meanwhile he was crying out, "O Lord, bend me! Bend me!" Then suddenly the glory broke.

Mr. Roberts adds: "After I was bent, a wave of peace came over me, and the audience sang, 'I hear Thy welcome voice.' And as they sang I thought about the bending at the Judgment Day, and I was filled with compassion for those that would have to bend on that day, and I wept.

"Henceforth, the salvation of souls became the burden of my heart. From that time I was on fire with a desire to go through all Wales, and if it were possible, I was willing to pay God for the privilege of going."

Note that Evan Roberts prayed for thirteen years before the mighty revival for which he prayed came, and that the fullness of the Spirit made him the great soul winner that he became.

01.08. Other Mighty Soulwinners

We do not have space here to give accounts of all the great men of God of whom we have a record who definitely claimed that they had a mighty endowment of power from on high, which came to them aside from their conversion to Christ. Let us mention briefly some of them.

Rev. A. B. Earle, D.D., was a Baptist evangelist who began preaching in 1830. He wrote a book, *The Rest of Faith*, telling of some of his experiences. In the introduction to one of his books, *Evangelist Earle* said that God had enabled him to lead 157,000 souls to Christ, and Hills in his book, *Holiness and Power*, says, "A book lies before me which says that 'he had no special power as a preacher before the Holy Ghost fell upon him.'" Dr. Earle came before D. L. Moody, but was a union evangelist wonderfully blessed of God. And he attributed his power to a definite endowment from Heaven, the fullness of the Holy Spirit for soul winning.

Mr. Hills says of A. T. Pierson, "Dr. A. T. Pierson preached eighteen years trusting to literary power and oratory and culture. He then sought and obtained 'holiness and power' by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He afterward testified to a body of ministers: 'Brethren, I have seen more conversions and accomplished more in the eighteen months since I received that blessing than in the eighteen years previous.'" (*Holiness and Power*, page 336). And those who know the writings of Dr. Pierson will understand that he did not mean that he had had the carnal nature eradicated, nor that he had talked in tongues, but that he received power from on high for winning souls.

How many more greatly used men of God, anointed soul winners, have testified that they had a definite time, in response to earnest prayer for the power of God in soul winning, when they were filled with the Holy Spirit. There was Christmas Evans, the one-eyed Welsh evangelist wonderfully filled with the Spirit after three hours of pleading with God. There was Len G. Broughton, Southern Baptist pastor whose ministry was transformed one night as he knelt at an altar and pleaded with God for the fullness of the Spirit and claimed that power and went back to baptize three hundred converts within the year and began a marvelously increased ministry of soul winning. There was "Praying Hyde," the missionary to India. As he sailed from America a friend handed him a sealed note which he later found said, "Are you filled with the Holy Spirit?" He was first angry, then troubled, and then sought God with all of his heart until he was wonderfully filled. Great revivals with the winning of thousands of souls in India resulted. There was Dr. L. R. Scarborough, president of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, who had won twenty thousand souls for Christ and taught in our class on evangelism the need for a definite endowment of power from on high, a fullness of the Holy Spirit, which he himself had definitely received.

01.09. Lessons From Their Testimonies

Every reader who is familiar with the history of great revival movements in modern times must be impressed with the fact that we have in this chapter given the position and testimony of all the mightiest soul winners -- Moody, Torrey, Chapman, Sunday, Finney, Spurgeon. Who else was of their stature in revivals and soul winning? Other mighty men organized much, built great denominations, founded great schools; but the men we have named in this chapter won more souls and preached with more power than any men who have lived since the Apostle Paul, as far as we know. And it seems wonderful, to me, that these spiritual giants, manifestly filled with the power of God, were all united on the essential facts regarding the fullness of the Holy Spirit, or baptism of the Spirit, the mighty anointing of God, the power of Pentecost.

Some of the men named were better theologians than others. Some had better education than others. But all of them were mightily filled with the power of God and knew how they were filled. And all of them were agreed on the essentials of this power of Pentecost. Notice, then, some lessons from the testimony of these mighty men.

All of them believed that the fullness of the Holy Spirit as experienced by Christians in the book of Acts is for us today! In fact, each claimed for himself and offered for his hearers the power of the Holy Spirit.

All of them, without exception, believed that the fullness of the Holy Spirit was given for Soul-Winning power.

Every one of these mighty men believed that the power of Pentecost, the fullness of the Holy Spirit, came in answer to prevailing prayer.

How many of these soul winners, the greatest of these twenty centuries, believed that speaking in tongues was the necessary sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Not a one of them! None of them "spoke in tongues" and none of them preached that speaking in tongues was necessary or desirable as a sign of the fullness of the Holy Spirit!

None of the greatest soul winners of the centuries claimed the eradication of the carnal nature nor that the baptism of the Holy Spirit brought sinlessness! Charles G. Finney later taught a doctrine of sanctification but never did claim that his own mighty baptism with the Spirit (that is what he called it) made him sinless or eradicated the carnal nature at the time. (See his autobiography.) Even John Wesley, whose testimony is not given here, did not develop his idea of Christian perfection until long after he himself had his wonderful Aldersgate experience with the Holy Spirit.

I believe that the experience and the testimony of the mighty men of God whose words we have given in this chapter are overwhelming in their unity. Let no one think that the doctrine of this book is new or strange. Essentially it is the same as the teaching of Spurgeon, Moody, Torrey, Chapman, Sunday, Finney, Christmas Evans, A. T. Pierson, Len G. Broughton, "Praying Hyde," A. B. Earle, and L. R. Scarborough.

Those who have gone away from the doctrine of the fullness of the Spirit, the power of Pentecost, as a special endowment of power for soul winning possible for every Christian and to be sought with prevailing prayer, have departed from the position of the great soul winners. This falling away in doctrine came with the falling away from revival! Men do not believe in the power of Pentecost simply because they do not themselves have the power of Pentecost.

I leave this subject feeling that every reader will be held accountable to God for what he does about the overwhelming testimony of the great soul-winning giants of the centuries who say that they themselves were mightily filled with the Holy Spirit for soul winning, and in answer to prayer, and that this mighty endowment of power did not cause them to speak in tongues, did not eradicate the carnal nature. May God speak to every humble heart who reads and make him willing to receive the testimony of those upon whom God has breathed in His mighty power.

02.00. Open Letter to Roman Catholics

Open Letter to Roman Catholics The letter which follows was written by Dr. John Rice to precious Catholic people. It would have been difficult for me to originate such lengthy correspondence. I pray you will take the time to read this letter in whole or in parts because my desire is only that you be saved and absolutely certain you are going to heaven when you die. I mean no offense, but we all know that the truth can sometimes offend. Test everything written here against the Word of God, the Holy Bible.

Dear Catholic Friend: The truth of God is so holy that I must deal very reverently with it. And the truth has been so perverted by Roman dogma and tradition, that the truth will not be palatable to you, I fear. Whether you will listen to it, whether your heart is open at all to the facts, I do not know. But in the blessed Word of God, 1Jn 4:6 says: "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." If in the heart you know Christ as Saviour, and if God's Spirit dwells in you, then God's Spirit will bear witness to you of the truth. And if there is no such witness, then I will conclude, of course, that you are in spiritual darkness. For we are told: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1Co 2:14).

Note I do not say that if you do not agree with me in every detail, you are not saved, you are not a child of God. But I speak of the truth as it is in the Word of God, simple and plain, on major matters. If your heart is not open to principal truth from the Word of God, then the Spirit of God is not abiding in you and you will go on in your blindness. I will grieve about that if you do. But I hope that there is in you a love for Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit of God so that your heart will answer honestly to the Scriptures. If it does not, then at least I have done my duty.

02.01. Chapter 01

I. The Roman Church Has Brought Upon Itself The Curse Of Rev 22:18-19, By Adding To The Scripture

Unbelieving men sometimes take from the Word of God, minimize parts of it, say it is not true and is not binding. The Roman Church and some others have the same kind of sin, in that they take the traditions of men, the decrees doctrines of men, and add them to what the Bible says, thus often nullifying parts of the Bible. And to those who do so, God plainly says: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book" (Rev 22:18). The statement in the Bible is simple. Honest people can understand it. To try to evade the meaning of the Scripture will prove insincerity. To add obligations or authority or rules or doctrines to those in the Bible, and to bow to authority beside the authority of the Bible and the authorities plainly given in the Bible means to bring the curse, the plagues written in the book of Revelation, to those who add thus to the canon of Scripture their opinions and organizations and traditions and rules and doctrines.

Some bring God's curse on them by marking off part of the Bible, calling it erroneous, uninspired, less than the very Word of God. Others achieve the same effect by setting up another authority beside the Bible which steals from the Bible part of its own God-given authority. So Mormons have the Book of Mormon and add it to God's Word. So Christian Scientists have the writings of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy and add them to the authority of the Bible. So Seventh-Day Adventists have often, in the past, added the writings of Mrs. White and called them authoritative and inspired like the Bible. And so the Roman Catholic organization puts up the authority of a church, the traditions of church, the rulings of popes and councils, and thus would drain away the real authority that God has put in the Word of God. And so Roman Catholicism takes its place as a false cult and must be so recognized by those who accept the authority of the Bible itself, the authority which it claims beyond any possible doubt, the authority which Christ Himself recognized in the Bible.

Jesus quoted to the Pharisees the words of Isaiah about people who honor God with their lips but whose heart is far from Him. In Mark 7:6-9 we read:

"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. "

Pharisees were hypocrites because they gave only nominal and verbal assent to the Scriptures and really they worshiped God in vain, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." And Jesus accused them, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own

tradition." Honest people could not say that the Pharisees did not add to the commands of God with their tradition and commandments of men. And every student in the matter must know, and you are intelligent enough to know, that the Roman Church has added to the commandments of God even more than did the Pharisees in Bible times. They make traditions of men take the place of the commandments of God. You pretend to be for the Bible, to accept its authority. You even claim that you accept the authority of the church on the authority of the Bible. Then you must accept what Jesus said on the matter or accept His brand as a hypocrite on certain matters.

1. The Bible plainly forbids making any image for worship and bowing down to any image. In Exo 20:4 and Exo 20:5 the Scripture says:

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. " And any honest reader knows that that Scripture forbids using an image in worship, bowing down to it, praying before it, and serving it. And yet the Catholic Church not only has images, but encourages people to pray to images, to the crucifix, to images of Mary, to images of saints. Here Roman tradition violates the Bible, and the commandments of men take the place of the commandments of God. That is sin.

2. The Scriptures command that "a bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife. . ." (1Ti 3:2). The Roman Church says that a bishop must have no wife at all. It even makes foolish pretensions that Peter put away his wife, though there is not a scratch of history in the Bible or out to indicate anything of the kind. It is a clear case of putting human tradition ahead of the Bible.

3. Jesus Christ plainly taught that Mary was on the same plane with all other Christians who would to the will of God. In Mark 3:31-35 we read:

"There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother. " Do not avoid the truth here on the authority of Jesus Christ, "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." And when one heard Jesus and cried out, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked, "Jesus answered, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luk 11:27-28). There is no hint in the Bible that New Testament Christians ever regarded Mary as more than another good woman. She had no authority among the apostles. No one was taught to pray to her, to do her homage, to adore her, or to partake of the unscriptural worship which Catholics do, but call it by other names. Thus the Roman Church has brought a plague upon itself by adding the commandments of men and traditions of men to the commands of God.

4. The Roman Catholic mass disregards the Word of God to add sacrifices for sin contrary to the explicit Word of God. In Heb 10:8-14 is a very clear pronouncement from God that when Christ died on the cross, that did away with all other sacrifices. It reads:

"Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt-offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. " This Scripture explicitly says certain things. It says (a) "Sacrifice and offering and burnt-offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law." (b) He expressly says that He did away with the old sacrifices to establish a second. (c) And then He expressly says that the offering of Jesus Christ "once for all" settles the whole matter of sin. Again, He says, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." When Jesus had paid for all sins and offered the last sacrifice which settled things forever, then He sat down because His sacrificial work was done. (d) There is no need for further sacrifice, "for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," that is, them that are set apart for God by the blood of Christ.

Then in the following verses the Lord reminds us of the promise in the Old Testament that He would make a new covenant with men, that He would put the law in their hearts and minds, and He says: "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" (Heb 10:17-18).

Now notice the one grand summing-up statement: "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." When one has trusted Christ and had his sins forgiven, then "there is no more offering for sin," no more animal sacrifices, no more of any other kind of sacrifices. So to make the mass a sacrifice, to claim that in the mass Jesus is sacrificed again and again, that the bread becomes His body, that the wine becomes His blood, and that there is saving virtue in this sacrifice-that is a blasphemous rejection of the Bible in favor of traditions of men. That is a false religion, not the Christian religion. Thus Roman Catholic friends, however good their intentions, have made in vain the commandments of God by their traditions.

There is not a single hint anywhere in the entire New Testament that New Testament Christians had any kind of sacrifices. The Lord's Supper was a memorial supper, a simple object lesson, a spiritual reminder that Christ had died for us and we are saved by His blood, and a simple and sweet reminder to all Christians that we belong to God and ought to love Him and serve Him and enter into His death. There is not a single hint in the entire Bible that there was any saving virtue in the communion. There is no hint that anybody ever was invited to take the communion or the Lord's Supper in Bible times except as he had already found peace with God and was already forgiven and saved.

5. The Roman Catholic Church has perverted the Bible and substituted tradition in making priests out of preachers or elders.

Since the Bible clearly teaches that now there is to be no more sacrifice for sins, and since the Old Testament priesthood has been succeeded by one priest, Jesus Christ, who has offered one sacrifice forever, then there is no teaching of a priesthood to offer sacrifices in the New Testament.

There are elders, preachers. Some of these elders had official positions as pastors or supervisors of local congregations. It is true that in the spiritual sense, all Christians are to be "kings and priests unto God" (1Pe 2:9; Rev 5:10). But there was no official priestly work done by anyone as an officer of a church, as an elder or bishop in Bible times. It was not even specified that an elder or bishop should even be present when people took the Lord's Supper. It had no official significance. It was a simple little object lesson, a ceremony of remembrance. And there is not a single hint anywhere that the Lord's Supper had any saving power. It was not a sacrifice. It was never called that in the Bible. That is a false doctrine, manufactured by the Church of Rome, which contradicts the Bible, adds to the Bible, and so brings the plagues of the Bible upon the Roman Church.

I have not room here to discuss all the innovations, all the strange and unscriptural doctrines and practices which have been invented by Roman Catholic hierarchy. In the Bible there was no pope and no papal authority, no papal infallibility. There were no prayers to Mary, no doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception nor of her body's ascension to Heaven. There were no penances, no indulgences, no confessions to priests, no orders of monks or nuns. All of this is manufactured, not only without the Bible but contrary to the plain teachings of the Word of God.

02.02. Chapter 02

II. The Roman Catholic Idea Of A Church Is Wholly Unknown In The Bible And Contrary To The Bible

You tell me, dear friend, that the Catholic Church is "the true church." But you found no such term in the Bible and no such idea in the Bible. The Bible says nothing about any nationwide or world-wide organization. The idea of a church as a denomination is utterly foreign to the Bible. No such organization can be "the true church" because nothing like that is pictured or promised in the Bible. They had nothing like that in Bible times.

1. Churches in the New Testament were local congregations of believers. The Bible speaks often in such language as "the church of God which is at Corinth" (1Co 1:2). "The church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts 8:1). But do not think that this was simply a segment of the general church. No, for the Scripture much more often uses the plural form for churches like "then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria. . ." (Acts 9:31). Every congregation was a separate church, not part of a general church. "The churches of Galatia" (1Co 16:1). "The churches of Asia" (1Co 16:19). "The churches of Macedonia" (2Co 8:1). "The churches of Galatia" (Gal 1:2). "The seven churches which are in Asia" (Rev 1:4).

We see then that in Bible practice and Bible terminology every local congregation was a separate church. If there were more than one, they were still "churches," plural; not "a church" or "the church." And thus all the officers of New Testament times, the elders or pastors or bishops and the deacons, were officers of local congregations. There were no bishops over a certain territory or province, nor over a number of churches. That whole idea invented by Roman Catholicism is patterned after this world and is not only not found in the Bible but is contrary to the explicit teachings of the Bible. And many denominations have followed Rome in this false practice of area-wide denominations or "churches" which are not churches in the Bible sense.

2. The general term "church" is occasionally used referring to the whole body of Christ, all the saved, without any reference to any organization. The word church in the New Testament is translated from the Greek word ecclesia and it always means a called-out assembly. That Greek word is translated everywhere in the New Testament as "church," except in three cases in Acts 19:1-41 where in Acts 19:32, Acts 19:39, and Acts 19:41 it is translated "assembly," referring to the mob called out at Ephesus. More than ninety times the word church or churches is used about local congregations. A few times, eight or ten times, it is used in the larger sense of the whole body of Christ. In every such case it refers to that "general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Heb 12:22-23), those who will be called out at the rapture when Jesus comes, and then it will be literally a called-out assembly. It is in that sense that "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" in Eph 5:25. It refers to every person born again and saved by the blood of Christ. The Lord Jesus never hinted that He was giving Himself for any organization, any so-called "true church" or denomination. For the Church of Rome to claim that it is this one body for whom Christ died is blasphemous, a perversion of the Scripture with an idea wholly

unknown in the Bible.

3. The foolish idea that the church is founded on Peter is contrary to Scripture and historically false. The Scripture says as plainly as it can be said that Jesus Christ is the foundation on which Christians are built, and that there is no other foundation. In 1Co 3:10-11, Paul was inspired to write:

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. "

Paul as a wise masterbuilder laid the foundation. That is, he got people saved. He got them to trust in Christ. They are built on Christ. And then he plainly said, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And it is wise to go back and see the context in the same chapter. There was a division in Corinth over this very matter. He says in 1Co 3:4, "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" And then he closes the chapter by saying: "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1Co 3:21-23).

"Cephas" here is Peter. So here divine inspiration in the Bible plainly says that the church and salvation are not built on Paul or Apollos or on Cephas, and that men are not to glory in men, that is, none of these three men nor any others. So Peter is not the foundation on which Christians are built. He is not the foundation of the church. Christ is the foundation of the church. But you say, as Catholic dogma teaches you to say and not from any independent study of the Scriptures, which you are not allowed to do-you say that Christ said He would build a church on Peter. You refer to Mat 16:18, which the Catholic dogma currently teaches (but did not always so teach), that Christ founded the church on Peter. But read it: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Now does Jesus here contradict the other Scriptures and say that the church is founded on Peter instead of on Himself? No indeed. Here there is a Greek play upon the words, "Thou art Peter [the Greek word Petros, literally a "little rock"], and upon this rock [Petra, a foundation rock, Christ the Rock, not Peter] I will build my church." Literally what Jesus told Peter is this: "You are a little rock, but on Myself, the great foundation Rock, I will build My church. "

You should read the Catholic Fathers and you would see that this is the teaching that was once current among the best Catholic theologians. But when the church decided to pronounce the pope infallible, then the church decided to insist upon this dogma, that the church is founded on Peter, that that authority is now in the pope. But at that Council in 1870, you ought to know if you are an informed Catholic, that Bishop Strossmeyer then publicly said in a brilliant speech before the Cardinals what I am saying to you now, that the Bible clearly teaches that Christ Himself is the foundation of the church, not Peter. You are not allowed of course to read the Bible and to study and find what it means if that differs from the Catholic dogma. Once it was proper for the Bible to mean this. Now the Catholic hierarchy has determined it is to mean something else and so you of course as a good Catholic will go by tradition and dogma instead of by the Bible.

Peter himself was inspired to teach that Christ was the Rock on which the church and Christians are built. In 1Pe 2:3-5, we read:

". . . The Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house. . . ."

Converts come to Christ and thus as living stones are built on the Living Stone into a spiritual house. The same Scripture goes on to say that Jesus is not only the foundation stone, but the Head of the Corner, the Rock of Offense, the Stone of Stumbling. Throughout the Bible, again and again, Christ is called the Stone, the Rock. He is illustrated by the rock in the wilderness which Moses struck and from which came water for the thirsty multitude. In Dan 2:1-49, He is pictured as the stone that will come at His Second Coming and smite the kings of the earth and destroy them.

No, the church is not founded on Peter. Incidentally, there is no evidence whatever that Peter was ever in Rome. Paul wrote the book of Romans by divine inspiration and gave greeting to many, and Peter is not even mentioned. Twenty-nine people are called by name to whom Paul sends greetings, one whole church and a number of households. And Peter is not even mentioned. Why? He was not in Rome, of course. In the book of Acts we are told how Paul came to Rome; we learn about those who came to greet him. We learn that he dwelt two whole years in his own hired house and that leading Jews came to meet him there. Peter did not come. Peter is not mentioned. Why? Peter was not in Rome. There is not a single reputable history in the world that even mentions Peter's being at Rome. The Bible does not mention it. In fact, when his epistles were written, Peter was in the other direction, at Babylon, and sends greetings from Babylon (1Pe 5:13). The idea of a Peter's being at Rome is one of the fictions like all the "nails from the true cross," like literally thousands of fake "relics" honored by the fictions, the tradition, the superstitions of the church at Rome.

02.03. Chapter 03

III. There Was No Pope, Neither Peter Nor Anybody

You refer to Mat 16:19 when Christ said to Peter, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

1. The "Keys" Jesus gave Peter did not mean he had power to forgive sins. That does not mean what you think it means. A great theologian says on this verse:

"Not the keys of the church, but of the kingdom of heaven in the sense of Mat 13:1-58., i.e. the sphere of Christian profession. A key is a badge of power or authority (cf. Isa 22:22; Rev 3:7). The apostolic history explains and limits this trust, for it was Peter who opened the door of Christian opportunity to Israel on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-42), and to Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:34-46). There was no assumption by Peter of any other authority (Acts 15:7-11). In the council James, not Peter, seems to have presided (Acts 15:19; cf. Gal 2:11-15). Peter claimed no more for himself than to be an apostle by gift (1Pe 1:1), and an elder by office (1Pe 5:1).

"The power of binding and loosing was shared (Mat 18:18; John 20:23) by the other disciples. That it did not involve the determination of the eternal destiny of souls is clear from Rev 1:18. The keys of death and the place of departed spirits are held by Christ alone" (notes in the Scofield Reference Bible).

Now note Mat 18:18 and Mat 18:19 :

"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. " So not only to Peter, but to the other apostles and even to all Christians is the same promise given. Whatsoever they shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; whatsoever they shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven. And He says plainly, "That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." It is clear that Jesus is here talking about the power of prayer. The Christian who moves God can move everything that God moves. And if the Spirit of God leads Christians to unite in believing prayer, then they can have whatever they ask. This is exactly what was promised Peter; he could bind on earth things that would be bound in Heaven and loose on earth things that would be loosed in Heaven the same way that other Christians have exactly the same promise. Peter was simply a New Testament Christian. He had all the promises that God gave to the other apostles and all the promises God gave to other Christians. Even you surely would not say that the instruction in Mat 18:1-35, was for the apostles only. And certainly you would not say it was for Peter only. So the promise about binding and loosing was to all the apostles, and more than that, it was for all Christians who, led by the Spirit of God, could agree to

ask of God.

Now see John 20:21-23 :

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. "

Jesus is risen from the dead. He gives His disciples again the Great Commission and says, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." And then He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." And in connection with the Spirit of God on these Christians, He says, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

2. All apostles were equal with Peter.

Again, it is important to notice that this promise was not given to Peter alone, but to all the disciples present. Certainly the other apostles were there besides Thomas, and almost equally certain others were there besides the apostles. In the same chapter Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, and others are mentioned in connection with that group who saw Jesus after His resurrection, and the women talked with the men about it. In Acts 1:13 and Acts 1:14 we are told that the apostles "with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren," that is, the brothers of Jesus, who would include Jude, Simon, James, etc., were together. So to this group of Christians in John 20:1-31 Jesus gave the promise: first, they were to have the Holy Spirit abiding in them. Then they were to go to fulfill the Great Commission.

Now note that Great Commission as it is stated again, in Mat 28:19 and Mat 28:20. That Great Commission was given to the apostles and other Christians there. But they were taught that when they got other disciples, they were to have them baptized and then to teach them, the new converts, "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Whatever command Jesus gave in the Great Commission is for every Christian, not only for the apostles and certainly not only for Peter. And that command is to be fulfilled in the power of the Holy Spirit, not in human wisdom.

Now notice John 20:23, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Actually this verse is written in the Greek so it could be either present or pluperfect in time, that is, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they shall have been remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they shall have been retained." So Dr. J. R. Mantey, professor of Greek, told me. In other words, led by the Holy Spirit a Christian who knows that one has trusted Christ for salvation can say, "Your sins have been remitted," knowing that they have already been remitted as soon as he trusted Christ. And to one who does not trust Christ, a Christian shall say, "Your sins are not remitted, they are retained, they are on you now," knowing that they have not been remitted, because the one did not trust Christ. In the first place, it is certain that whatever the Lord said to Peter about any authority here, He said to the other apostles also. There was no primacy given Peter in this matter. And it is also equally clear that whatever authority any people had here, it was by the Spirit of God and in accordance with the Word of God, not that they could forgive sins, but they could know that the sins were forgiven one

who trusted Christ or they could know that one's sins were not forgiven if he did not trust Christ. To make it so any man could forgive sins on his own initiative would be utterly foreign to the clear teaching of the Bible elsewhere. That is human tradition which contradicts the plain Word of God and brings upon all who thus add to the Word the plagues and curses that Jesus warned of in Rev 22:18 and Rev 22:19.

Obviously, even the most casual reader of the Bible knows that New Testament Christians did not regard Peter as having any special authority. Paul found him wrong in the matter of a certain compromise, and so in Gal 2:1-21, we find that Paul rebuked Peter openly to his face. Peter had no authority which Paul respected more than the authority of anyone else. In the general council which met at Jerusalem in Acts 15:1-41, it seems that James presided and had the final word. Peter gave his word, as was proper, but he did not speak with any authority recognized by anybody present except the authority of good advice and the Holy Spirit's leading, such as James had also and as others had also on the same occasion.

No, there was no such thing as the Roman Catholic Church in Bible times. There was no popery. There was no mass and no sacrifices. There was no confessional, no pretense on the part of anyone that he could forgive sins. There was no priesthood except the priesthood of all believers in that we can pray for others. But there was no official priesthood in the churches. Roman Catholicism has changed elders and preachers into priests, has changed the pulpit into an altar, has changed Mary into "Mother of God, Queen of Heaven," etc., in idolatry.

3. The apostles had no successors; they handed down no authority.

Twelve original disciples of Jesus were called in the Bible "apostles." They were men specially sent and authorized to teach and preach until the Scriptures should be fulfilled. When Judas, by his sin, fell from the apostleship and killed himself, the disciples elected Matthias to be a witness with them of the resurrection of Christ, and the requirement was that he must be one who had been with them all the way from the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist until His resurrection and could give witness of these things (Acts 1:22). Later Paul, Barnabas, and James, the brother of Jesus, are called apostles. But in 1Co 12:28 we are told: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." The apostles were set first in the church. They had no successors. Peter did not give his apostolic authority to Mark who worked with him. Paul did not give his apostolic authority to Timothy, his beloved son in the ministry. John did not give his apostolic authority to anybody else. There is a wicked, foolish, unscriptural idea abroad that the "true church" is a matter of "apostolic succession." That idea was invented by the modern Roman Catholic Church. It was unknown in Bible times. And now when the Anglicans claim "apostolic succession in the priesthood," we know that they got it from Rome. They did not get it from the Bible. When our "Church of Christ" friends claim that they have the only true church, we know that that idea of a church was derived from Roman Catholic tradition. It is true that Christ said, "Upon this rock [and He meant Jesus] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat 16:18). But He did not mean any organization on earth. The churches and congregations of Bible times have all disappeared. That "general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven," the body of Christ, has not disappeared and will not disappear and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. But to claim that of any organization of

men with human officers, is an idea foreign to the Bible and unsubstantiated by history. The present so-called Roman Catholic Church is not the church at Rome to which Paul wrote his letter. It has none of the works. It does not believe the same doctrines. It does not have the simple local organization, local pastors (or bishops) and deacons. It does not preach the same plan of salvation. It does not have the same spiritual power.

Summing up, Peter had no authority that other apostles did not have, and that authority was never transmitted to anybody. Peter was not a pope, and even if he had been, he could not have handed that authority down to anybody else. All that is a web of human tradition and as of later origin manufactured by men and not after the Bible pattern. There is not a trace of the papacy in the Bible or in the New Testament church, either in organization or doctrine.

02.04. Chapter 04

IV. The Authority Claimed by the Catholic Church Is Blasphemous and Unchristian The pope claims (in this modern dogma of the Catholic Church, which has developed particularly since the fourth Lateran Council in A. D. 1215, when papal infallibility was adopted as a dogma of the church) to be the vicegerent of God on earth, claims to speak with the authority of God, claims that when he and priests under him speak officially, it is God speaking. And you say, "this church represents Him (and you mean the Roman Catholic Church or hierarchy) just as He so stated 'as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.' " But you certainly read the Scripture very carelessly. Individual Christians represent Christ. It was not to "the church," some super-duper world-wide organization, that Jesus said, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you"; it was to a group of individuals and He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." And that day the Holy Spirit moved into the body of Christians to live and to represent Christ on earth. The Holy Spirit Himself is Christ's own personal representative, His vicegerent on earth. And so the Bible carefully teaches. The Lord Jesus said nothing about breathing on the Roman Catholic Church the day He rose from the dead. There was no such church then. Such an idea among New Testament Christians was not even thought of. And though there was a local group of Christians, He was not speaking to the group as an entity, but he was speaking to individuals. The Holy Spirit moves into the body of a Christian when he is saved. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1Co 6:19-20).

You say, "My Protestant friends do not seem to be able to see the necessity for having an organization, with a ruling authority in the greatest institution on earth." But you use the term "institution" in an unscriptural sense. The Bible does not even mention such an "institution." And you are trying to settle by human argument a matter which was brought on by human tradition, when if God had intended any such authority in an organization, that is, an organization which could save or damn, could forgive or not forgive, which could tell people whether they could read the Bible or not, whether they could follow the Bible or not-if God had wanted to put any such authority in an organization, He could have done so. He did not. The Bible never mentions anything of the kind.

You see, the trouble is you want a human authority, a man, to boss this matter when God wants the Holy Spirit to boss. You want that authority to reach down so a priest can tell people what they can do and what they cannot do, and God wants the Holy Spirit to dwell in the body of every believer and tell him what to do. And then you speak about "chaos" and say, "That is the situation in Protestantism today-'a house divided against itself.' " And you speak about "the Presbyterian branch." Again, you are using the term church in a wholly unscriptural sense not even thought of in the Bible. And Protestantism is not a church in the Bible sense any more than the Catholic organization is a church in the Bible sense.

02.05. Chapter 05

V. Christians Who Set Out to Live by the Bible Have a Warm Bible Christianity and Spiritual Unity Utterly Unknown by Catholics

You talk with no knowledge of the facts when you speak about "chaos" among Bible believers. No, there is a chaos if you mean that there are many cults who, like Roman Catholics, set up some other standard to follow besides the Bible. Some groups who call themselves Protestant do not believe in the virgin birth, and others, like Catholics, say they believe in the virgin birth, but they do not believe in salvation by personal faith in Christ. Of course, that is confusion whether among Catholics or Protestants, but it is not brought on by following the Bible, but rather by rejecting the Bible. Those who follow the Book of Mormon or Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy's writings, or who follow the "scientific" unbelief of religious liberals, or the traditions and rulings of the church among Catholics-these all, whether Protestants or Catholics, are in confusion, and of course do not represent Bible Christianity .

However, there is a remarkable unity, very easily demonstrated and known by millions of Christians, among Bible believers. It is a foolish saying of infidels that there "are some three hundred denominations and everybody understands the Bible differently." The simple truth is that all the principal groups of Christians in the world who bow to no authority but the Bible authority do agree on all the principal doctrines in the Bible. Christians from a hundred different denominations, I suppose, from year to year attend Moody Bible Institute, or the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, or other fundamental Bible institutes where the authority of the Word of God is held up always above any other source of doctrine, above any authority of denomination or pope or bishop or council or cardinals or priests.

I am editor of an interdenominational Christian magazine. We have, among those who read THE SWORD OF THE Lord regularly, almost every kind of divergent denomination from priests in the Filipino; Catholic Church to those from all principal Protestant bodies. I received. the other day a most fervent, brotherly letter from a Lutheran minister. He sprinkles babies; he has a liturgy and there are other minor matters on which we would differ. But on the great issues of the verbally inspired Bible, the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, His blood atonement, His bodily resurrection, on the need for a new birth, on Heaven and Hell, we feel as brothers.

I have held great city-wide campaigns in Chicago, Buffalo, Cleveland, Seattle, Miami, and elsewhere, with representatives of the principal Protestant groups taking part in those meetings, with the simple stipulation that they must be men who believed the Bible and the essentials of the Christian faith. And so Baptists, Presbyterians, Nazarenes, Pentecostals, Mennonites, Episcopalians, and many others have participated in those meetings. The one simple essential we agreed on was that the Bible was the Word of God and was the supreme authority and the Christ of the Bible is all He claimed to be. So such people naturally agreed on the great doctrines of the Bible, the verbal inspiration, the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, His blood atonement, His bodily resurrection, His miracles, and the need for regeneration, salvation by faith in Christ, Heaven and

Hell, etc. It is a foolish and insincere fiction to suppose that there is a chaos among Bible-believing Christians. That simply is not so.

You understand, of course, there were many, many who could not properly take part in such a campaign with me as a preacher and they would not have been welcome. That would include all those false cults who have some other authority besides the Bible. Mormons would not fit in, nor Christian Scientists, nor Catholics, nor Jehovah's Witnesses, because all of these have sources other than the fundamental center of a Christian unity, the Bible. They would not agree in doctrine because they get their doctrines out of human tradition or the writings of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, or the Book of Mormon, or the books of Judge Rutherford, instead of from the Bible. I am saying simply that the Holy Spirit living in the bodies of Christians who believe the Bible and go to the Bible for authority have more unity than would be possible in a great organization such as the Catholic Church where the authority is supposed to reside in the church (meaning literally in the priesthood and not in the congregations).

I preached the Gospel in the First Presbyterian Church in Inchon, Korea, where General McArthur made his famous landing in the Korean War. In that foreign country, speaking through an interpreter, standing barefooted upon a pillow, preaching to people who sat crosslegged on a polished floor, I found exactly the same sweet unity of spirit, the same brotherly love that I found with Christians in Bombay and Madras, India, in Karuizawa, Japan, and as I found in great united meetings all over America. The other day a Catholic man who had lost his wife and was disconsolate and now for three years had been trying to raise his children alone, found that he, too, had this same unity with other Bible-believing Christians. He went regularly to the Catholic Church and to no other, but he said, "It was like a trip to the corner store, with no spiritual help." His hungry heart reached out for something and he began to read the Bible at home to his children. He began to listen to my broadcast. His heart began to seek for a personal acquaintance with Jesus Christ. He wrote to me pleading for prayers and help. Some godly people went to see him; they read together from the Bible and he was taught to look to Jesus who died to save sinners. On his knees he trusted Christ and took Him as Saviour and, oh, how happy he has been since! Mark you, this happiness, this union of heart with other Christians, did not come through the Catholic organization. It came as he read the Bible, and then found other Christians who believed the Bible and then found the Christ of the Bible. The "chaos" that you pretend to see among Bible believers is simply not true. There is a chaos among those who have other sources of doctrine and so serve other gods. There is a chaos when men go to Catholic tradition or the Book of Mormon or the writings of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy or the presumptuous imaginings of modernists or unbelievers. But there is a great unity which millions know as they read the Bible and find there the same Saviour, the same doctrine that all have sinned, the same promise that the blood of Christ has paid for our sins and that Christ died for us and is willing to forgive sinners, and then the sweet sense of fellowship of born-again believers who know they have a home in Heaven and who know they are born of God.

02.06. Chapter 06

VI. Roman Catholics Themselves Do Not Have This Christian Unity

There is a kind of unity among the loyal adherents of the Catholic Church, but it is not Christian unity. It is not even the kind of unity that men have in a labor union where they join voluntarily, where they have a vote in the proceedings, where they can argue for their rights, and where they can join others of like convictions to seek a common end.

Catholics do not have the unity which comes when people know the same Saviour, have the same peace in heart, find in the Bible the same doctrines and look together, as the Bible teaches us to do, for Christ's Second Coming. Catholics are alike in praying to Mary, but Mary does not answer, does not give them any spiritual response. The unity of Catholics is like the unity in a penitentiary. The prisoners have someone to tell them what to do. They are told when to get up, when to march to the playground, when to go to meals, and when to rise. They are fed not what they want, but what prison officials decide is proper on the budget that is provided. Prisoners have something in common: they have the same kind of bars on their cells, the same concrete floor, the same smell of disinfectant.

I am saying the Catholics do not know the kind of unity which is very common among Bible-believing Christians. Have a bunch of Catholics together; now try to have a testimony meeting and try to get them to rise with joy in their faces and tell how God has answered their prayers. A few Catholics, thank God, have had such experiences. They seem queer to other Catholics and that is not the ordinary thing.

Other Christians find a common bond in the Bible. But sadly I have found that the average Catholic family does not even have a Catholic Bible. If they have one, they are not free to study it and find what God Himself means to tell them. They are to believe the Bible teaches only what the church tells them it teaches. The simple truth is that the Catholic Church through the centuries has usually forbidden Catholics to study the Bible and now in our American civilization public enlightenment has made it so they must give permission for Catholics to read the Bible. Catholics generally are not encouraged to read it and generally do not read it.

I remember I talked to a beautiful and cultured Catholic lady in Washington, D. C. A question came up about the Bible and I said I would ask her a question. She threw up her hands and laughed deprecatingly and said, "Oh no! I don't know a thing about the Bible. Now on the Prayer Book," she said, "I am pretty good. But I don't know anything about the Bible." I say that that attitude is rather characteristic of good Catholics. Those who are not good Catholics are not usually good on the Prayer Book, even. Catholics are not usually tied together by one common experience of conversion. They are not commonly tied together with a sweet enjoyment of the same Scripture truths. Catholics generally believe in the virgin birth, and I thank God that they do, but that is emphasized primarily in order to emphasize Mary, and not necessarily to emphasize the deity of Christ. And in most of the Catholic countries in the world, as in South American countries, priests

systematically collect and burn Bibles and people are taught that it is heresy to read the Bible. And that attitude is the general Catholic attitude around the world except in a very few enlightened spots where culture makes for more human freedom than will permit that degree of servility.

You talk of Catholic unity. The simple truth is that most of the Catholic population of the world lives in most abject superstition and ignorance, with almost no comprehension of spiritual truths. In countries like Columbia and Peru in South America, Protestant missionaries have recently been murdered, and nationals who have been converted to Christ and come to know Him as Saviour and do not depend on the priest for forgiveness have their homes burned, and many a believer has been beaten and others tortured and killed. There is no more unity among Catholics than the kind of unity of communist inspired mobs in Castro's Cuba. Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean that Catholics are communists, or that the Catholic Church generally favors communism. I mean that the priest-led mobs who killed Christians who read the Bible in South America are the victims of mass superstitions and mob rages such as similar mobs in Cuba are, who storm the homes of Americans.

You speak of unity among Catholics. But President Kennedy does not agree with the Catholic dogma that every head of state, if a Catholic, must be subject to the pope in his official duties. On this matter Catholics in America do not very well agree with Catholics in Italy. The true and loyal Catholic knows nothing of the great freedom in Christ. He does not know that he can come personally to Christ and get forgiveness without any reference to the priest or the church or the mass or the confessional. He does not know the great freedom taught in that Scripture, 1Ti 2:5 and 1Ti 2:6 : "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." He does not know that he can go to Christ directly and that Christ has made peace between him and God. No, the Catholic Church has put Mary in there as an intermediary and the saints and the priests and the church.

I can read the Bible and ask God's blessed .Spirit to help me understand it. That is exactly what Jesus taught His disciples, that "when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). But that blessed and intimate fellowship with the Holy Spirit leading him to understand God's Word, the Catholic is not free to have. He cannot go to the Bible and find whether it is proper to eat meat on Friday or during Lent-no, he must go to the church who has established the man-made rules. So the Catholic has little acquaintance with Christ, little dependence on the Holy Spirit. It is a big church, a big priesthood, a little Jesus. It is a big Mary but a little Saviour. It is big law but little grace.

02.07. Chapter 07

VII. No True Roman Catholic Is Sure of Heaven A noble young Catholic man wrote me. He was greatly impressed with THE SWORD OF THE LORD. He appealed to me that I would enter "the true church." How much good I would do, he said, if I would join the Roman Catholic Church and use whatever gifts and training I have in advancing the cause of "the true church."

I wrote him that I could not do that, first of all, because as it is now I have perfect assurance that my sins are forgiven; I have the assurance from the Word of God and from the Holy Spirit who lives within me that when I took Christ as my Saviour and relied upon Him, my sins were all forgiven and there, once for all, as they were paid for on the cross, my sins were forgiven, I was born of God and I am certain of Heaven. I told him I do not deserve this salvation, that it is all of God's grace, but it is certain because the blood of Jesus paid for it; I do not have to go through the church to get this salvation; I have already gone to Christ and when I trusted Him I received everlasting life. I told him that I could not give up this sweet peace and assurance.

I told him that I am relying on the one sacrifice forever which perfected the one who trusted in Christ according to Heb 10:10-14, and that now I could not put any confidence in the mass, since, after my sins were remitted through the blood of Christ, "there is no more offering for sin" (Heb 10:18). And I urged him to find out if his priest, or if any other Catholic he knew, had sweet peace and assurance that his sins are already all forgiven, that he is now already a child of God and certain for Heaven, with all his sins forever hidden under the blood of Christ.

He was indignant. He was sure Catholics had just as much peace and assurance as anyone else did. So he went to his local priest in Tennessee. That priest assured him that no, of course, he did not know for sure that his sins were all forgiven. He hoped to go to Heaven but he would probably have to go to purgatory for a time first. The young man was distressed so he went to a bishop and there he received the same kind of an answer. Now, getting desperate, he wrote to a number of archbishops. And again he got the same kind of answer, that none of them could know for sure that their sins were forgiven.

Distressed he went back to the local priest and asked the priest why now there would be the sacrifice of the mass when the Bible so plainly said that Jesus had paid the whole debt by one offering forever, and that "now. . .there is no more offering for sin." The priest scoffed at him. "Who gave you the right to interpret the Bible?" he stormed at the young man. The young man, cut to the quick, said to the priest, "Who gave you the right to say that there is need for more offerings when the Bible says that Jesus' offering settled the matter once for all?" The priest, instead of answering him, angrily slapped his face and turned and left him. That young man went to bed that night but tossed in torment for hours. Could no one then have any assurance of forgiveness? Was there no certainty of salvation through the blood of Christ, to one who trusted in Him? And in his groping mind there came again the Scripture of Heb 10:10 : "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," and there he put his trust in the Lord Jesus alone and had the peace that he could not have by Catholic dogma.

I have from time to time, contact with Catholics whom I greatly love and respect. Many of them are noble, good people and some of them, I believe, are devout Christians, by which I mean that in spite of all the false teachings of the traditions of the church, they have seen through the darkness and have come to personally trust in Jesus Christ and His atoning blood, and have rested in that and have peace as born-again children of God. But I would have to say in honesty that that is not the position of the average Catholic. And that peace, that assurance of salvation, that personal devotion to Jesus Christ, is not known by the average Catholics. They know Mary and penances and Ave Marias and confessionals, but the sweet joy of settled peace, knowing sins are forgiven, knowing they are children of God, knowing they are born again, knowing they are saved and going to Heaven (and mark you, all these are Bible principles)-I say that is unusual among Catholics and that kind of settled peace of certain salvation is not usually the property of Catholics.

No, dear brother, when you talk to me about the unity of the Catholic Church, you are not talking about any Christian unity such as real born-again Christians generally have when they depend on the Word of God alone as authority and when they come to Christ personally for salvation and when they have the Holy Spirit dwelling within to guide them into the truth and comfort them.

02.08. Chapter 08

VIII. The Autocratic Domineering of the Catholic Church Over Its Members Dishonors Christ and the Bible

I have indicated above that the Catholic does not have the peace and happiness and freedom and spiritual enlightenment that one has who is free to go to the Bible and take the authority of the Bible and the leadership of God's own Spirit dwelling within his body. But not only the Catholic who is domineered and ruled and bossed suffers. The Catholic must eat fish on Fridays and during Lent (or macaroni and cheese). If he reads the Bible at all he cannot find out what it means except from a Catholic theologian or some of the official literature of the church. He dare not depend on the Spirit of God to make plain the Word of God. And not only does the poor Catholic suffer, but Christ Himself suffers, too. His crown rights are violated! The Lord Jesus who seeks to be Lord of all is put second to Mary, second to the saints and second to the rigmarole. And the blood of Christ is not the one great element that settles salvation for the believing sinner; the great element is the church itself which may choose to dole out bit by bit any blessings that may be obtained through the blood. The Catholic's sins are forgiven only if the priest says so (and he never knows for sure then). The Catholic need not pray as to where he should help support the Gospel to get it out to all the world. The church decides that for him. And so Christ has to step into the background. Everytime you have a high church you have a low Jesus. Everytime you have a high human priesthood you have a low divine Saviourhood. There are too many lords in the Catholic Church for Christ Jesus to be Lord of all as He claims to be and wants to be. Do not misunderstand me, Catholics are not alone in this matter. Many Protestants and other false cults take away the liberty that is in Christ. Christ as so-called "Way Shower," must share honors with Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, "The Leader." Or some others teach that one cannot be saved without baptism and so Jesus has to step back a bit into the background so that baptism and the church and the preacher may take a more important place. And when Southern Baptists insist that one does not truly serve God except as he supports the CO-operative Program or the denomination, that is the same kind of popery that dishonors Christ and puts the church, the organization, the leadership, the secretariat ahead of Christ and the Holy Spirit. And the pastor who insists that the tithes will not be recognized by God unless the tithes come into the church where this pastor receives his salary and where he can dominate the spending of the money-that pastor takes the part of the same popery that puts Christ in second place and puts human instruments or traditions or commandments ahead of the authority of the Holy Spirit and the authority of Christ. But that great state church pictured in Rev 17:1-18 with headquarters in the city of the seven hills (Rev 17:9), that harlot woman that is called "the mother of harlots and abominations in the earth," that state church "drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus"-she is the mother of abominations and particularly the mother of this abomination of putting the church ahead of Christ, putting the ordinances ahead of Christ, putting human leaders

I am saying that the overlordship of the Catholic Church is not only unscriptural, utterly unknown in the Bible and in New Testament churches, but it dishonors Christ, it perverts Christianity, it takes

from the Lordship of Christ, it denies the freedom of the human soul before God, and in that organization men take the leadership which God plainly gave to the Holy Spirit in the individual believer.

Dear Catholic Friend; I have written in love. After repeated correspondence and many, many questions and many arguments, I have felt led to go into detail. I have no hate for Catholics. I know many Catholics personally and love them. But I must protest that there is nothing like the Roman Catholic Church in the Bible. There is no papacy. There is no mass. There is no confessional. There are no prayers to Mary or to the saints. And nothing could please me better than that you, dear Catholic friend, could come out into the joy and peace and personal relationship with Christ which I enjoy, knowing that my sins are forgiven, knowing that by God's mercy I am ready for Heaven where He will take me when He comes or when I die. In Jesus' name, yours,

John R. Rice

©1961 and 1989, by Sword of the Lord Foundation, Sword of the Lord Publishers, PO Box 1099, Mufreesboro, Tennessee. Contact Sword of the Lord Publishers for copies of this letter and give one to every Catholic friend you know. Precious Catholic people need to hear the true gospel and need to be saved!

03.00.1. The Coming Kingdom of Christ

THE COMING KINGDOM OF CHRIST By John R. Rice, D.D., Litt. D.

Author of Prayer — Asking and Receiving; The Home: Courtship, Marriage and Children; Twelve Tremendous Themes; The Ruin of a Christian; Revival Appeals, etc. A Bible study on the return of Christ, the coming restoration and conversion of Israel, the re-establishment of David's throne at Jerusalem, Christ's reign thereon for a thousand years, and the eternal Heaven upon the earth where all the saints of God of all ages will dwell in eternal rapture in the presence of our Father, God, and His dear Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

03.00.2. Copyright Information

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03.00.4. Preface

PREFACE WITH MINGLED joy and anxiety I present this book to Christian readers everywhere. I am anxious because the matters taught are so weighty. I earnestly pray that God will make the truths that are herein presented clear to every humble heart who willingly seeks to know what God has promised and the things that "must shortly come to pass." But there is a great joy in the telling of this story. My own heart has been so blessed in the long months of preparation, study, prayer, and writing, that I cannot but feel that others likewise will be blessed. The burden of the book is this: that Christ will return to this earth, restore Israel to Palestine and save them, and will establish again the throne of David, and from that throne rule over the entire earth; that this kingdom will be a literal kingdom of a visible Christ reigning over a literal people; that eventually Heaven will be on this earth. Many other details of teaching will become clear as you read. All I ask is that you give to the reading an open mind and a prayerful, humble heart, and that you search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so.

Two things particularly characterize this volume. The first is that nearly one line in three of the book is actual Scripture quotations.

Many, many other Scripture references are given. The whole matter must be settled by the Word of God. It is a book of Bible teaching. I trust and earnestly believe that this feature will make the book valuable to the well-versed Bible scholar and at the same time understandable and rich to the beginning student who knows little of the Word of God. The other outstanding characteristic is that the Scriptures are taken at face value.

I believe the Bible. I believe it says what it means. I believe that humble, prayerful hearts who approach the Word of God in reverent faith will find its treasures fully available, and each one may fill his vessel to the full. Worldly wisdom is not sufficient, for God has hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes. So we take the Scriptures at face value.

- "Israel" means Israel.
- "Jerusalem" means Jerusalem.
- "For ever" means forever.
- "A thousand years" means a thousand years.
- All the promises of God are "yea and amen."

If Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and the apostles believed the promises about the coming kingdom, then we may safely do the same.

- Some say the promised reign of Christ on the throne of David will never come to pass.
- Others say it began during His earthly ministry.

- Still others believe that at Pentecost the kingdom was set up and that the church and kingdom are the same.

- Still others believe that the Scriptural promises and prophecies on these matters are highly figurative, cannot be understood, and that we should leave the study of unfulfilled prophecies and preach only those that have been fulfilled. But the careful and prayerful reader who checks this little book by THE Book will learn that God has promised a kingdom on this earth when the Lord Jesus Himself shall reign gloriously in Jerusalem over all the earth.

Please do not be offended at the positive ring throughout the book.

Before you are through you will see, I trust, that this book presents only the clear, positive teachings of the Word of God. If we were guessing about dates, or speculating on things not revealed, we might well be more timid. There is much about the future that we do not know.

Many faithful and good teachers and preachers of the Bible do not agree about details. But the great body of truth concerning the fact of Christ's literal return and literal reign on this earth are so clearly taught that for a humble and open-minded believer to know what God's Word says on these matters is simply to accept it and be glad. For myself it was so. Reared and trained altogether under the teachings of postmillennialists in Sunday School, preaching service, college, university, and seminary, when I began the independent study of my Bible I was compelled and then happy to accept this Bible teaching. In closing, may I say that the purpose of the book is not only to make clear a great Bible teaching but to establish a Hope and show Christians that it is the blessed Hope. I earnestly pray that hearts will be blessed even more than heads. To me it is surprisingly sweet to know that there is coming a day:

- When the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ;

- When the pure in heart shall see God, - When the meek shall inherit the earth;

- When the eyes of the blind shall be opened, - When the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, - When the lame shall leap as an hart, - When the tongue of the dumb shall sing, - When sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Our arms will hold again our dear ones, loved and lost awhile, and we shall see Him whom we love because He first loved us.

I trust that the longing in your heart, as you read this book, will teach you to pray sincerely in the words the Saviour taught us, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Mat 6:10), and like the beloved John, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"! (Rev 22:20).

I take this occasion to acknowledge my debt to many who have helped to make this book possible. The writings of Dr. R. A. Torrey, Dr. C. I. Scofield, Dr. W. E. Blackstone and many others have taught me to take heed to the "more sure word of prophecy" "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."

I owe to the ministry of such men a debt of gratitude which words can only poorly express. The defects of the book must be many. My heart cries out that however much of prayer and study and labor has been bestowed upon the book I am an unprofitable servant. Yet before now God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the mighty, and He who blessed Moses' rod and Gideon's lamp, and the jawbone in the hand of Samson, can surely bless this. I put it in His hands

as the little boy put the loaves and fishes there for Him to multiply and feed the hungry multitude.
May He get glory to His great name! Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

John R. Rice Wheaton, Illinois December, 1944

03.01. Blessings in the Study of Prophecy

CHAPTER ONE Blessings in the Study of Prophecy

CHRISTIAN people are constantly confronted by certain great questions. People are hungry to have the facts about such questions as these:

1. Why did all the Jews expect Christ to have a literal kingdom on earth?

David understood that some great Descendant would continue his kingdom on this earth permanently. The Jews in the time of Christ expected some great Son of David to arise and establish again the Jewish monarchy. The wise men came to find "the King of the Jews," and even Herod was alarmed because he expected a King to be born who would restore David's kingdom, over Israel. Even the apostles, and that after the resurrection of Jesus, were looking for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). WHY? Had God given them reason to expect a literal kingdom on earth?

2. Will this war-torn world ever have real, permanent, worldwide peace?

Men's efforts have failed. Peace treaties have become weapons of offense. All the world's culture, civilization, and science have only succeeded in making war more terrible, more heartless, more bloody. Will this war-torn world ever have peace? If so, when, and how?

3. Will the curse placed on this world because of sin ever be removed so that man can live here in a new Garden of Eden?

Weeds still grow easier than corn. Science only slightly modifies the terrible scourge of insect pests. Disease increases. Drought, floods, earthquakes and tornadoes ravage the earth. This whole planet groans and travails because of sin. Will man ever subdue this earth and have dominion over it as God commanded, as Adam lived in Eden at perfect peace with all animal life and the elements of nature?

4. Has the glory of Israel departed forever? Has God cast away forever the nation of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and the apostles? Or will God yet restore the nation Israel to its own land, Canaan, united, happy, and saved?

5. Christians talk much of Heaven; where will Heaven be through eternity? Will it be in some mystic, uncertain, far-off state where spirits without bodies gather, or will it be the paradise of God set up on this earth?

These Questions Answered in the Bible The Bible answers these questions, definitely, explicitly, in chapter after chapter and verse after verse. Surprising as it may seem, every preacher who knows his Bible can show you the answer to any one of these five questions, with dozens of Scriptures to prove it in the Word of God. The Bible answers these questions so clearly that they never would have been asked but for the ignorance of those who do not know the Bible and the folly of those who explain away the plain, literal teachings of God's Word. The simple fact is, that people

generally know nothing about the prophetic portions of the Bible.

- The denominational seminaries usually do not attempt to teach these portions.
- The average pastor never preaches on prophecy, thinks it of no special importance and admits that he does not understand it.
- And many people foolishly call a discussion of prophecy "speculation."
- Many Bible teachers and preachers say that these prophecies are so highly figurative that they cannot be understood and that perhaps most of them have already been fulfilled in a figurative sense.
- The International Sunday School lesson committee deliberately avoids these prophecies.
- Satan has evidently set out to keep from the people a knowledge of what God has plainly foretold will come to pass.

"There Shall Come in the Last Days Scoffers" The Bible plainly foretells this attitude of skepticism toward prophecy and particularly toward the return of Christ in 2Pe 3:3-5, as follows:

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers., walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water."

Notice that these scoffers about the second coming of Christ are:

- Worldly in their living, "walking after their own lusts,"
- Modernistic in their doctrine; that is, they "willingly are ignorant" of the direct creation of the world by the Word of God.

Evidently this Scripture has come to pass, is being fulfilled before our eyes. It is a pitiful fact that in these modern days, Christians, and often preachers, walk after their own lusts and have the same habits, companions and entertainments as the unsaved world. This Scripture has also come to pass in these last days, that men, even so-called Christian college and seminary teachers, and some preachers "willingly are ignorant" of the fact "that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water." People willingly remain ignorant of the direct creation of the world as given in Genesis, and instead of that substitute the modern doctrine of evolution.

But, says the Scripture above, given us by inspiration through the Apostle Peter, the outstanding characteristic about these men who will appear in the last days is that they are scoffers, casting doubt about the second coming of Christ, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." How many, many preachers are scoffers about the prophecies of the future so plainly given and so often repeated in the Bible! The Devil has raised up these scoffers among Bible teachers and preachers, Sunday School lesson writers, and seminaries, to keep the masses of the people

ignorant concerning God's plain statements of the things which must come to pass.

It is fair to say that many good, earnest men who love the Lord and believe the Bible have been mistaught and are ignorant concerning the great prophecies of the Bible.

Many a preacher preaches all the truth he knows, but has been discouraged in the study of prophecy by better scholars than he. Then there have been many charlatans and false teachers who have brought reproach on the prophetic portions of God's Word. Many people very foolishly set dates for the second coming of Christ, when Jesus plainly said that no man knows the day nor the hour, and that all should watch for that time which would come as suddenly as a thief in the night.

Seventh Day Adventists, Millerites, Jehovah's Witnesses, Anglo-Israel teachers and many others have brought discredit on prophetic teaching. But how foolish it is to neglect and ignore half of the Bible because it has been mistaught by others! The prophetic portion of the Bible is still God's Word and is intended to be read, to be taught, and to be understood.

More Than Half of Bible Prophecies Not Yet Fulfilled!

Most people do not realize how much of the future is told in the Bible. They know that many things about Christ's first coming, His birth, His sufferings, His death and resurrection are foretold in the Old Testament.

They do not know that hundreds of details concerning:

- The resurrection of the Christian dead, - The changing of the bodies of living Christians, - Our marriage to Christ and our honeymoon, - A great tribulation on this earth, - The rise of the Antichrist (a world dictator), - The last great battle on earth, - The setting up of the kingdom of Christ, - The regathering of Israel to one land, - Their conversion, - The restoration of the kingdom of David, - The final doom of Satan, - Judgment of sinners, - The moving of God the Father and His house of many mansions to the new earth for the remainder of eternity, Are told with fascinating clearness!

Far more than half of the prophecies of the Bible are as yet unfulfilled. The prophecies which have not been fulfilled are as definite, as literal, and as easily understood as the prophecies which have been fulfilled already. The second coming of Christ is foretold as clearly as is the first coming, and the incidents connected with it are as clear as it was:

- That He should be born at Bethlehem, - That He should be of the tribe of Judah, - Descended from David, - Born of a virgin, - That He should enter Jerusalem on an ass and - That He should preach the gospel to the poor.

Those were literal happenings, literally foretold. The literal facts about His crucifixion, including:

- The gamble for His garments, - The very words of the priests before the cross, - The piercing of His hands and feet, and - The cry of Jesus, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

All were so literally foretold that the most brazen skeptic could not deny their fulfillment. We have no reason to believe that the remainder of the prophecies will be fulfilled any less literally than these. Oftentimes the prophecies about the second coming of Jesus are in the same chapters or

same verses with these other prophecies which have been already fulfilled, definitely and literally.

Unfulfilled Prophecies Can Be Understood

Sometimes people who do not know much about prophecies, or who do not believe they will be literally fulfilled, excuse themselves by saying that one cannot understand a prophecy until it has been fulfilled and that therefore we should not study nor try to interpret unfulfilled prophecies. A brief reflection ought to convince anybody that that is not true. Prophecies are given ahead of time so that people may be warned. They can be understood, and that is exactly the reason they are given. For example, Noah prepared for the flood, built an ark, and preached to the wicked generation before the flood; and all Noah knew about it he got from prophecies that were not yet fulfilled! He did not ignore those prophecies nor think they might be figurative, but he knew what would happen and what he should do in preparation.

Lot in Sodom, and Abraham outside of Sodom, knew ahead of time that the wicked city, with others, would be destroyed by the wrath of God. All they knew about it was from the Lord's prophecies that had not yet been fulfilled. But that is what prophecies are for, so we may be prepared when the things come to pass. The Flood and the Destruction of Sodom, Like the Return of Christ The judgment of God on the whole earth in the flood, and on Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot, are mentioned by the Saviour in Mat 24:37-42 and Luk 17:26-30 as typical of the events surrounding the coming of the Saviour. Jesus said, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Those prophecies of the future were given to be understood ahead of time, and so are the prophecies of the Bible which are yet unfulfilled.

I remind you that just as we do not know the time of the Saviour's coming, so the exact time of the flood and of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone from the Lord out of Heaven were not foretold. But the essential facts were foretold plainly and the prophecies were fulfilled literally. So we may expect it to be with the prophecies which have not yet been fulfilled.

It is a fact, then, that unfulfilled prophecies can be understood. We are not to go beyond what the Bible says. We are not to teach guesses nor speculation nor what we imagine about the future, but what the Lord has revealed. And that we may take at face value, believing that it will be fulfilled to the letter, and literally, as were the prophecies which have been fulfilled heretofore.

Practically all we know about Heaven, about Hell, about the resurrection of our bodies, about rewards and judgments, we know from unfulfilled prophecies.

Many Prophecies of Christ's First Coming Were Understood Before Time The Old Testament is full of references to Jesus. Jesus is the theme of all the Bible, the Old as well as the New.

Jesus said, "Moses . . . wrote of me"; He said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."

Peter preached to Cornelius that "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

How foolish it would be to have the Old Testament full of predictions of prophecies about the first coming of the Saviour if none of them could be understood ahead of time. The fact is that many, many of these prophecies were understood ahead of time.

- The wicked scribes and Pharisees knew and told Herod that the Saviour was to be born in Bethlehem (Mat 2:3-6).

- They knew that Christ should live forever (John 12:34).

- The more spiritually-minded seemed to have known (probably from Dan 9:24-25) the time of His birth.

- Remember the wise men (Mat 2:1-2), and Simeon (Luk 2:26).

Even the common people seemed to be expecting Jesus when He began His ministry (John 7:31).

- Christ's virgin birth (Isa 7:14), - His descent from David (Jer 23:5-6), - His birth at Bethlehem (Mic 5:2)

These were so thoroughly made known in prophecies, before they were fulfilled, that all might have known they would literally come to pass, and many did know. The time of the Second Coming is not foretold, but Dan 9:25 told ahead of time that the first coming of Christ would be sixty-nine sevens of years (483 years) after the command to restore Jerusalem and the temple in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra!

It is silly to say that unfulfilled prophecies cannot be understood. That is what they are given for, to be understood. Of course, there are depths to the prophecies and to all Scripture that human beings have not yet fathomed. When I read John 3:16, I cannot know all about how much God loved me! But thank God, I can clearly understand that He did love me and that He gave Christ to die for me, and that by believing on Him I have everlasting life.

Unfulfilled prophecies, then, are to be read, studied, and taught like other parts of the Bible.

Special Blessing Promised in the Study of the Prophecies The Lord promised special blessings to those who read, who hear, and who understand prophecies. In Mat 13:10-17, Jesus stated this principle, that since His coming many things not understood by the prophets and righteous men of old are now revealed, but only to spiritually-minded people.

He did not explain the parables of the kingdom of Heaven to the public, but did to His disciples, saying in Mat 13:16-17 :

"But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

Jesus has a special blessing for those whose hearts are humble and attentive to His teaching about prophecies.

Likewise in Rev 1:3, the same Lord Jesus, in giving John the book of Revelation, said, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

Remember that the book of Revelation has a divinely inspired title given Rev 1:1, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The subject of the book of Revelation is the course of events culminating in the public revelation of Jesus Christ visibly to the whole world. And the Lord Jesus promised a special blessing to those who read, hear and keep the things written in this prophecy! Prophecy can be understood. Christians not only can understand the prophecies but are plainly commanded to read and hear them. So we should search the Bible for answers to our questions.

Unfulfilled Prophecy "a Light That Shineth in a Dark Place" Not only can unfulfilled prophecies be understood, but they are the only lights we have in this dark world as concerns the future. Science can give no assurance about what will happen tomorrow. The rulers of the nations who in some sense have in their care the lives of millions, can only grope in an ever increasing darkness, wondering what tomorrow will bring. But the Scriptures, thank God, will tell us; and God's prophetic Word shines on the future as light in a dark place. So says the Word of God. 2Pe 1:19 says: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

- Prophecy of the future is "sure." It is not speculation nor guess but sure revelation.
- To this prophecy yet unfulfilled, "ye do well that ye take heed," as the only dependable light in the dark, - And keep on heeding "until the day dawn"!

We are commanded to take heed to prophecy. There is a special blessing on those who study prophecy. Unfulfilled prophecy is a light shining in a dark place. Christians who know and understand the prophecies of the Bible will walk in the light and not in darkness, knowing the "things which must shortly come to pass."

Why Jews Expected Christ to Set Up a Literal, Earthly Kingdom

We do not have to seek far to learn why the Jews of the time of Christ, even including the apostles, all expected Jesus to set up a literal kingdom on the earth. The reason is that the Bible plainly and repeatedly, from one end to the other, teaches that He will do exactly that.

- It tells that the kingdom will be over Jews.
- It tells many times that that kingdom will be centered in the land of Canaan or Palestine.
- The Bible repeats many times that the King will be a Descendant of David and will rule in the place of David, from the same place, that is, from the same throne.
- The Bible likewise makes clear that that kingdom will be a literal kingdom on a literal throne over a literal land.

Now, if your mind has been stirred enough to investigate honestly this matter, blessed are you! If so, you are getting ready to enjoy your Bible as you never did before and to learn things that you never dreamed were in the Word of God. May God bless you and help you to learn for yourself some of the mysterious and wonderful things God has foretold as certain to come to pass. Let us learn, then, about God's promises to Abraham, to David, to the children of Israel, to the eternal city Jerusalem, to the apostles, and to all Christians.

03.02. God's Covenant With Abraham: His Seed...

CHAPTER TWO God's Covenant With Abraham: His Seed to Possess Canaan Forever

ONE OF THE earliest great promises which has not yet been fulfilled is the promise that the people Israel is to possess the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. In Gen 12:1-3 we are told that Abraham was called out from his country in Ur of the Chaldees, away from his kinspeople and relatives, to a land that the Lord would show him, the land of Canaan. With that call, God had given Abraham this great promise in Gen 12:2-3 :

"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

God there selected Abraham and his descendants to form a great nation through which He would bless the world. All the Bible, except the first eleven chapters, reminds us again and again that the nation Israel has been called and selected of God to be a blessing to the whole world.

After God called Abraham to the land of Canaan, the land itself was given to Abraham. That in itself would not seem so remarkable, but with the gift went an everlasting promise that all the land would be given, not only to Abraham, but TO HIS SEED FOREVER! Read Gen 13:14-15 which says:

"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." The land of Palestine has been given unconditionally to Israelites, to Abraham and the descendants of Abraham, for an everlasting possession. In fact, that term "an everlasting possession" is exactly what God said to Abraham when He mentioned the matter again in Gen 17:8 : "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." Did you notice in reading the above verse that God said "all the land of Canaan"?

It is the literal land, Canaan, which was promised to Abraham. It is ALL of the land of Canaan, also. Its proper boundaries are mentioned in the first of Joshua. Now only a comparatively few Jews are in the land of Canaan, and they certainly do not possess it, own it, and rule over it, as was promised. The Promise Must Be Fulfilled to Abraham in Person In both the Scriptures mentioned above, the land of Canaan is promised to Abraham himself, in person, as well as to his descendants.

Gen 13:15 says, "TO THEE will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

Gen 17:8 says, "And I will give UNTO THEE, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession." The promise is not just that someday the descendants of Abraham would take possession of the land of Canaan, but that he

himself would be present and in possession.

Jews in past generations have possessed the land of Canaan. In Jos 21:43-45 we are told how Israelites under Joshua possessed the land.

"And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."

There are at least two important things in the promise to Abraham which were not fulfilled when the nation Israel took possession of the land of Canaan.

One thing is that Abraham himself did not have possession. The promise was primarily to him. He never had before that time and did not then possess the land. God did not say to Abraham, "Unto thee THROUGH thy seed I will give the land." But He did say, "Unto thee AND to thy seed." That was not fulfilled when Israel took the land under Joshua's leadership.

Another part of the promise clearly was not fulfilled. That is, the possession was to be eternal. It was to be "an everlasting possession." That was not fulfilled when the nation Israel conquered the land of Canaan. Individuals died and did not possess it forever, and eventually the whole nation was scattered and lost national possession of the land. The covenant to Abraham was not fulfilled at that time.

Read Jos 21:43 again carefully. That verse plainly indicates that the covenant was not fulfilled. The Lord simply gave unto Israel, "the land which he sware to give UNTO THEIR FATHERS."

Jos 21:45 says: "There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."

- Does that mean that God had fulfilled all He had promised ever to do for Israel?
- Does it mean that the kingdom of David, foretold in Deu 17:14-20, had been fulfilled? Certainly not.
- Did it mean that the promise of the Saviour, which promise was given particularly to that nation in Deu 18:15, had been fulfilled? Certainly not.
- Did it mean that a TEMPORARY possession of the land of Canaan by Jews of that generation fulfilled the promise of ETERNAL possession by Abraham and his seed? CERTAINLY NOT!

Jos 21:45 simply states that God had kept all His promises up to date, having done at that time and to that people all that He had promised to do at that time to that people. None of God's promises had failed. And if God's promises up to that date had not failed, and if His promises to us up to date have not failed, can we not surely expect that of His promises to Abraham and his seed not one good thing shall fail? God keeps His promises! The promise about eternal possession of the land was to Abraham in person as well as his seed, and when it is fulfilled the possession will continue forever.

How Long Does "For Ever" Mean? The Bible ought to be taken at face value. God's Word means what it says. God promised Abraham "for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed FOR EVER."

Again He promised Abraham "all the land of Canaan, for an EVERLASTING possession." The only honest and safe way to interpret these statements is not to interpret them at all but simply take them at face value.

- The word "for ever" means forever.

- The word "everlasting" means everlasting. Do not explain away the Scriptures. The Hebrew word *olam* translated "for ever" in Gen 13:15 is the same word translated "for ever" in 2Sa 7:26 when David said "let thy name be magnified for ever." It is the same word translated "for ever" in Psa 66:7, "He ruleth by his power for ever."

If God's name would be magnified forever, and if He is to rule by His power forever, then Abraham, in person, and his seed are to possess the land of Canaan forever.

Many other examples could be given showing that it means in the Hebrew just what it is translated to mean in English. "For ever" means forever, and that is how long Abraham and his seed are to inhabit Canaan!

God's Promise to Abraham Is Yet to Be Fulfilled In the above promises, God said to Abraham about the land of Canaan, "To thee WILL I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Gen 13:15), and again in Gen 17:8, the Lord said, "I WILL give unto thee, and to thy seed. . . ."

Notice that in each case the Lord used the future tense, "I will." The promises are for the future.

Abraham never expected in his first and natural life on this earth to possess all the land of Canaan. Heb 11:8 makes clear that Abraham was not promised IMMEDIATE possession of the land, but was called to a land which he should AFTERWARDS inherit. With this in mind, read carefully Heb 11:8-13 as follows:

"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. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with Sarah, were sojourners in the land which God had promised to give them in the future, but which they had not yet received. Later all of the Jewish nation, who by faith became heirs of the same promise, "As the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable," Heb 11:13 tells us, died in faith, not having received the promises but having embraced them by

faith. Evidently all the saved Israelites down to the time the book of Hebrews was written were heirs of this promise, but had not received it.

Down to the time of Christ, then, the promises to Abraham, that the land of Canaan should be given to him and his children for an everlasting possession, had not been fulfilled! The promise that Israel is to possess the land of Canaan forever is yet in the future.

Stephen Said Abraham Had Not Yet Inherited Canaan In that wonderful sermon by the Spirit-filled Stephen in Acts 7:1-60, we are told plainly that God called Abraham out of Mesopotamia, into the land of Canaan, but while Abraham lived there God did not let him inherit it as his own. In Acts 7:5 he says about Abraham: "And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child."

Abraham did not inherit the land of Canaan, "not so much as to set his foot on."

Let no one claim that promise to Abraham has been fulfilled, for it has not.

Literal, Physical Possession of Canaan Promised to Abraham and Christ Together The passage above surely must have convinced you that the promise to Abraham of eternal possession of the land of Palestine has not yet been fulfilled. Abraham died, the Scripture says, "not having received the promises" (Heb 11:13) having no inheritance in the land of Canaan as yet, "no, not so much as to set his foot on" (Acts 7:5). That physical inheritance of the land of Canaan by Abraham is future. But here is another happy teaching of the Scripture in these same promises to Abraham.

Christ Himself is to inherit, with Abraham, the physical land of Canaan.

Gen 13:15 says: "For all the land which thou seest, TO THEE will I give it, AND TO THY SEED for ever." Likewise Gen 17:8 says: "And I will give unto THEE, and to THY SEED AFTER THEE, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

Those promises concerning Abraham's seed are taken to mean the nation Israel, or at least those of Israel who by faith are the children of promise (Gen 21:12; Gal 3:29). God says, "I will be their God," so that indicates the plural seed of Abraham.

Converted Israel will inherit Palestine with Abraham. But Christ is Abraham's Seed, to whom the promises about inheriting Canaan were given with Abraham. Gal 3:16 shows that God had in mind that Christ, Abraham's Seed, should inherit the land of Palestine forever with Abraham. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." The New Testament adds further revelation to the Old. Abraham's seed does refer to Israel, but it certainly refers to Christ, we are here told. The promise to Abraham will be fulfilled and he will inherit the land. Likewise the promise to Christ will be fulfilled and He will inherit that land of Canaan. This proves two important facts.

- First, that Christ will have a literal reign on earth, - Second, that this reign is future.

Christ Has Not Yet Inherited Canaan as a Possession

Abraham lived in the land of Canaan, but did not possess it. So Christ lived in the land of Canaan but did not possess it. Abraham was a stranger and a sojourner in the land of promise, but, we are told, did not inherit or come into actual possession of as much as to set foot upon (Acts 7:5). If that were true about Abraham with his riches in gold, silver, cattle, and servants (Gen 13:2), it was even more true about Christ in His earthly life.

Jesus was born and laid in a borrowed manger, crucified and laid in a borrowed grave. Between those events, He Himself told us that "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Mat 8:20).

Jesus did not possess the land of Canaan for an inheritance. The term "possession" used in the promises to Abraham is clearly defined by the circumstances when we are told that Abraham did not receive these promises during his lifetime. That proves it is a literal ownership and control, living on the land, which is promised to Abraham and so, physically, to Christ.

What the promise meant about Abraham, it also means about Christ.

If we cannot make the promise figurative with regard to Abraham, then it is not figurative about Christ.

If Abraham was to have even more literal possession of the land than he had while here on earth before the promise was fulfilled, then Christ must have even more literal possession of the land than Abraham did before the promise to Him is fulfilled.

It will not do, then, to explain away this Scripture and say that in some spiritual sense Christ in Heaven has already inherited Canaan. No, not until He has more literal control of it, and more literal possession of it than Abraham had, can Christ be said to have inherited the land of Canaan. The promise has not yet been fulfilled, but is for the future when Christ shall reign over the land of Canaan after His return to the earth. In fact, if there is any land on this earth which Christ does not actually, literally possess, it is Palestine, and if there is any people on earth who have rejected Him as King, it is Abraham's seed, the Jews.

Surely your heart ought to be happy to realize that when Abraham comes back to possess the land promised to him as an everlasting possession, Christ will also possess that land.

God plainly told Abraham that his descendants would be carried down into Egypt for four hundred years (Gen 15:13). The children of Israel later must have known that they would not at that time have an unbroken period of actual possession of the land of Canaan, since the Lord had plainly told them in Deu 28:63-68 that the nation would be scattered into all the world because of their sins. All of them understood and believed that.

Israelites to Live Forever on This Earth!

We have come to one great milestone of Bible teaching: the seed of Abraham, including Christ, are to possess and inhabit the land of Palestine forever.

- How many questions that answers!

- How many problems that settles! Where will Heaven be for Abraham? IT MUST INCLUDE PALESTINE ON THIS EARTH! Heaven, for Abraham and his believing descendants, at least, will

include possessions on this earth.

Many other Scriptures throughout the Bible repeat God's promise to Israel about their land. For example, read the two following passages from Jeremiah:

"Then will I cause you to dwell In this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever" (Jer 7:7).

"They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever" (Jer 25:5). Not only did God give the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants, but He gave it to them "for ever and ever." The Bible by doubling the term makes the promise doubly sure. Jews are to live forever and ever on this earth in Palestine.

Actually, of course, if Heaven for Jews will be on earth, then Heaven for everybody will be on earth, as the Scripture makes plain later on. Here the promises are particularly to Abraham and his literal descendants. Saved Jews, children according to the promise, children of Abraham in both flesh and spirit, are to inhabit the land of Palestine forever in a Heaven on earth.

I was taught as a child in Sunday School that at the second coming of Christ there would be one general resurrection of all the dead, saved and unsaved. I was taught that this planet would be burned up and destroyed and disappear. I was taught that there would be at that time one general judgment and that saved and unsaved would alike stand before God to be judged according to their works. In some mysterious way it was supposed that Christ would intervene in behalf of the Christians. Then the unsaved would be sent to Hell and the redeemed spirits would float around and sing and twang their harps in a golden city hanging in space in the "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere"! How far away from the plain Bible teaching that is!

I was taught in the Sunday School (and the Theological Seminary only strengthened the teaching) that if the meek were ever to inherit the earth, they would have to do it in this life.

I was taught that all the promises to Israel really meant the church, and that the promises to Jerusalem and Mount Zion really meant Heaven!

I was taught that that golden age-when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks" (Isa 2:4; Mic 4:3) and when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa 11:9) - would be brought about by preaching the gospel, aided by schools, hospitals, good laws, peace treaties, inventions and the developments of modern science!

I believed that, despite the evidences of my senses and the testimony of history and current events, until I began to study the prophetic teachings of the Bible.

Then I learned that God had promised to bring the Israelites back to their land to possess it forever, that Heaven, then, must be on this earth.

If God Set Out to Destroy This World

Let us imagine that to please all our postmillennial and amillennial friends, or those of whatever description who have largely ignored the prophetic portions of the Bible, the Lord should prepare

to burn up and utterly destroy this planet or earth.

Let us suppose that, as so many say, the prophecies are highly figurative anyway and that to study and teach or preach them is largely speculation, and so the Lord prepares to strike the match or say the word that will utterly destroy this whole planet. What a multitude is gathered, let us imagine, to behold that great event. But wait! I see an old man who walks like a king who comes forward to interrupt the ceremony. His face has the look of authority and his voice is bold as he cries out, "Wait, Lord; You cannot destroy my property!"

I can imagine the Lord might say, "This man is a friend of mine; let us hear what he has to say. Speak on, friend, tell the people. What is thy name? To what possession do you refer? What title do you hold to the property?"

"My name," says the venerable patriarch, "is Abraham! From Ur of the Chaldees I came at Thy command. To Canaan I came and the land Thou didst give to me, teaching me by faith to know that I should afterward inherit it. To Isaac and Jacob Thou didst make the same promises, and all our days, though rich in gold and silver, cattle and servants, we lived as sojourners and pilgrims in tents, patiently waiting until we should inherit and possess forever our own land. This scroll in my hand, O Lord God, is a written deed to the land of Canaan, called by name, and signed by Thyself. It is a warranty deed; guaranteeing to me and my faithful children after me-the children of promise-the possession of the land forever.

"You may burn up, if You will, the weeds and thorns and thistles. Destroy, if You will, all disease germs and insect pests, which have increased the curse on the land because of man's sin through the centuries. O Lord, You may shake down and burn the cities, for I look for another city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. The elements may melt with fervent heat, but the land is mine; to me Thou didst give it with the promise that I should inherit it with my seed. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' "

If God wanted to please the ignorant and the scoffers concerning His prophecies, how would He face Abraham? The deed which Abraham has is the Bible, the Word of God.

There will come a time, say the Scriptures, when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2Pe 3:10). But the same chapter explains that that will be a judgment like the flood. 2Pe 3:6-7 says:

"Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

- The world "perished" in the flood.

- The earth shall be "burned up" in a coming day of judgment.

- The present heavens or firmament will pass away, we are told, and all that fire can melt on this earth will melt. But as the earth reappeared from the waters of the flood, to be restocked and repopulated and replanted, so in a much greater way this planet, purified of pests, disease, and the marks of sin by the literal fire of God's wrath, will be planted again as the Garden of Eden. This

planet will never be entirely removed, can never cease to be.

Psa 104:5 says: "Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever." The fires of judgment will purge this earth, but it will not pass out of existence. It will remain to be the home of God's people through eternity. Canaan shall again be the possession of Abraham and his seed, and at that time they shall possess it forever!

03.03. Israel to Be Restored as a Nation

CHAPTER THREE Israel to Be Restored as a Nation

ONE OF THE greatest themes in the Bible is the promised restoration of Israel to their land, that is, the promise that Israel shall be returned to Palestine and their kingdom re-established.

It was this promise that Nehemiah had in mind when he fasted and wept and prayed and took back a remnant to Palestine.

It was these great promises that Daniel had in mind when he fasted and wept and prayed and confessed his sin and the sin of his people Israel (Dan 9:3-19) until God sent him the promise concerning his people Israel and his city Jerusalem, when the transgressions would be finished, sins brought to an end, reconciliation made for iniquity, everlasting righteousness brought in, and the Most Holy One anointed, that is, when the great coming Jewish King should be anointed (Dan 9:24). This was the hope and promise which the apostles had in mind when they asked the risen Saviour, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

Peter meant this when he preached that Israel should repent, looking forward to the "times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets," at the second coming of Christ (Acts 3:19-21). This was the hope of the misguided Zealots when they rebelled against Rome and finally brought about the utter destruction of the city by Titus and the Roman army in A.D. 70.

Israel to Be Dispersed and Later Regathered to Their Land

Deu 28:1-68 is one of the most terrible in the Bible. Almost all of Deu 28:1-68, and most of Deu 29:1-29 following it, tell of the terrible plagues, the punishment that was to come upon the nation Israel if they should disobey the Lord and forsake His laws.

Deu 28:63-66 makes plain the great dispersion and scattering of Israel among all nations which was to come. As you read it, you will see that it has certainly been fulfilled.

"And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life" (Deu 28:63-66).

Verse Deu 28:64 shows that this was not merely the Babylonian captivity which God had in mind. They were not to be taken to one nation, but "the Lord shall scatter thee AMONG ALL PEOPLE,

FROM THE ONE END OF THE EARTH EVEN UNTO THE OTHER"!

No, what God here threatened was that which has come to pass, and is true even today; Jews are scattered in every nation under Heaven. They are in every land and yet have no land of their own, they are among every people, yet they remain a separate people.

Many of Abraham's Seed Destroyed Utterly That Deu 28:15-68 full of terrible predictions of the ruin of those Jews who turn away from the Lord God. A careful reading of it makes clear that many Jews have been and will be destroyed without remedy. The promise is not to all of Abraham's seed. In that chapter, verse Deu 28:20 says that the cursing, vexation and rebuke will be upon them, "until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly."

Verses Deu 28:22; Deu 28:24; Deu 28:48; Deu 28:51; Deu 28:61 say that the curses of God shall smite wicked, unbelieving Jews "until thou perish" and "until thou be destroyed" etc. It becomes certainly evident that the promises to Abraham's seed are not for disobedient and rebellious Jews. God plainly told these that they should be destroyed. But this limitation of the promise was made known from the very beginning. The Lord told Abraham, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen 21:12). The promise was not to all of Abraham's seed, not at all to Ishmael and the sons of Keturah by Abraham. Later, God chose Jacob and rejected Esau. The "birthright" which included the covenants and promises was sold by Esau for a mess of pottage, and profane Esau did not inherit the promises as did Jacob. The promise to Abraham did not include all of his descendants. The Promises Inherited Only by Faith Rom 4:13 shows that only converted Jews, those who like Abraham believed in God, shall inherit the Abrahamic promises.

There we are told: "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." The promise was to Abraham on the basis that he believed God, and the promise to his seed is on the same basis. Jews who inherit with Abraham the land of Canaan will inherit it on the basis of righteousness by faith. Happily, Gentiles also who have the same faith are counted the seed of Abraham, and will inherit the earth with Abraham (Gal 3:7-9; Gal 3:14; Gal 3:28-29). But the point that we are now making is that only a limited number of all those who have ever descended from Abraham will inherit the land with Abraham. Those who inherit will be those who have trusted in the Saviour, as Abraham did. That is the reason that half the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy gives verse after verse saying that Israelites who sinned should be "destroyed," should "perish."

Then verse Deu 28:63 says:

"And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it." When God threatened to destroy Israelites, He did not mean that the last Jew would be blotted out, for many Scriptures foretell the eternal existence of the race. But relatively few of the nation have been converted and can inherit the promises. No Second Chance for Unsaved Jews

Let it be understood that God's plan of salvation for the Jew is the same as for everybody else in the world. Jews are sinners, as are the Gentiles. To be saved, they must turn by faith to Christ as others must do. A Jew who dies unsaved, not having trusted in Christ, does not have any part in the promises made to Abraham. Those promises can be inherited only by those who are heirs

through the righteousness of faith (Rom 4:13). Unrepentant and unbelieving dead, whether Jews or Gentiles, are in Hell and will never be saved. The rich man about whom the Saviour told us in Luk 16:19-31 was a Jew, an unsaved Jew, who in Hell yet called Abraham his father, as he literally was, that is, his ancestor.

Unbelieving Jews Not Really Abraham's Seed

How could unbelieving Jews inherit promises of God made to the spiritually-minded, believing Abraham, the child of God, the friend and prophet of God? Jesus plainly told the unsaved Pharisees of His day that though they were physically descended from Abraham, they were not really Abraham's seed but were children of the Devil (John 8:37-44).

John the Baptist preached that "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Mat 3:9).

Even when the whole remnant of Israel is converted, each individual must put his faith in Jesus as the Saviour, the only way anyone has ever been saved, or ever will be saved. A nation shall be born at once (Isa 66:8), "and so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom 11:26); but that will come when individual Jews all turn, as they one day will, to receive the Saviour and trust Him as their Messiah, their Deliverer, and their King. The Regathering of Israel and the Future Foretold

After all the warnings of the terrible punishment God would bring on Israel when they forgot God, it is refreshing to know that He will one day turn their hearts back again. Israel has been dispersed. Israel will be regathered. God has not cast away His people.

Deu 30:1-6 is a very important passage showing God's plan for Israel in the future. When you read it carefully, I will call attention to several important facts in that passage.

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And, the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (Deu 30:1-6).

Notice the following great facts which are made clear in this passage:

(1) God does not say "if," but "when." God knew that the sins of Israel would lead to their being scattered in all the world.

(2) He also knew that far later those of the nation yet alive would be led to return to the Lord as told in Deu 30:2. In the inspired words of Moses, Israel will return to obey the very commandments in these Mosaic laws. (This will be in the Great Tribulation period to come, as you will later see.)

(3) The nation Israel will be regathered to their own land. Deu 30:4 makes clear that every living Jew "driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven" will be gathered and brought back to the land of Canaan.

Notice particularly that Deu 30:5 says, "And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it." The fathers of present day Jews possessed the land of Israel, but they did not have EVERLASTING possession of it. In the future, every living Jew under Heaven will be brought back to the land of Canaan to possess it.

(4) This Scripture above makes clear that after the Israelites are gathered back to their own land, then they will not merely keep the law of Moses, but they will be "circumcised in heart." They will be converted, born again, and have everlasting life.

Ezekiel Reveals the Hope of Israel

Many times in Ezekiel do we find this theme of the restoration of Israel to their own land, Palestine. Eze 34:1-31, Eze 36:1-38 and Eze 37:1-28 are especially plain. God is the Shepherd and the children of Israel are His people.

Eze 34:11-13 says:

"For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country." The prophecy is about Israel; they will be brought "to their own land," Palestine, the land of "the mountains of Israel." This is not figurative, but literal.

Again in Eze 36:22-28 we find a plain promise from God to Israel that they will be regathered from among the heathen, gathered out of all countries, and brought again "INTO YOUR OWN LAND," that then they will be given new hearts, or converted.

"Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. 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: from 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. AND YE SHALL DWELL IN THE LAND THAT I GAVE TO YOUR FATHERS; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Eze 36:22-28). This passage, like Deu 30:1-6, plainly promises that all of Israel left alive on the earth will one day be restored to Palestine, their own land, that there they will be converted and there will enter into the everlasting possession which

God promised them. Do not call this figurative language, nor explain away the meaning. The Lord plainly says, "And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers," the literal land Canaan.

If there should be any doubt, the remainder of the chapter tells of the increase of corn, the tilling of the land, the building of cities and that the whole land shall be like the Garden of Eden (Eze 36:35). The Lord is not here talking about some mystic, unreal place out in space where disembodied spirits gather. He is talking about a literal land, with soil that grows crops, a land where cities are built and prosper. The place is the land of Palestine where people will be regathered with literal bodies to eat, drink, sow and reap, build and inhabit, a physical Garden of Eden, a literal Heaven upon earth. The Valley of Dry Bones In Eze 37:1-28, Ezekiel saw a vision, a valley of dry bones, very, very dry. In the vision Ezekiel was commanded to prophesy to these dry bones that they should live, and as he prophesied, there was a noise and shaking and the bones came together, sinews and flesh came upon them and skin, and then the wind brought breath into these bodies, and they lived, an exceeding great army! Then the Lord explained the vision in the following words:

"Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold., O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord" (Eze 37:11-14). The bones are not the bones of the dead, but the bones of the living. The graves are the countries all over the world where Jews are scattered and buried alive. Israel as a nation seems dead, but God will revive national Israel again. God is not talking ABOUT Israel, but TO Israel.

It is important to notice that though God here uses a figure of speech, He plainly states what the figure pictures.

He says, "These bones are the whole house of Israel." The resurrection here pictured, then, is the resurrection of "the whole house of Israel."

God hears the despairing cry of the Jews as they say, "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts."

Many Israelites mourn as did Daniel and Nehemiah over their state; no king, no priesthood, no sacrifice; cast out of their land, persecuted around the world. To these God says, "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel."

God is speaking here to living Jews but about their national deadness. It is a promise to the literal people, Israel, of their restoration as a nation to their land and to the favor of God. The breath that will come into Israel will be the return of the Spirit of God to spiritually dead Israel. The resurrection He promises here is the return to their own land from the graves which are other countries. Notice again the plain, literal promise in Eze 37:14, "And I shall place you in YOUR OWN LAND."

Israel, that is, living Jews, will be restored to their own land as a literal nation again. The Sign of the Two Sticks In the rest of Eze 37:1-28, God showed through the prophet the reuniting of the two kingdoms, Judah and the ten tribes, the Northern and Southern kingdoms, which divided in the days of Rehoboam, Solomon's son. Notice how literal are these promises. Notice the promise about Christ, the greater David, the Descendant of David. See that the happy land promised is not a heaven on some other planet, but literal Palestine.

Here is the rest of the chapter, Eze 37:15-28 :

"The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, More-aver, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and BRING THEM INTO THEIR OWN LAND: AND I WILL MAKE THEM ONE NATION IN THE LAND UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell IN THE LAND THAT I HAVE GIVEN UNTO JACOB MY SERVANT, WHEREIN YOUR FATHERS HAVE DWELT; AND THEY SHALL DWELL THEREIN, EVEN THEY, AND THEIR CHILDREN, AND THEIR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN FOR EVER: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them, and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." Do you not see why Jews in the time of Christ expected Him to set up a literal kingdom? Do you not see why they expected it to be in the land of Canaan, "on the mountains of Israel?" Many, many times are these plain promises given by the prophets in the Old Testament.

"For Ever," "For Ever," "Everlasting Covenant," "For Evermore," "For Evermore" In the above Scripture, Eze 37:25-28, especially Eze 37:25-28, the Lord emphatically repeats His statement that the restoration of Israel to the land of Canaan shall be for an everlasting possession. Five times in these four verses does the Lord mention the eternal character of this restoration of Israel.

- They shall dwell in the land of Canaan "for ever" (Eze 37:25).

- And the greater David shall be their prince "for ever" (Eze 37:25).

- The covenant God will make them will be "an everlasting covenant" (Eze 37:26).

- God will set His sanctuary in the midst of them "for evermore" (Eze 37:26).

- Again we are told the temple or sanctuary will be in the midst of them "for evermore" (Eze 37:28). The promise to Abraham was forever and so is the promise to the nation Israel. When Israel is restored to their land to possess it, they will possess it for evermore. The land, the kingdom, the covenant, the sanctuary of God, all of these shall be enjoyed forever "in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt." The Return From Babylon Did Not Fulfill This Prophecy The promises which we have read in Ezekiel were not fulfilled when the children of Israel returned from their captivity in Babylon. Those Jews did not stay in their land forever. God's sanctuary did not abide there forever, but the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, and since that time Jews have been scattered to all parts of the earth. Nor were the Jews converted (that is, the entire nation) at that time. In the passage used above to show the promised restoration of Israel to their land, we were clearly told that Israel should be wonderfully converted.

Eze 36:26-27, mentioned above, tells of this conversion.

"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."

Just before and just after these two verses in the same passage, we read how God was to restore Israel to their land. When the children of Israel were brought back from the Babylonian captivity then we could not say that every individual Jew had a change of heart. Nothing like that is said in Nehemiah and Ezra which describes their return from captivity. Many of those Jews doubtless were saved, but never yet has there been a nation on the earth, as far as we know, in which every individual was a child of God.

Above we studied Eze 37:15-28 where the Lord instructed Ezekiel to take two sticks and bind them together until they should be one and say to the people that one day He would bring back Judah. and Israel and make them, one nation in the land on the mountains of Israel forever. In the midst of that passage, now notice Eze 37:23.

"Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God." That verse says that when Israel is restored to their land forever, they never again shall defile themselves with idols nor detestable things "nor WITH ANY OF THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS." In other words, the Scripture makes clear that Israel will never again turn away from God nor sin against Him. when they are brought back to the land of Canaan and restored again as a nation to God's favor, for they will be saved and not only saved but glorified.

Certainly then, that restoration mentioned in these Scriptures and prophesied for Israel was not the restoration from their Babylonian captivity. Israel since that time has clearly sinned. They have rejected and crucified their own Messiah or Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. For their sins they have now been scattered from one end of Heaven to the other, around the world.

Israel to Be Regathered Out of "All Countries," Not Just Out of Babylon The restoration of Israel to their land which we are discussing is a far more general and universal restoration than that which happened when Israel went back from Babylon to their land. In that day the total number who went back, as given in Ezr 2:64-65 and Neh 7:66-67, was only about 50,000. Probably many more Israelites were in the land of Babylon who preferred not to return to Canaan. Most of those who went back were of the tribe of Judah though some were from every tribe. Those who returned were a remnant of the nation.

How much greater will be the return to Palestine when God restores the whole nation again as pictured in His Word. In Deu 30:3-5 speaking on this matter, remember that the Lord said:

"Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers." This Scripture plainly indicates that God will gather every living Jew under Heaven back to the land of Palestine!

Verse Deu 30:3 says that the Lord "will return and gather thee from ALL THE NATIONS," not simply from the region of Babylon. Even from "the outmost parts of heaven" the Lord will gather Israelites to bring them back to their land.

Eze 36:24 says: "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you OUT OF ALL COUNTRIES, and will bring you into your own land."

Eze 37:21 says that "I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them ON EVERY SIDE, and bring them into their own land." The re-gathering of Israel prophesied will include every Jew alive in every nation on earth. Nothing like this happened in the days of the return from Babylon with Ezra and Nehemiah. From Babylon Jews "Returned"; at The Restoration God Will "Gather" Them When some Israelites under Nehemiah and Ezra returned to Palestine to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and their temple, King Cyrus made a proclamation stating that all Israelites who wished might return to their land (2Ch 36:22-23; Ezr 1:1-4). They went of their own accord. Those who chose to return, returned. Those who chose to remain where they were, remained. So it has been since that time. The Zionist movement is a movement sponsored by unconverted Jews with a laudable purpose of restoring some Jews to their own land, Palestine.

Those who are successful, prosperous and happy in other nations around the world remain where they are. Those who are unhappy, and long to go back to Palestine are encouraged to go. The movement rests on the will of men, not the will of God. The new national Israel is only a fragment and is not a fulfillment of the prophecies about Israel being restored. Preachers who think so are mistaken. The capture of Jerusalem in 1917 by General Allenby whereby Palestine was opened to control by the British and colonization by Jews, was of no significance in the promised restoration of Israel to their land. The stream of immigration whereby Jewish people dribble back to Palestine in this day does not fulfill the wonderful promises of God. First, as we have shown, this does not include all the Jews in all countries, even to the outmost parts of Heaven, and second, in this

movement men are the active ones, and not God. As long as it is left to the will of men, we can expect that Jews will be found in every nation in the world. Their enterprise, their foresight, their thrift will carry them wherever there is business for bankers, traders, merchants, peddlers, capitalists, scientists, artists, musicians, and statesmen, but when God's time comes He will turn the hearts of the people back toward the land and then He Himself "will gather them on every side and bring them into their own land."

03.04. When Will Israel Be Regathered and Conv....

CHAPTER FOUR When Will Israel Be Regathered and Converted? At Christ's Coming

SURELY IT IS an established teaching of the Word of God that Israel will all be restored to their land. As to that, the promises are clear. When, then, will Israel be carried back to their land as a nation under the blessing of God to inherit their eternal possession? The Scriptures give the answer that it will be at the second coming of Christ. No past movement of the people of Israel to Palestine fulfills the prophecies, and in the Bible, the restoration is repeatedly connected with the conversion of the entire remnant of the nation and the beginning of the reign of Christ as His Second Coming.

Here is one of the simplest proofs that Christ's kingdom has not been set up on the earth. In dozens of places in the Bible we are taught that the coming kingdom will follow the regathering of Israel to their own land, Canaan. In 2Sa 7:10, the Lord revealed to David through the prophet Nathan His plan for the regathering of Israel and their settling in "a place of their own" to move no more, in the following words: "Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime."

Then in the following verses, 2Sa 7:11-16, the Lord gave David the great covenant about his dynasty and the everlasting kingdom. The kingdom follows the regathering of Israel to their own land. God will place Israel permanently in their own land and then David's Descendant will reign over them on David's throne. The Scripture in Isa 11:10-12 plainly says that the coming of the great King, "a root of Jesse," that is, the Descendant of David and his father Jesse, will be IN THE SAME DAY as the regathering of Israel.

"And IN THAT DAY there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass IN THAT DAY; that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Gush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isa 11:10-12).

Note in verse Isa 11:11 the exact words "in that day." The beginning of the reign of Christ and the assembling of the outcasts of Israel from every corner of the earth will take place in the same day.

Jer 23:3-6 again connects the raising up of the "righteous BRANCH" of David to reign on David's throne with the regathering of the children of Israel. When God gathers His flock, Israel, out of all countries and brings them again to their own fold, then the Lord Jesus "shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." The same thing is promised in Jer 33:14-17. In Eze 34:1-31, read verses Eze 34:12-14; Eze 34:22-24. The order is the same. God will regather Israel, and then the kingdom of David will be restored. Eze 37:21-25 shows the same thing again.

The Regathering of Israel for the Kingdom to Take Place at Christ's Second Coming

We have taken detailed steps to impress it upon your heart, but ere this you must have seen that the regathering of Israel is one great, sudden event at the second coming of Christ. That is exactly what the Scripture teaches. In Mat 24:29-31, the Saviour gives the order of events. Following a Great Tribulation on this earth, He will return visibly and personally to this earth.

Then He shall send His angels and regather His elect or chosen people of Israel.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Mat 24:29-31). This Scripture fits with all the others concerning the regathering of Israel and the establishment of His kingdom.

Christ the King will gather His flock, and establish His kingdom over them, on the mountains of Israel. This, Jesus Himself said, did not happen at His first coming, but would happen on His visible, bodily return to this earth. The slow migration of Jewish people back to Palestine cannot fulfill this Scripture, but with all the authority of the Son of God upon them, the angels of Heaven will scatter to all the world to seek out every living Jew and bring him back to the land of his fathers, to meet his promised King, the Lord Jesus Christ! The regathering of Israel to Palestine waits for the second coming of Christ.

Then will come the blessed kingdom of Christ, when "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever" (Luk 1:33).

Israel Will Be Saved When Regathered The kingdom of Christ awaits not only the regathering of Israel, but their conversion as well. Since the Jewish nation rejected Christ at His first coming, most of the Jews were not saved then, and since most Jews have not been Christians in any age since Jesus came, it is certain that Christ's kingdom, has not been set up on the earth. Those who do not take the promises about Christ's kingdom on earth literally, but explain them away, teach that Christ set up His kingdom at His first coming, or, as some teach, at Pentecost. But they overlook many Scriptures which positively teach that at the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth the Jewish nation will be converted.

Jews to Be "Circumcised in Heart"

Connected with the promise of the regathering of Israel for their kingdom, at a number of places in the Bible is a statement that they will be circumcised in heart, or converted. Deu 30:5-6 speaks of this as follows:

"And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God WILL CIRCUMCISE THINE HEART, AND THE HEART OF THY SEED, TO LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THINE HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, that thou mayest live."

Circumcision among Jews always meant that they were a chosen, separate people, set apart according to the plan of God. Actually, circumcision ought to have been, and with spiritual Jews was, a sign that they were wholly set apart to love and serve the true God. A Jew who has been circumcised in the flesh is set apart physically as one of God's chosen race, Israel. But as long as he rejects the Jewish Messiah, he belies his circumcision. He is not circumcised in heart. When with all his heart he turns to seek the Lord, and finds Him, then the Jew, born again, a child of God, is truly 'circumcised in heart!' In this passage we are told that the circumcision of heart for all the Jews will be in connection with their regathering to their own land. Circumcision of Israelites in the Old Testament plainly signified separation, and said, 'This man is different, he is God's man!' That circumcision only faintly foretold the time when Israelites would be circumcised in heart, when every living Jew would know and love the true God.

Eze 36:24-27 tells us again of this coming time when Jews shall have a change of heart when they are regathered to Palestine. Remember that this regathering is connected everywhere with the kingdom of David, and the kingdom of Israel cannot be restored until Israel is saved.

"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: from 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" (Eze 36:24-27). This Scripture is as clear a picture of salvation as "ye must be born again."

"A new heart," "a new Spirit" will be given Jews when they are regathered for the kingdom, of Christ and are in their own land. This is the same individual salvation that Christians have today.

Read again Eze 37:15-28 where the Lord instructed Ezekiel to take two sticks and bind them together until they should be one and to say to the people that one day He would bring back Judah and Israel and make them one nation in the land on the mountains of Israel forever. In the midst of that passage, now see verse Eze 37:23 -

"Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God."

Israel to Be Saved Then Do not miss the blessed significance of this passage.

Verse Eze 37:23 tells us about Israelites that, "I WILL SAVE THEM OUT OF ALL THEIR DWELLINGPLACES, WHEREIN THEY HAVE SINNED, AND WILL CLEANSE THEM: SO SHALL THEY BE MY PEOPLE, AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD." That plainly refers to salvation.

Verses Eze 37:26-28 say that God will set His sanctuary, His tabernacle, in the midst of them forevermore. He will be their God, and Israel shall be His people! That verse says that when Israel is restored to their land forever they shall never again defile themselves with idols nor detestable things, "NOR WITH ANY OF THEIR TRANS-GRESSIONS." In other words, the Scripture makes clear that Israel will never again turn away from God nor sin against Him when they are brought back to the land of Canaan and restored again as a nation to God's favor, for they will be saved,

and not only saved but glorified.

Paul in his inspired letter to the church at Rome tells us more about this coming conversion of Israel. In Rom 11:25-27 we are told that the conversion of the whole nation Israel will be after the fulness of the Gentiles comes in and that "all Israel shall be saved" when Jesus the Deliverer comes again to reign.

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: 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" (Rom 11:25-27). In the preceding verses of the same chapter, Paul tells us how present-day Israel, branches of the tame olive tree to whom God gave His great and precious promises, have been broken off because of unbelief, while we, the Gentiles, the wild olive branches, have been grafted in. But when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, that is, when most of the Gentiles who will be saved are saved, then the Lord Jesus will return and appear unto Israel, and they will recognize and love and trust Him and be saved. "All Israel shall be saved." That had not happened yet when Paul wrote. It has never happened since. It awaits the second coming of Christ. This church or gospel age is the time of the "fulness of the Gentiles." The fulness of the Gentiles must come before the time comes for all Israel to be saved. Now most Christians are Gentiles, and relatively few Jews today have accepted Jesus as their Messiah and Saviour. But when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, and when Israel is restored to their land as pictured in the Scriptures above, then "ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED!" When He, the Deliverer, comes to deliver Israel from the armies of the Antichrist and restore them to their own land, then Israel shall be saved.

Here, to me, is one of the most fascinating themes of all the Bible, that Jesus should be loved by His own people, should be sought by the race that rejected Him, that they should mourn for Him and seek Him, and then, praise God, find Him! That is one of the most interesting stories in the Bible, and it is clearly told so all can read it who will. The book of Zechariah is packed full of prophecies concerning the return of the Saviour and the conversion of Israel.

Zec 14:1-21 tells of the return of Christ in power with all His saints, to deliver the Jews, when the Antichrist and his armies shall have besieged Jerusalem and have taken it. That chapter tells how "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives," how in one day the Lord shall defeat the armies of the nations of this world, and then how "the Lord shall be king over all the earth." That chapter clearly tells of the setting up of the kingdom of Christ on earth. But in the preceding chapters we find scattered the divine prophecies of the conviction and conversion of Israel.

Israel to Mourn Over Their Sins

Zec 12:10-14 shows that a deep conviction for sin shall come upon Israelites when they first see the returned Saviour "whom they have pierced." By that time Israel will have had enough of her rebellion, and when they see the Saviour they will mourn over Him, we are told, "as one mourneth for his only son."

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn

for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart" (Zec 12:10-14).

Zec 13:1-2; Zec 13:6 follow immediately, so we print it here before we comment.

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land."

"And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

Jesus will open the fountain for sin and uncleanness to all Israel when He returns to reign! When the people Israel, the nation that condemned Him to be pierced with thorns and nails and spear, see Him, they will mourn over Him in sincerest sorrow for sin. They will ask, "What are these wounds in thine hands?" and He will answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

They will need no further proof that He is the Messiah than His marvelous coming to fulfill the prophecies, regather Israel and establish His kingdom. So then it will come to pass that "All Israel shall be saved." This conversion of what is left alive of the nation Israel must take place at the second coming of Christ. It has not happened yet, and that is all the more certain proof that Christ has not yet established His kingdom, but that it will be established at the Second Coming.

03.05. David's Kingdom Over Israel to Be...

CHAPTER FIVE David's Kingdom Over Israel to Be Restored Forever THERE ARE three great elements in all prophecies of the future.

They are:

- A land - The land is Palestine or Canaan.

- A people - the people, Israel - A throne or kingdom - the throne is the throne of David. In 2Sa 7:8-16 we are plainly told that all these elements will be combined when the nation Israel is brought back to their own land and established there forever under the kingdom of a Descendant of David on David's throne. Nathan the prophet was sent by the Lord to tell David that the throne of his kingdom would be established forever over Israel in the future.

Read this passage with this in mind.

"Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (2Sa 7:8-16).

Verse 2Sa 7:10 says a surprising thing! Israel was already in the land of promise, Palestine or Canaan, and David's throne was already established there, and he was their king, yet the promise is "Moreover I WILL appoint a place for my people Israel, and WILL plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more."

Years after the death of David, Israel would be carried to Babylon, and later scattered all over the world. David's kingdom, then established, would be temporarily discontinued in the captivity and afterward. In the time of Christ there was no king on the throne of David; even today there is none. There has been no descendant of David reigning on a throne at Jerusalem over a nation Israel now for these more than 2,000 years! So the Lord promised David that in the future, when Israel would be regathered, He would "appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they

may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime."

Verses 2Sa 7:11-15 make clear that God promised David He would establish David's kingly line so that whatever should happen, David's dynasty would not be broken up forever as was the dynasty of King Saul. When Solomon and other kings descended from David did sin against God, verses 2Sa 7:14-15 promise that the one sinning would be chastened and whipped, but that it would not break God's covenant.

Then verse 2Sa 7:16 repeats, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." The dynasty of David, in the future, was to be established forever. There would come a time when a King of David's line would rule on David's throne forever. When will David's kingdom be reestablished? When will this coming Son of David take up the throne? In this passage, the Lord plainly connects two great events: the return of Israel to their own land, and the reestablishment of the throne of David. In 2Sa 7:10, God said to David, "Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more," and then shows the promise of the unending reign of David's dynasty. The two are inevitably connected. This is the same time as discussed in Deu 30:5, where the Lord promises, "And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it." The regathering of Israel, the reestablishment of David's throne, and the conversion of Israel are three inseparably connected events.

1Ch 17:1-27, gives a very full and interesting account of this marvelous covenant of God with David, promising the eternal establishment of David's throne and with a Descendant of David upon it. Much of it is given in the same words of this passage in 2Sa 7:10-16, but you should carefully read it. Line upon line God made sure His promises.

Psa 89:1-52 Repeats Covenant With David This covenant with David is referred to many times in the Bible. In the eighty-ninth Psalm are several plain statements about this covenant.

Verses Psa 89:3-4 say: "I have made a covenant with my chosen. I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah." The seed of David and the throne of David are to be established and built up forever, even "to all generations." In the same eighty-ninth Psalm, verse Psa 89:27-37 say:

"Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah"

Verse Psa 89:27 clearly teaches that the coming King, of the seed of David, is to be higher than all the kings of the earth. He is to be Ruler with worldwide sway and with an everlasting kingdom. Verses Psa 89:30-35 plainly say that however the kings of Israel and Judah following David were

to sin, that God would not break His covenant or promise with David, would not cast off the Davidic dynasty under any circumstances.

There are no conditions to this promise. It is attested by the sworn oath of God Himself (v. Psa 89:36), that the Seed of David "shall endure for ever and his throne as the sun before me."

If we honestly accept these plain promises of God, we must believe that the throne upon which David sat at Jerusalem will be reestablished and will endure forever, and that on this throne at Jerusalem will sit this great Son of David, literally descended from his loins.

David's Kingdom, a Tree Cut Down, to Grow Again More than once in the Bible an earthly and literal kingdom is pictured and symbolized by a tree. In Eze 31:3 the Assyrian king is pictured as a great cedar tree, and the symbol is carried out throughout the chapter. In verse 18 the same symbol is used to picture Pharaoh of Egypt. The cutting down of the tree there means the destruction of the kingdom. In Dan 4:10-27, we are told how God gave to Nebuchadnezzar the dream of a great tree which pictured his own rule as a world emperor. The tree, in the dream, was cut down, but the stump was left. The inspired interpretation is that Nebuchadnezzar would lose his kingdom for a time to dwell among the beasts of the field, but that when his heart was humble, God would restore his kingdom. The same image is used more than once in the Bible concerning the kingdom of David.

David's kingdom was established and grew into a great tree. When Israel and Judah were carried into captivity, the kingdom was destroyed until only the stump remains. David's kingly seed remains, but his throne at Jerusalem is vacant. But out of the stump of David's once proud kingdom grows a Sprout, a Branch who will restore in multiplied glory the kingdom of David at Jerusalem, to reign over Israel. That is the theme of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, Zechariah and other prophets. The Rod From the Stem of Jesse In Isa 11:1-12 the restoration of David's kingdom is foretold.

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the falling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the OK. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Gush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall

set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth"

Jesse was the father of David, and Isa 11:1 means that from the "stem" or trunk of David's line, a Rod or a Sprout should grow to restore David's kingdom. "A Branch shall grow out of his roots." In the New Testament it is made clear that Jesus is the Son of David. Of that we will learn more later. But in this passage, Isaiah shows that the coming Saviour would restore the kingdom of David on earth. Not Fulfilled at Christ's First Coming

If you read the passage you cannot help seeing that this did not occur at the first coming of Christ, and has not yet occurred. Verse Isa 11:4 says that He shall "smite the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." But Jesus did not slay the wicked. Nor does the gospel slay the wicked nor smite the earth today. This verse could not mean that Christ through the gospel ever smites the earth with various catastrophes and plagues, for that would be just as true of preceding centuries as during the present time. The poor are not judged in righteousness and the meek do not have their enemies reprov'd now, as verse Isa 11:4 says they will have. That would be a mere "private interpretation" of Scripture, which is forbidden in the Scriptures (2Pe 1:20), to explain away the plain intent of this passage, count it all figurative language, and so dismiss it.

Study verses Isa 11:6-8. The nature of wild animals has not been changed yet as is pictured in this passage. Lions do not now eat straw like oxen, a sucking child cannot safely play on the hole of the asp (one of the most poisonous of snakes), nor put his hand on the cockatrice' den. Calves and lions and cows and bears do not lie down together nor feed together. Jesus did not change the nature of wild animals at His first coming, and the gospel has not done it yet. This Teaching, the Branch of David to Rule Over Israel, Repeated Several Times Jeremiah was inspired to tell the same story and we find it clearly stated in two passages.

"And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous BRANCH, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer 23:3-6).

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the BRANCH of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness. For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel" (Jer 33:14-17).

These passages tell of the righteous Branch of David, that He will be a King who "shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice IN THE EARTH." In these passages we are plainly told that that seed of David shall be called "the Lord our righteousness," really the Lord Jesus Christ, our present Saviour and our coming King. The regathering, yes, and the salvation of

Israel is mentioned here again in connection with the kingdom of this Branch of David's tree, once cut down, but to be restored again with greater glory under David's greater Son. These passages discuss a kingdom, a reign "in the earth ." This is not in Heaven. The throne is not in Heaven, nor is the reign in Heaven. But this King shall reign and prosper and execute judgment and justice-in the earth, Jer 23:5 says, and "in the land," Jer 33:15 says. This is the same reign about which Isa 11:1-16 tells us when the nature of the wild animals shall be changed and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth.

We may take it, then, as a well-defined doctrine in the Old Testament that there must appear a great Descendant of David who will reign on David's throne at Jerusalem and that the monarchy of David in Palestine will be restored again in an everlasting kingdom on the earth. The Throne of David, the Nation Israel, the Land of Canaan In this chapter and the two preceding chapters, you have been impressed, I trust, with the truth that all the unfulfilled promises and prophecies of the Bible center around one land, one race and one throne.

These three, the throne of David, over the people Israel, in the land of Canaan, form the triple center of all prophecy. One who understands God's covenant with Abraham about the land Canaan, His covenant with Israel about their restoration and conversion, and the covenant with David about his throne, has the heart and center of the prophecies. Almost as prominent in the prophecies as these three is the city Jerusalem. The wonderful promises to the holy city are dealt with more fully in chapter nine.

Meanwhile, in chapter six, we will see that Jesus is to be the Branch out of the root of Jesse, "the King of the Jews" who shall reign on David's throne over the whole earth.

03.06. Jesus to Be King of the Jews on David's...

CHAPTER SIX Jesus to Be King of the Jews on David's Throne

DAVID'S THRONE is to be established forever as we have learned in the last chapter. Isaiah and Jeremiah told us about that Branch from the root of David that would restore his throne. No one can dispute that Jesus Christ Himself is that Son of David who will sit on David's throne and restore again the kingdom to Israel.

There are many Scriptures that mention this Sprout from the roots or stump of David. In Rev 5:5 Jesus is called "the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David," and in Rev 22:16, Jesus Himself says, "I am the root and the offspring of David"!

Jesus to Inherit David's Throne

Any Christian could not read far in the Old Testament Scriptures without learning that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Seed of David so many times referred to, the righteous Branch that will restore his kingdom, the King who shall reign and prosper. But in the New Testament this is positively stated again and again. When Mary, an innocent Judean virgin, was visited by the angel Gabriel to announce to her that she should become the mother of the Son of God, she was plainly told that Jesus was to rule on the throne of David. Read Luk 1:30-33 and see how definitely and explicitly the literal reign of Christ on earth was foretold.

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 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: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Notice these statements in this Scripture.

- "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David."

- "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever."

- "Of his kingdom there shall be no end." The genealogy of Jesus as given through Mary and her father Heli (Luk 3:23-38; Joseph, not the real father of Jesus, was son-in-law of Heli, and as given through Joseph (Mat 1:1-17) both show that Jesus was literally the Son of David and legally the Son of David. Fourteen times in the gospels Jesus is called the Son of David. Therefore Gabriel promised Mary that "God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever." The very words of the Scripture are inspired, and how delicate and exact are the meanings of the words in the Bible! For instances, Jacob had two names, Jacob and Israel.

- "Jacob" was the natural man, a schemer, a trickster, a trader, the thief of his brother's blessing, the deceiver of his father, the scheming son-in-law of Laban.

- "Israel" was the spiritual name given to the same man when in all night wrestling with the angel of God he learned to prevail and become a prince with God and man.

"Israel" was the man of God, the man of prayer, the victorious Christian. Sometimes Christians like to spiritualize the name Israel and say that all the children of God are spiritual Israelites. But the Scripture here does not say that Christ is to reign over "Israel" but over "Jacob," that is, over literal flesh and blood Jews, the literal, physical descendants of Abraham, the same race over whom David reigned. Had we been told that Christ should reign over "Israel," men would have been quick to say that it meant a spiritual reign in the hearts of Christians. But the Lord caused the angel to use the specific word "Jacob," and the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write it down so that we might know that the kingdom of Christ on earth will be a literal Jewish kingdom over the house of Jacob on the literal throne of David!

Christ, Like Solomon, to Sit on the Throne of 'Their Father David' The Scripture tells us that Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father, and the Scripture also tells us that God will give to Christ the throne of His father David. A comparison of these statements in the language of the Bible itself ought to help you to see that Christ will inherit the literal throne of David and will sit upon it literally as Solomon did. For instance, here are some statements of the Scriptures:

"Then sat Solomon upon the THRONE OF DAVID HIS FATHER; and his kingdom was established greatly" (1Ki 2:12).

"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: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luk 1:32-33). The first verse is about Solomon, and the second about Jesus. Solomon sat upon the throne of his father David. The angel said to Mary that the Lord God would give to Jesus the throne of His Father David. If the Bible meant a literal reign in the first case, then why should it not mean a literal reign in the second case?

Any honest interpretation of the Scripture must lead us to the conclusion that the reign of Christ will be on the literal throne of David at Jerusalem, where Solomon reigned. The Genealogy of Jesus The genealogies of Jesus given by the Holy Spirit to Matthew and Luke particularly prove that Christ is the promised Son of David. That genealogy given in Matthew begins with this statement: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Mat 1:1).

Two important points the Holy Spirit makes with regard to this genealogy.

First, Christ is the promised Son of David who will sit upon David's throne and rule as King of the Jews.

Second, Jesus is the Son of Abraham. This means that Christ is the "seed" of Abraham mentioned in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 13:15; Gen 17:7-8). The Holy Spirit calls attention in Gal 3:16 to the fact that the seed is singular, referring to Christ. Christ is THE Son of David. So He is "THE Son of Abraham," and not just one descendant of Abraham. In other words, Christ is the promised King and He is the promised Heir of the land of Canaan with Abraham.

It is an interesting fact that the genealogy given in Matthew is only the official genealogy, not the actual one. The account given in Mat 1:1-16 ends with the statement: "And Jacob begat Joseph

the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (Mat 1:16). The genealogy given is that of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Then the remainder of the chapter tells how Mary "was found with child of the Holy Ghost . . . before they came together."

Joseph was not the father of Jesus, and the genealogy given is a legal one, but not the actual one.

Now compare with this the genealogy found in Luk 3:23-38 which genealogy starts off with the following words:

"And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli."

Mat 1:16 says that "Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary," while Luk 3:23 says, "Joseph which was the son of Heli." Who was the father of Joseph, was it Jacob or Heli? It was Jacob because we are plainly told that "Jacob begat Joseph." Then who was Heli?

Heli was the father of Mary, and Joseph was the son-in-law of Heli.

It would be in accordance with Jewish custom to call him the son of Heli, but actually the words "the son" are not in the Greek, but were supplied by the translators, which they indicated by putting the words in italics. In Luke, then, we have actually the genealogy of Jesus the Son of David and King of the Jews.

Another remarkable difference is shown in these two genealogies.

One is giving the ancestry of Joseph back to David, and the other the ancestry of Mary and of Jesus back to David. Joseph's line descended from Solomon, David's son, while Jesus, through Mary, actually descended from David through another son, Nathan.

Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, was a descendant of the last king that sat on David's throne before the captivity (Mat 1:11). Consider Jechonias, mentioned in Mat 1:11. He is also called Jehoiachin, Jeconiah and Coniah in various places in the Scriptures. Matthew says that Joseph, the husband of Mary, was descended from this Jechonias or Coniah. But Jer 22:30 says of this man that he should be written childless, for none of his seed should ever prosper on the throne of David!

What a wonderful example this is of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

Joseph could not have been the father of Jesus, and Jesus could not have counted His ancestry through the last of the reigning kings of Judah, according to divine Writ. Instead, the literal genealogy of Jesus tells us in Luk 3:31, that He was "of Nathan, which was the son of David." Do not confuse these genealogies nor think them the same; they are not. The two genealogies sometimes have similar names, but they are not names of the same people. The lines diverge at David and come back at Joseph and Mary to prove Jesus the legal and actual Son of David and the Heir of David's throne.

Wise Men Sought "the King of the Jews"

Those wise men who came from the East to find the Saviour at His birth inquired saying: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship

him" (Mat 2:2).

How did these wise men learn about the coming Saviour? They could have learned in only two ways: either they read the prophecies of the Old Testament and understood that Jesus would be the King of the Jews, or they had it revealed to them directly from God. I think they learned it both ways. They were Magi, that is wise men, from the East, most probably from Babylon, since that was the first great nation eastward. And we know from the book of Daniel that a class of great men were there called by such a name.

Daniel, remember, had been the greatest man in Babylon, next to the king himself, through a long period of years and through the reign of several world rulers. His religion and his writings could hardly have been a secret to the scholars of great Babylon. From Dan 9:25, they doubtless learned the approximate time of the Saviour's first coming so plainly foretold there.

God probably revealed to them through the Holy Spirit something about the nature of this coming Saviour, and gave the star in the East as a sign of the birth of the Child.

We come to the inescapable conclusion that a careful study of the Old Testament by spiritually-minded men led them to understand that the Saviour would be the King of the Jews. The leading of the Holy Spirit confirmed their honest belief. The wise men were right. Jesus is to be the King of the Jews and rule in a Jewish kingdom on this earth. When we read more of the story in Mat 2:3-6, we see that Herod expected the Saviour to rule literally in the land of Palestine, over Jews. His jealousy and fear for his own kingdom led to the murder of all the boy babies who might, he thought, fulfill the promise of God about the kingdom of the Jews.

Read Mat 2:3-6 :

"When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel."

Here we see that "all the chief priests and scribes of the people" agreed with Herod that the coming Saviour would be primarily a King, a Prince of Judah, "a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel."

They proved it by quoting from Mic 5:2! This attitude of all the people expecting Christ to take the literal throne of David and rule in Palestine from Jerusalem over a literal kingdom is shown throughout the Bible. There is not a single indication that any Jew or Christian Gentile in either the Old or New Testament believed otherwise. There were no post-millennialists in Bible times. Every Jew, including the twelve apostles, expected the kingdom of Christ to be literal and that the Saviour should sit on the throne of David. Jesus did not one time rebuke this thought!

Christ Presented as King of the Jews When John the Baptist came as the forerunner of Christ and to announce His ministry, he came preaching, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat 3:2). What did he mean?

Surely he must have meant the kingdom which was long foretold in the Old Testament. In fact, the term "the kingdom of heaven" probably was taken from Dan 2:44 where we are told that "the God of heaven" shall "set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed."

John was speaking, evidently, about the kingdom which the God of Heaven would set up, and therefore called it the kingdom of Heaven. A heavenly kingdom on this earth, according to John the Baptist, was at hand. This term "the kingdom of heaven" is used only in the Gospel of Matthew, though the same kingdom is mentioned in many, many other places in the Bible.

Jesus preached the same kind of sermons exactly, in the beginning of His ministry, for Mat 4:17 tells us: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Just a little later, still in the early part of His ministry, Jesus sent out His twelve apostles as forerunners, not to Gentiles nor Samaritans, and Mat 10:6-7 tells us that He instructed them: "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." At Hand! What Did Jesus Mean?

John the Baptist and the twelve apostles all preached to the Jews, at the beginning of Christ's ministry, that the kingdom of Heaven was "at hand." Did that mean it had begun? Did that mean the kingdom would begin unconditionally at some set time, in the immediate future? No, by the exhortation, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," Jesus and His representatives certainly meant that the kingdom of Heaven was now possible and near, in the presence of the King Himself, and that the establishment of that kingdom depended on repentance by the Jewish nation. The kingdom was not "IN hand," it was "AT hand." The term used simply means nigh or near. The kingdom had not begun. If the Jews had repented and accepted Christ as their Saviour and King, then the kingdom would soon have been restored to Israel. In fact, Christ's coming as Saviour to an individual and as Saviour and King to the Jewish nation are on the same basis. Christ is nigh unto all who call upon Him for salvation. He is "at hand" for every sinner who wants to be saved. That was true then, and is true now about salvation. But concerning the kingdom of Heaven, there is a difference. That kingdom was at hand at the beginning of Christ's ministry, but after the rejection of Christ as Saviour and King became persistent, malicious and national in scope, then the kingdom was no longer at hand.

Any Jew may trust Christ as Saviour today, for as a Saviour He is still at hand. But Jews cannot have their kingdom until the King returns. Christ can save sinners through the gospel and through the Holy Spirit, and those who are saved are "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6), but Christ cannot reign over Israel in the spirit but must sit in the flesh on the throne of David; for that throne was a literal, physical throne. The kingdom was postponed until the King returns.

Christ Rejected as King The national leaders of Israel, the scribes and Pharisees and elders, were first greatly impressed with the preaching of John the Baptist; and many of them went to be baptized by him in the River Jordan. But they were a self-righteous group and had utterly ignored the command to repent.

John the Baptist called them a "generation of vipers," or snakes, and warned them of the fires of Hell (Mat 3:7-12). These religious leaders were willing to have a king if that did not involve repentance and a change of heart. Actually they were ungodly and wicked; they were Jews

outwardly but not inwardly. When Jesus pressed continually the command to repent and denounced their hypocrisy, they began to hate Him. It soon became evident that the rejection of Christ as Saviour and King of Israel was deliberate and national. The last time Jesus had it preached that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" was in the tenth chapter of Matthew. In the next chapter (Mat 11:20) we are told: "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not." Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum are particularly named as under condemnation for their sins more than Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, since the latter cities would have repented at the preaching they heard. After this you will find in the ministry of Jesus that His message is not about a kingdom then at hand, for the people refused to repent and the kingdom was postponed.

Some of the common people, without any sincere repentance, would have gladly made Jesus King even by violence, because of His miraculous feeding of the five thousand (John 6:14-15). He Himself said that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Mat 11:12. See also Luk 16:16). But as He continued preaching about repentance and being born again, and about His own crucifixion, the Jewish people as a whole, as unspiritual as their leaders, were offended at His preaching and left Him to follow Him no more. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). In John 7:1 we are told that Jesus would not walk in Jewry, that is, among the Jews, "because the Jews sought to kill him." The die is now cast; the Jews have rejected their King, and the story moves on, in the gospels, to the crucifixion.

Christ Crucified as King of the Jews

Christ died for the sins of the world, and we know that God had in mind salvation of sinners when He allowed His dear Son to be crucified. "God so loved the world" that Jesus went to the cross. The plan of Jesus was the same as the plan of the Father. It was no accident when Jesus was crucified. Men did not thwart the plan of God. Christ did not die as a martyr. He Himself said concerning His death:

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17-18).

Christ died as our Passover Lamb (1Co 5:7). "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa 53:6). In the mind and plan of God, Christ died in our stead and to be our Saviour. But this was not the plan of the Jewish rulers. They hated Jesus because He claimed the right to be King. They accused Him to Pilate and sought His crucifixion on the ground that He claimed to be the King of the Jews.

Luk 23:1-3 says:

"And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it." When Pilate wrote over the head of Jesus, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," these wicked enemies of Christ urged Pilate to change the accusation and make it read that Jesus said He was the King of the Jews. But Pilate refused.

Christ was crucified as King of the Jews and the crucifixion from their viewpoint was simply a concrete evidence of their refusal to repent and of their rejection of Him as King. The people said to Pilate, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). So the Jews rejected their King and the kingdom was postponed. Does that seem unreasonable to you? Then remember that the same plan obtains in the case of practically every sinner.

Christ is offered as Saviour to every man just as He was offered to the Jews. Do you object to the thought that Jews could reject their King, and the kingdom would be postponed and later set tip? Then remember that many a sinner has first rejected Christ, again and again, and then later has received Him as Saviour and Lord. We may safely say that God is willing to save today every sinner who will repent, for the Scripture says that He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2Pe 3:9). But sinners rejected the plan of God as did these Jews.

Many times individual sinners reject Christ too long and so are lost forever. The same thing was true of many individual Jews in the time of Christ, for God has not foretold in the Scriptures that He will save some particular individual. He will save all who put their trust in Him, but individuals may or may not be saved. However, with the nation Israel it is different, for God has plainly promised that Christ shall have His kingdom, and have it He will, when His time comes. But it will be offered them on the basis of repentance; and Israel will repent and be converted, as they ought to have done before. The Church Age, a Mystery Hid in Ages Past

God knew, of course, that Jews would reject their Saviour and King, just as He knows what every sinner will do about the gospel when it is preached to him, just as He knows all things. But that Israel might have the entire responsibility of accepting or rejecting the King of the Jews, most of the events of this present church or gospel age were not made known in the Old Testament times. The prophet Joel foretold the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, but aside from that the prophets of the Old Testament seem not to have had any revelation at all of this entire period of time from Pentecost on through the present to the second coming of Christ.

Jesus Himself did not give revelations concerning the course of this age with its rejection of the gospel, its wars, wickedness, and the worldliness of professing Christians, until after He ceased to preach that the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. To Paul the apostle was first given an understanding of some of the mysteries concerning the church in this age. Eph 3:1-10 tells us how Paul was given this grace to understand and teach how that Gentiles would be in the same body with Jews, the church. And Eph 3:5 expressly says that this mystery was not made known in other ages.

Search all through the Old Testament and you will not find a single reference to the rapture of the saints.

Much is taught in the Old Testament about the second coming of Christ. But mark this, there is no way to tell, from reading the Old Testament alone, that the first and second comings would not all be the same.

Part of the prophecies about Christ's coming were fulfilled at His first coming. Even more of them are yet to be fulfilled and will be fulfilled at His Second Coming. He has already come as the Lamb of God, but He has not come as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. He has already come as the Man of sorrows, rejected, despised, and bruised for our iniquities, as foretold in the fifty-third chapter of

Isaiah. But His. coming to rule on David's throne, to execute justice on the earth, and with the breath of His lips to slay the wicked, as foretold in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, has not been fulfilled. The mystery of this present church age coming between the first and second comings of Christ was hidden from the Old Testament prophets. God knew that the Jews would reject their King, but He left the responsibility upon them and did not reveal it until it had come to pass and the kingdom was postponed. This will help you to understand why the prophets of the Old Testament looked forward always to the coming kingdom; and why, in the New Testament Epistles, Christians are again and again exhorted to look forward to the rapture of the saints, before the kingdom, while in the gospels Jesus spoke primarily to Jews and so spoke much about the kingdom but also referred to the rapture (for example, in the parable of the ten virgins, Mat 25:1-13).

03.07. The Kingdom Postponed until the King...

CHAPTER SEVEN The Kingdom Postponed until the King Returns

AFTER THE rejection of Christ by the Jews was general and national, then Jesus taught often about the kingdom and always made clear that it was now postponed. In introducing the parable of the pounds (Luk 19:11-27), Luke tells us that He spake this parable to them because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. So He corrected their false impression and told them that He would be like a nobleman who should go into a far country and receive a kingdom, and then return to reign; that He would then allow faithful servants to rule with Him and would punish His enemies.

Then in the parable Jesus referred to the Jews who had rejected Him saying, "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luk 19:14). The clear teaching of the parable is that when Jesus came the first time, He did not receive the kingdom, but will go to a far country (to Heaven with the Father) until the Father gives Him the kingdom and then will return here to reign.

Jesus gave a similar teaching in the parable of the talents in Mat 25:14-30. Jesus again illustrates Himself as "a man travelling into a far country" (verse Mat 25:14). After giving out talents to His servants, Jesus referred to His Second Coming like this: "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them" (verse Mat 25:19). Again to the faithful servants He said, "I will make thee ruler over many things" (verses Mat 25:21; Mat 25:23).

Notice the ruling takes place after the Second Coming. In verse Mat 25:27 Jesus illustrates Himself as coming into His own possessions at His Second Coming, saying, "And then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury." Then in the first verse after this parable, Jesus says in Mat 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."

Jesus is clearly teaching that now His kingdom is postponed and that He will not reign until He comes back, like the man who is gone into a far country. But when He returns and all the holy angels with Him, "THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory," and His faithful servants that have done well during this church or gospel age will then be appointed by Him to rule with Him over many things.

"But Now Is My Kingdom Not From Hence" When Jesus stood before Pilate, He gave this same teaching that His kingdom was postponed.

Pilate said to Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" and "What hast thou done?" (John 18:33; John 18:35). The Holy Spirit tells us the clear answer of Jesus in John 18:36 : "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." The word "world" used here means the present order or arrangement, the present system.

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world," that is, not of the present system. And then He explained more fully "now is my kingdom not from hence."

'My kingdom, rejected by the Jews, now will not come at this time and will not be of this present world order,' said Jesus in effect. The kingdom of Christ will not come until the end of this present world order. The present "world" (the Greek word is kosmos) will end at the return of Christ when present civilization and governments will be utterly destroyed. Then Christ will have His kingdom. At the last supper with His disciples before the crucifixion, Jesus comforted the hearts of His disciples concerning His kingdom and promised them that they should eat and drink at His table in that kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. In Luk 22:28-30 Jesus said:

"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And, I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The postponed kingdom of Jesus is not of this world, that is, not of this present order of things. In Mat 19:28 Jesus gave a similar promise to His disciples and said they should reign with Him on twelve thrones "when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory."

John the Baptist, Jesus, and His apostles preached, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat 3:2; Mat 4:17; Mat 10:7). Jews, as a nation, were addressed in these first messages, and enormous throngs representing the entire nation listened to these sermons. However, the nation did not repent and accept the King and His kingdom; so soon the character of the message was changed. Jesus and the apostles still preached the gospel, the "good news." But it was good news of salvation at hand, not any longer good news about a kingdom at hand. He called out individuals, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mat 11:28). He still commanded people to repent (Luk 13:3; Luk 13:5), but He did not say, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

John the Baptist, Jesus, and His apostles preached, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Peter, after the wonderful outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, again addressed the Jewish leaders and preached to representatives of the whole nation and said, "Repent ye therefore."

He did not say in that passage that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand as it had been before the Jewish leaders and people rejected Christ and refused to repent. Instead He plainly tells them that they should now repent, not expecting the IMMEDIATE setting up of the kingdom and that their national sins should be IMMEDIATELY blotted out, but the sins of Israel as a nation should be blotted out AT THE RETURN OF CHRIST!

Read Peter's exhortation and see how different it is from the early teaching of John the Baptist and Jesus, that the people should repent to obtain the kingdom which was at hand.

Acts 3:19-21 says: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Of course, we know that an individual's sins are blotted out when he believes in

Christ (John 3:18), but the sins of Israel as a nation will not be blotted out until "the times of refreshing" when God "shall send Jesus Christ" to the earth again "whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution."

Then, in that time of refreshing and restitution of the things promised by the prophets, the throne of David will be restored, Israel will be restored and their sins as a nation will be blotted out from the sight of God, and they will be no more punished. The Apostles Preached Repentance and the Kingdom, But Never That the Kingdom Was at Hand

After Israel rejected their King and refused to qualify nationally for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, the command to repent was not withdrawn. Jesus commanded the apostles that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in all nations (Luk 24:47).

Paul preached that God has COMMANDED ALL MEN EVERY WHERE to repent (Acts 17:30). In 2Pe 3:9 we are told that God would have ALL come to repentance. But notice this fact: NOT ONCE, AFTER THE REJECTION OF CHRIST BY THE JEWISH OFFICIALS AND THE MULTITUDES, DID ANY BIBLE PREACHER TEACH THAT "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND"! The kingdom was no longer at hand but was postponed. The story of the kingdom was called "the gospel," that is, good news or tidings, while the kingdom was said to be at hand. Jesus preached "the gospel of the kingdom" (Mat 4:23; Mat 9:35) as long as the kingdom was at hand. After that He taught concerning the kingdom and preached the gospel or good news of salvation, but a postponed kingdom was not good news and that part was not called the gospel.

All of the apostles preached concerning the kingdom of God and kingdom of Heaven, but the Bible never says that any of them, after the early ministry of Christ, preached "the gospel of the kingdom."

However, the gospel of the kingdom is to be preached again during the tribulation period and just before Christ returns to set up His kingdom. In Mat 24:1-51 Jesus was teaching His disciples and us about the things surrounding His coming and the end of the world (verse Mat 24:3).

- Verse Mat 24:8 in that chapter tells of "the beginning of sorrows."

- Verse Mat 24:15 tells of "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" in Dan 9:27, which will happen in the midst of the seven years of trouble which precede the reign of Christ on earth.

Understand; the coming of Jesus into the air to receive His saints will evidently be at the first of the seven years, before the Man of Sin is revealed (2Th 2:6; 2Th 2:8), but His return with His saints to reign cannot come until the close of the seven years. Then (still in Mat 24:1-51), verse Mat 24:21 plainly says that the time discussed is the Great Tribulation, and verses Mat 24:29-30 say that IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH SHALL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN. So you see clearly when you read Mat 24:1-51 carefully that the discussion is about the last days just before Christ returns visibly and bodily to the earth. Now here is an interesting fact; IN THOSE DAYS OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION, THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM WILL BE PREACHED AGAIN! For in the same chapter, Mat 24:14 tells us, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

Again the kingdom of Heaven will be "at hand," impending, drawing nigh, and it will be good news to troubled Jews and all Christians who have prayed, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

03.08. The Kingdom of Christ on Earth is Yet Future

CHAPTER EIGHT The Kingdom of Christ on Earth Is Yet Future

JESUS IS GOD, and in some sense has part in all the rule of God the Father over this universe. We are clearly told that Christ is now sitting on the right hand of the Father in His throne (Rev 3:21; Eph 1:20), and before giving the Great Commission, Jesus Himself said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." When we talk about the reign of Christ on David's throne, we do not mean that Jesus is not now God, possessing all the kingly attributes of God. But David's throne and God's throne in Heaven are entirely different thrones. God was on His throne in Heaven before David was given a throne at Jerusalem. When David ruled at Jerusalem, the throne in Heaven was unchanged and its glory was undiminished. When David's throne was temporarily vacated and the children of Israel carried into captivity, there was no change in the throne of God in Heaven. As far as the Scriptures reveal, there has been no change in the throne of God in Heaven through all the centuries of human existence. Its glory had not been diminished and it could not be increased. Christ now shares the glory that He had with the Father in the beginning and no Christian can deny that Jesus is now Lord as well as Christ. Jesus now has authority with the Father just as He shares the nature of the Father. But the reign of Christ on the throne of David is not the same as the reign of the Father in Heaven. David's throne belongs to God, is subject to the heavenly throne, but David's throne is not the heavenly throne. The throne of God in Heaven has always been established. But the reign or kingdom of Christ on David's throne is yet future.

Jesus Taught Us to Pray for His Future Kingdom The Bible is full of proof that the kingdom of Christ is not yet set up and that Christ is not now on His Throne. In the model prayer Jesus taught us how to pray, in these dear and familiar words:

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Mat 6:9-10).

Jesus wants us to pray "Thy kingdom come"! The kingdom had not come when Jesus gave the command to pray this prayer. Notice that to the first three petitions of the 'Lord's Prayer' there can be but one answer.

- The name of God is not hallowed in this world now.
- His will is not done on earth as the angels perfectly obey Him in Heaven.

These other two petitions must be answered when the kingdom comes. When Christ rules on this earth in a literal kingdom, then the name of God will be kept sacred and without blasphemy. Then God's will shall be done on earth. It is not so now. This prayer clearly shows us that the kingdom of Christ is in the future.

How far Christians have missed the spirit of this prayer! The first thought of a Christian when he prays should be to long for the coming of the Saviour, His kingdom, and the time when man shall reverence God's name and do His will on the earth as it is done in Heaven. The second coming of

Christ is as central, as emphatic, and as pervasive in the teaching of the Bible as is His first coming. The Second Coming is:

- The Christian's "blessed hope" (Tit 2:13), - His constant watch (Mark 13:33-37), and, - According to the model prayer, it should be his daily prayer. The millions who daily pray, "Thy kingdom come," are praying, whether they know it or not, for the return of Jesus and the setting up of His reign on the earth. The Bible Constantly Mentions the Kingdom as Future Jesus never left a doubt with His disciples that His kingdom was in the future. In Mat 19:28-29 He said unto His disciples:

"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 tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." When Jesus spoke these words, He did not sit "in the throne of his glory." He referred to a future time "in the regeneration," that is, when things are made new, when the Son of man should sit on the throne of His glory. At that time the twelve apostles shall sit on the twelve thrones, He said, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Jesus is to reign over the house of Jacob, on the throne of His father David (Luk 1:32-33). His apostles will sit on thrones at the same time to judge the tribes. The wildest stretch of the imagination does not picture apostles now sitting on the thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. It was future when Jesus mentioned it. It is future still. When Jesus stood before Pilate, charged with claiming to be King of the Jews, He explained to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this present "world" (the Greek word is kosmos, meaning the present social and political order, the present civilization). Jesus did not mean that His kingdom would not be on this planet. The kingdom of Christ will be on this earth, but not of this present civilization, this political and social order. Here is what Jesus told Pilate:

"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

Pilate understood and believed the claim of Jesus that He would one day rule as King of the Jews, and so the Roman ruler had it put above His head on the cross when Jesus died, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The kingdom of Christ will be on this earth, but not of this present world. No, it must be "in the regeneration" (Mat 19:28), in the time of "the restitution of all things" (Acts 3:19-21).

"Wilt Thou at This Time Restore Again the Kingdom to Israel?"

After Jesus was risen from the dead, the kingdom was yet future. In Acts 1:6-7 the disciples raised with Jesus the burning question of the time of His kingdom. They had heard all His teachings. Jesus had opened their hearts after the resurrection to understand the Scriptures (Luk 24:45). Do not mock at their question. I would rather have the theological training of Peter, James, and John, three years of intimate teaching by the Saviour Himself, than to have a degree from all the seminaries in this world.

Smart professors often say that the apostles were foolish to expect still an earthly kingdom, but I remind you that Jesus never said so.

Here are the apostles of Jesus, trained, empowered and authorized to carry on His work after His ascension, which is about to take place. Knowing the hundreds of promises about the coming kingdom, the covenants with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Israel, their hearts longed for the restoration of the kingdom of David under Jesus, as was revealed in the Old Testament and then promised by the angel to Mary.

Let us hear the disciples' question and the answer of Jesus:

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8). Be sure you understand the question! The disciples did not ask "Lord, wilt thou restore again the kingdom to Israel?" No, no, they knew all too well the promises which made certain the re-establishment of that kingdom under Christ. Their question was altogether about the TIME of restoration of that kingdom. "Lord, wilt thou AT THIS TIME restore again the kingdom to Israel?" they asked. The apostles simply asked to know if it was time for the kingdom to be set up. That is what they asked, and that is what Jesus answered. Jesus did not rebuke them for thinking the kingdom would be restored to Israel. He simply said, "It is not for you to know the times." The kingdom of Christ was not set up when Jesus had finished His earthly ministry, had risen from the dead, and was ready to ascend back to the Father. The Kingdom Not Established at Pentecost

Notice this other thing, the kingdom was not set up at Pentecost. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus promised should come "not many days hence," was the subject of the discussion when the disciples brought up the question about the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel under Christ. Jesus plainly indicated that when He talked about the baptism of the Holy Spirit or the pouring out of the Spirit He was not talking about the kingdom.

Read again Acts 1:6-8 and you will see, if you look closely, that this is true. When the disciples asked if this was the time that the kingdom was to be restored to Israel, Jesus replied that the matter of this kingdom pertained to "the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in HIS own power," and this, it was not for them to know. Not a word in the Bible has ever made known the time of the coming of Christ and the things that follow it. The bringing of that kingdom God has kept "in his own power." That is, that kingdom will be set up by the power of God, not by any work of men. That is the reason we are told in Dan 2:44 that in those days "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." That kingdom will not be set up by human hands nor by human works but by God Himself. He has kept it "in His own power." But the matter of winning souls in this gospel age is another matter, and for that God will give men power, the power of the Holy Spirit. That is what Jesus meant in the above passage. Read it again.

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israeli And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put IN HIS OWN POWER. But YE shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8). The power and authority for restoring the kingdom to Israel, when Christ will sit on the throne of David, the

Father has kept in His own hands. It is not for us to know the times or seasons concerning that, not even for the apostles to know it. But power for soul winning, He had plainly promised them, should come when they were baptized with the Holy Ghost "not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). The Holy Spirit power for soul winning was definitely promised for the immediate future, AND THEY WERE NOT TO LEAVE JERUSALEM UNTIL THEY GOT IT! But the authority and power for restoring the kingdom to Israel the Father has reserved in His own power and it is not for them to know that time.

One of the worst mistakes one can make in the study of prophecy is to try to set the times and seasons which it is not for us to know and which the Father has put in His own power alone. All the Millerites, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Anglo-Israelites, and others who have attempted to set dates for the Lord's return, have gone wrong because they tried to know the times that are not revealed. Times and seasons pertaining to the restoration of the kingdom to Israel are left in the hands of God.

These times and seasons (in other words, these dates) are secret things that belong to God. No chronology in any part of the Bible is given whereby we may set the dates for these things. Those who interpret Daniel or Revelation or any other part of the Bible with a view to making a day mean a year (which it never does mean in the Bible) in order to set the date for the return of Christ, the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, etc., violate the plain teaching of the Word of God.

They try to know that about which God plainly said, "It is not for you to know" and which God has kept "in His own power."

Some people say that the kingdom was set up at Pentecost, the restoration of this kingdom to Israel. They make the same mistake exactly as other date-setters. Jesus said that the times and seasons of that kingdom were not for the apostles to know and they did not know. Neither do we know. We know the kingdom will be restored to Israel, but WHEN is a matter not revealed. The reason why the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel is not told is that it must follow the return of Christ. And concerning the return of Christ the Saviour plainly said, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Mat 25:13).

Again He said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Mat 24:36).

Pentecost was one thing, but the restoration of the kingdom under Christ, Jesus told them, was an entirely different thing. Jesus is not now sitting on the throne of David, and the kingdom of Christ is not yet come.

Jesus Had Same Power Before Pentecost as After

"Church of Christ" people and some others usually believe that the reign of Christ on David's throne began at Pentecost. But the Scriptures do not say so. Actually, of course, Jesus on the day of Pentecost did not have any change of state or authority. Jesus had already risen from the dead with a glorified body fifty days before Pentecost. About ten days before Pentecost He had ascended to Heaven and sat down with the Father on His throne. Since His ascension, when He went up, up, till a cloud hid Him from the disciples' sight, the Scriptures do not hint that there has been any change whatever in the state of Jesus: His glory, power, authority or royalty. How could

there be when He already had been glorified with the glory that He had with the Father in the beginning? (John 17:5). In Mat 28:18 we are told that Jesus said, before giving the Great Commission, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

He did not say that all power or authority will be given, but He said "All power [or authority] is given."

Jesus already, before His ascension, had received all authority in Heaven and in earth. He could not have more than that at Pentecost. Nor are we to suppose that before His death and resurrection He lacked power and authority.

- He could have had twelve armies of angels for the asking at the time of His arrest (Mat 26:53).

- He controlled demons with a word, at will, and repeatedly cast them out.

- He who in the beginning with the Father created the worlds used again the same creative power time after time during His earthly ministry.

- He created more loaves and fishes, - He put the coin in the fish's mouth, - He gave life to the dead and changed the stinking, decaying body of Lazarus to breathing, pulsing health. Disease.

- He cured with a word or thought.

- He was master of the wind, waves, angels, demons, life, death, Heaven and Hell, even in His earthly ministry, long before Pentecost.

Jesus in human form carried with Him all the power and authority of the Father. In His preaching He plainly said so, again and again. The Jews saw this and hated Him for it.

John 5:18; John 5:21-23 says:

"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."

All judgment was committed to the Son; the Son had power to give life to "whom He will," and the Son must be honored as the Father. All this was true before Pentecost. Jesus at Pentecost did not get greater or less authority than He had before.

If on David's Throne Now, Why Not Before His Birth?

If Jesus is on David's throne now, then what is the difference in His reign now and that before He came to earth? He is one with the Father now, and has "the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). If He reigns NOW on David's throne, He reigned THEN on David's throne. There is only one throne ever mentioned in the Bible as being in Heaven, and that is the throne of God. Jesus sits there with the Father now on His throne (Rev 3:21; Psa 110:1). That throne was there before David ruled at Jerusalem; it is there now. It never has been, in the Bible, called the

throne of David. David never sat on it. And Jesus, sitting on the throne with His Father until He receives His own kingdom and returns to reign, IS NOT ON THE THRONE OF DAVID! The reign of Christ on David's throne certainly did not begin at Pentecost.

World Hates Christ Now as in His Ministry Is this world now subject to the reign of Christ as Israel was subject to David? The world does not love Him, the world does not obey Him. It crucified Him when He was here, and every Christ-rejecting sinner does the same thing in his heart. Peter denied Him, and the rest of the disciples forsook Him and fled. Do not present day disciples do the same?

What nation is a Christian nation in all the world today, as Israel was David's nation? Is America, with legalized booze, with the national government a party to the booze trade? Is the will of Christ done on earth as it is in Heaven, as Jesus taught it would be when the prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is answered?

Look about you and see if the kingdoms of this world have been taken from Satan, "the god of this world" (2Co 4:4), and have been given to 'the Lord and His Christ.' No, not yet, but they will be at His coming.

Restoration of the Kingdom Not Till Jesus Comes, Says Peter

Preaching again in Acts 3:19-21, Peter urged the Jewish rulers and the Jewish nation to repent so that the national sins of Israel should be forgiven. But Peter plainly told them that those national sins for which Israel was suffering then and has suffered ever since would not be blotted out until the times of refreshing from the Lord, in the future, when at the second coming of Christ all the things promised by the prophets would be restored.

Read carefully that passage.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21). The restitution of the kingdom of David and of other things promised by the prophets will not take place, this passage states, until Jesus comes again. The restitution of the nation Israel to the land of Canaan, and all the eternal and unchangeable promises of God to Israel, to Abraham's seed and to David's throne, await the second coming of Christ! Jesus is not now on David's throne.

"Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord," says Acts 3:19. That time of refreshing is also called "times of restitution" (verse Acts 3:21). This time of refreshing or restitution will occur when the Father "shall send Jesus Christ . . . whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution." At that blessed time of the restitution of all things, the sins of national Israel shall be blotted out, and they shall be restored as a nation to favor with God. The sins of individuals are blotted out when they repent. But to these Jewish leaders of the nation who officially rejected and crucified the Saviour, Peter preaches that they are to repent, that the sins mentioned, of Israel as a nation, would be blotted out at the second coming of Christ. Individual Jews do repent and their sins are blotted out as individuals. Then they are no longer condemned

(John 3:18; John 5:24). But Israel as a whole will be forgiven and restored nationally, their kingdom will be restored, their land will be restored, at the second coming of Christ, and not till then. This return of Christ is indicated more than once when the Lord discussed the restoration of Israel. Deu 30:3, speaking about the regathering of Israel and their restoration to their land, says, "That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee." The term "Lord" in the Old Testament Scriptures often refers to Christ and seems to do so here. "The Lord . . . will return and gather thee from all the nations," said God to Israel. The regathering and restoration of Israel awaits the Lord's return!

Christ Gone to Receive a Kingdom-Will Return to Rule The parable of the pounds given by the Saviour in Luk 19:12-27 clearly pictures the fact that the reign of Christ awaits His return from Heaven. This parable was given to explain why the kingdom did not immediately appear. The preceding verse, Luk 19:11, says: "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." To correct this erroneous impression "that the kingdom of God should immediately appear," Jesus told them the parable of the pounds. This parable teaches that Jesus, in His ministry on earth, was like a nobleman with no kingdom; that He went away to Heaven, and that when the Father gives Him the kingdom He will return, will reward faithful servants and destroy those who are not willing for Him to reign over them.

Read the story for yourself.

"And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities." For brevity's sake we leave out the verses about the unfaithful servant, and give you the last verse of the parable.

"But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

Some great facts stand out in this parable.

1. In His first coming, Jesus was like a nobleman, deserving a kingdom, but having not yet entered into His rule. At the first coming of Christ, He did not sit on David's throne.
2. Jesus ascended to Heaven to "receive for himself a kingdom and to return." Jews there would understand that. It was as if Herod, a nobleman, should go to Rome and there persuade Caesar, the emperor of the whole Roman world, to appoint him as king in Judea. Having received the

kingdom from the emperor, Herod would return to Jerusalem to reign.

3. In His absence, while Jesus is gone to the far country, we His servants are to "Occupy till I come." During this church or gospel age, while we are carrying on the work of Christ, we are merely occupying until He receives the kingdom and returns to reign.

4. The reign does not begin until Christ, having received the kingdom, returns. After His return, the nobleman, having received the kingdom, says to one servant, "Have thou authority over ten cities," to another He says, "Be thou also over five cities." A king appoints his helpers to rule with him at the beginning of his kingdom. A president appoints his cabinet when he goes into office. So Christ, when He returns, will appoint faithful Christians to rule with Him, each one according to his faithfulness and ability.

Likewise, at the beginning of his reign, a man must put down his enemies. A peaceful reign is impossible until rebels are put down. So in Luk 19:27, Jesus teaches us that when He returns and reigns from the throne of His glory, David's throne, and faithful servants rule over literal cities with Him on this earth, that living enemies who do not consent to His rule will be put to death. How clearly this pictures the battle of Armageddon and the judgment of the living Gentiles as pictured in Mat 25:31-46.

Surely the parable of the pounds proves that Jesus is gone into a far country and that when the Father gives Him the kingdom He will return to rule on this earth in the promised kingdom, will appoint faithful ones to rule with Him and destroy His enemies. The same connection between the second coming of Christ and His reign is found in Rev 2:25-27, where Christians are commanded to "hold fast till I come" and then are promised that those overcoming will rule over the nations, even as God has promised to Jesus.

"But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev 2:25-27). The connection and order of events here is very clear. Christians are now to hold fast and live the overcoming life "till I come." Then when Jesus comes He will reward overcoming Christians with the right to rule with Him "over the nations."

Verse Rev 2:27 quotes Psa 2:9. That Psalm tells about the reign of Christ on earth. Rev 2:26 says that Christians will reign with Him. And in connection with Rev 2:25, it plainly says that this will be at the second coming of Christ. Christians who hold fast until Jesus comes, that is, overcoming Christians, will rule with Christ when He sits as King "upon my holy hill of Zion" (Psa 2:6). The Tabernacle of David, Now Fallen Down, to Be Rebuilt When Christ Returns A great commotion took place among the Hebrew Christians when Paul began his missionary tours among the Gentiles. A great discussion arose as to whether Gentiles could be saved by faith in Christ without being circumcised and keeping the law of Moses. Paul, Barnabas and others went up to Jerusalem to meet the apostles and there threshed the thing out.

All came to the conclusion that it was the will of God for Gentiles to be saved, that God should take out of the Gentiles a people for His name, and He would afterwards return and build again the tabernacle of David which was fallen down. The tabernacle of David, his kingly reign and throne, has fallen down. But when Jesus returns it will be restored. Read Acts 15:13-16 and you will see

that clearly the reign of Christ is to come when HE RETURNS to the earth.

"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will RETURN, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up."

God is now taking out a people for His name among the Gentiles, but the Lord Jesus will return and build again the tabernacle of David. Isa 16:5 shows clearly that the tabernacle of David means a throne where Christ will rule. A similar thought is found in the eleventh chapter of Romans where the Holy Spirit tells us that "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom 11:25), but after that Israel shall be saved. Jews are now blinded and about the hardest of all people to reach with the gospel. But when Jesus returns, those left alive will be saved, when the tabernacle of David is built again and Christ reigns. That time will be "the regeneration" when the apostles will reign with Him, sitting on twelve thrones and judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mat 19:28).

Christ Now Seated With the Father in His Throne, Not on the Throne of David In Rev 3:21 we are plainly told where Jesus now is. He sits, not on the throne of David, but on the right hand of His Father, in the Father's throne.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev 3:21). In the future, this passage teaches, Jesus will sit on His own throne. Then Jesus will allow others who overcome to reign with Him, just as the Father allows Jesus to sit with Him in His throne.

God the Father has an agreement with His Son Jesus Christ about this matter, which is mentioned in the 110th Psalm. There we are told that the Father has invited the Son to sit on His right hand until all His enemies are made the footstool of Jesus, and that then He shall reign out of Zion, that is, out of the city of Jerusalem.

We give here the entire 110th Psalm.

"The Lord, said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head."

Jesus, then, is not now sitting on the throne of David but is seated at the right hand of the Father in His throne. When the time comes for the reign of Christ, then the terrible retribution, mentioned in this Psalm, verses Psa 110:2; Psa 110:5; Psa 110:6, will take place on the enemies of Christ.

Later we shall learn that these refer to the Great Tribulation and battle of Armageddon when "he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the

wicked" (Isa 11:4; 2Th 2:8). But Christ is not now on David's throne. David, on a throne at Jerusalem, and Christ in Heaven, have nothing in common as kings. David was on earth, Christ is not. David ruled over a nation of Jews, Christ does not rule over a nation of Jews. The Jews, by a great majority, rejected Christ as both King and Saviour. They said, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luk 19:14).

Even today the vast majority of Jews will have nothing to do with Christ. The land of Palestine is inhabited largely by Mohammedans who do not even acknowledge the deity of Christ, much less accept Him as Saviour and King. The Un-kingly Jesus This Nazarene peasant, do you call Him a king? David was rich beyond imagination, a monarch whose glory shames the crowned heads of Europe. But Jesus had nowhere to lay His head.

- He had no money to pay taxes until God put a coin in the mouth of a fish.
- He had no bed in which to be born, - He had no grave in which to be laid, but in birth and in death was the object of charity.
- He ate His daily bread as a penniless one supported by the ministrations of good women.
- His estate, after the nails were driven in His hands, and His naked body had died on the cross, was one simple garment, a seamless robe!

No, Christ had all the powers of a king, but He did not exercise them in His brief ministry on this earth. He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God had voluntarily emptied Himself, and became, not a King, but a Saviour; not rich, but poor; not proud, but meek and lowly in heart. A king? No, the wise men who brought Him gifts, as to a king, looked far into the distant future when Christ should reign over the Jews. A king? To be sure it was written of Him by Pilate, but it was written above the cross where He was crucified! I think that even Pilate, Pilate the compromiser, Pilate the cowardly one, Pilate the pleaser of men, the seeker after human favor-even Pilate seemed to know that Christ would come into His own and would one day reign as a king. A king? No, the only crown He wore was a crown of thorns, briars pressed down on His dear head in mockery. The only scepter He ever wielded, the only kingly robe He ever wore, was after He was scourged with the Roman cat-o'-nine-tails, when the mocking soldiers plucked out His beard, blindfolded Him and beat Him over the head and people said, "Guess who hit you." That bleeding, stumbling figure, carrying the cross out of the gate of Jerusalem to the place of a skull-do you call Him a king? Is there any likeness between this abused, despised, and pitiful figure, the jest of the soldiers, the pawn of Herod and Pilate, the One despised and rejected by Israel; is there any likeness, I say, between Him and King David the mighty monarch of Jerusalem with his great palace, his riches, his power and the applause of the world? No! By faith we know the kingly heart of the Saviour, but we must admit that Christ did not rule as a king. At His first coming Jesus did not rule as King of the Jews. He did not then, and He does not now, sit on David's throne. The kingdom of Christ on earth has not yet begun. When Will Jesus Sit on His Throne, the Throne of David? So much is said about the coming reign of Christ in the Bible that we should expect definite teaching about when Christ will sit on His throne and reign. Thank God, we do have definite teaching in many places on this question. For instance Mat 25:31. There the Saviour tells us, "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." When will Jesus sit on His throne, His promised throne, to reign over

His promised kingdom? The Scripture answers, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory . . . THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."

All the argument in the world cannot change the plain, simple fact which the Scripture expressly states: Jesus will be enthroned at His Second Coming.

Some may complain, however, that that Scripture, Mat 25:31, refers to Jesus sitting on a throne to judge. It does tell about His judging those that are brought before Him, the sheep and goats, the saved and lost of the living nations on the earth when He returns. And that judgment will be on the basis of what they have done toward Christ's brethren, the Jews, during the tribulation period. We grant that.

However, one must distinguish between this judgment of the living on earth with those three groups of sheep, goats and brethren, and the last great judgment of the unsaved dead, mentioned in Rev 20:11-15. No, Mat 25:31 tells of the beginning of His kingdom when He shall sit on the throne of His glory. Those brought before Him are the living of the nations of the earth over whom He is to rule. In fact, in the same context, Mat 25:34, we are told that the Saviour will say to the saints who will reign with Him: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mat 25:34). The kingdom of Christ begins when He will sit on the throne of His glory at His coming. In 2Ti 4:1, Paul plainly tells Timothy that the Lord Jesus Christ, "shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."

"The quick," or living, will be judged at the appearing of Jesus to reign, and the dead will be judged before He turns the kingdom over to His Father. Get it clear in your mind that according to 2Ti 4:1 "His kingdom" comes after "His appearing."

Jesus is not sitting on His throne now, but He will sit on the throne of David at His Second Coming. Not in the rapture of the saints when we go up in the air to meet Him, but after our honeymoon in Heaven when Jesus comes visibly, bodily, literally, with all His holy angels to reign on this earth, "THEN shall He sit upon the throne of His glory."

Certainly that kingdom is in the future, not the present. Do not be discouraged, dear Christian, for all God has promised He will do, and the Saviour shall have the kingdom that rightfully belongs to Him and shall reign on the throne of David on this earth.

03.09. Eternal Promises to the City, Jerusalem

CHAPTER NINE Eternal Promises to the City, Jerusalem

PREACHERS and Bible teachers have fallen into an evil way of spiritualizing the Word of God, explaining away the promises and making the Bible mean what it does not say. In many editions of the Bible, men have defiled the Word of God with their opinions which explain away the literal meaning of the inspired Book. At the top of pages or chapters where God promised good to Israel, men have written "God's promise to the church." When God's Word prophesies good to Jerusalem or to Mount Zion, or prophesies about the future of Mount Zion, such learned teachers and preachers often say that God did not mean what He said at all, but referred to Heaven. They are wrong, utterly, foolishly, presumptuously, wickedly wrong! The Bible says what it means and means what it says. God has an eternal plan connected with the literal city of Jerusalem in Palestine, which is so plainly foretold that honest Bible students must accept it. Mount Zion is "the southwest hill of Jerusalem, the older and higher part of the city; it is often called, the city of David" (Young's Analytical Concordance). The term "Mount Zion" is often used for the whole city of Jerusalem.

If you want to understand what God says in the Bible about Jerusalem, then remember this: always the name Jerusalem refers to the literal city of Jerusalem in Palestine, unless the Scripture indicates otherwise. Five times in the Bible, in Gal 4:26, Heb 12:22, Rev 3:12, Rev 21:2, and Rev 11:10, the word "Jerusalem" refers to the heavenly city which will one day come down to Palestine on the site of the old Jerusalem, hundreds of times "Jerusalem" means the city now in Palestine. The other five times it refers to the heavenly city which will one day be on the same site, literally and actually a new Jerusalem.

Likewise Mount Zion is used in the Bible scores of times as synonymous with the city of Jerusalem. Once, certainly (Heb 12:22), possibly again (Rev 14:1), Mount Zion is used as synonymous with the heavenly Jerusalem. The rest of the time, everywhere in the Bible, the term "Mount Zion" means the literal hill on which the older part of Jerusalem will be built, and it is used as synonymous with the city Jerusalem.

If you would understand the Scriptures and know God's plans and promises, then take literally His promises about Jerusalem and Mount Zion.

Mount Moriah, Where Abraham Offered Isaac, the Site of the Temple and Jerusalem

God had selected Jerusalem as the permanent capital of Palestine and the center of temple worship, even before the children of Israel took the land. Did Abraham know, when he took his son Isaac three days journey to sacrifice him by faith on Mount Moriah, that Mount Moriah was the very spot where later Solomon would be instructed to build the temple? Perhaps by faith Abraham did know that, for we are told that he "looked for a city!" (Heb 11:10). God had some purpose in bringing there to the temple site that sacrifice picturing the coming Saviour. When the children of Israel were encamped west of the Jordan River, and Moses gave them their final instructions and

charges before he should die and they should enter the promised land of Canaan, the Lord revealed to them that He would choose the place for His sacrifices and eventually for the temple, which He already had in mind. Deu 12:5-6 says:

"But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill-offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks."

Five times in that chapter that place is mentioned, in only slightly different words, as 'the place which the Lord God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there.'

David was led to make his capital at Jerusalem when a great plague came on the entire nation because of David's sin in numbering the people.

"And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite. And David spake unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house. And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite" (2Sa 24:16-18). In obedience to the Lord's command by the mouth of the prophet Gad, David bought the threshingfloor of Araunah and built there "an altar to the Lord" and the plague was stayed.

GOD HAD HIS HEART SET ON JERUSALEM! Looking down through the years to His future plans for the city, God loved it and would not let it be destroyed. He said to the angel, "Stay now thine hand"! The Threshingfloor of Araunah Was the Site of Solomon's Temple And what about this threshingfloor of Araunah, or Oman? It was on the very spot where God would later have His temple built by Solomon, David's Son!

2Ch 3:1 tells us, "Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Oman the Jebusite." Where God commanded Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice is where God commanded David to offer a sacrifice to stay the plague. There God His temple built, the place of sacrifice. From the beginning God planned an eternal destiny for Jerusalem and its holy environs.

God's Name Placed Perpetually at Jerusalem

God placed His name at Jerusalem forever, and His plan for the city and the temple site reaches on into the literal reign of Christ on earth when all Israel shall be regathered to their own land, and when that great Seed of David shall return and establish forever David's throne and rule thereon. In 1Ki 9:1-3 we are told how God has made an unchanging choice of the site of the temple and of Jerusalem.

"And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, That the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. And the Lord said unto him, I

have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, TO PUT MY NAME THERE FOR EVER; AND MINE EYES AND MINE HEART SHALL BE THERE PERPETUALLY" (1Ki 9:1-3). The same thing is told in 2Ch 7:15-16 in the following words:

"Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually."

Note that God said that He would place there His name, His eyes, His heart!

God's name, on this earth, He wants ever connected with the city Jerusalem! His eyes watch continually over that place! His heart is there! Notice, too, that God said this was "for ever," and again "perpetually." Even about Jerusalem, then, the Scripture is true that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom 11:29).

God will not change His plans concerning that city Jerusalem and the site of His temple there on Mount Moriah. It must have been for this reason that God repented of the evil that He had planned to do to Jerusalem and said to the angel He had sent to destroy it, "Stay now thine hand" (1Ch 21:15; 2Sa 24:16).

All the prophets of the Old Testament knew about God's eternal purpose and covenant concerning Jerusalem, and it is often mentioned. Notice the following Scriptures:

"For David said, The Lord God of Israel hath given rest unto his people., that they may dwell in Jerusalem for ever" (1Ch 23:25).

"Also he built altars in the house of the Lord, whereof the Lord had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever" (2Ch 33:4).

"And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the Lord said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever" (2Ki 21:7).

Joel tells us of the time when Christ shall be "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" (Joe 3:17). In that time, we are told: "But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the Lord dwelleth in Zion" (Joe 3:20-21). Surely Joel, writing the prophecy, knew God's plan to place His name perpetually at Jerusalem as the center and joy of the whole earth, the city of the Great King.

Micah foretold that Jerusalem was to be the center of the plan of Christ on earth. Notice the terms: "the mountain of the house of the Lord," "the mountain of the Lord," "the house of the God of Jacob," "Zion," "Jerusalem." These words mean just what they say.

- The "house" is the temple at Jerusalem.

- The "mountain" is the literal Mount Zion on which the older part of Jerusalem was built.

- Mount Moriah is the site of the temple adjoining Mount Zion, and is within the city. In the Bible the prophets everywhere used such terms referring to the city of Jerusalem. Micah said:

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Mic 4:1-2).

"And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever" (Mic 4:7).

Isaiah tells us that:

"In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem" (Isa 4:2-3). This glory to be on Jerusalem is yet future, as Isa 4:5-6 undeniably show.

Daniel and Nehemiah Knew God's Eternal Plan for Jerusalem The prophets seem to have known how God always looked upon Jerusalem. For this reason, Daniel, captive in the foreign land of Babylon, prayed three times a day with his window open toward Jerusalem (Dan 6:10). For this reason Daniel prayed,

"O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from THY CITY JERUSALEM, THY HOLY MOUNTAIN: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, JERUSALEM and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon THY SANCTUARY THAT IS DESOLATE, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: FOR THY CITY AND THY PEOPLE ARE CALLED BY THY NAME" (Dan 9:16-19).

Daniel knew that though the city of Jerusalem then lay waste, that God Himself would see that it was rebuilt. Though the temple, the sanctuary of God, was then vacant, God Himself had placed His name there perpetually! Daniel knew that God had further plans for Palestine and Israel and the city Jerusalem and the site of the temple there!

Nehemiah, knowing God's promises about the city, fasted and prayed with weeping when he heard that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down and the gates thereof were burned with fire. Something of this must have been in the heart of Jesus Himself when He looked on the city He loved and said:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 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" (Mat 23:37-39). In these brief verses, how much is told! The love of Jesus for the Holy City, Jerusalem, and for the Jews; the certain destruction of the city and the temple; and also, thank God, we are told that Israel, in Jerusalem, shall one day cry out, when they see Jesus in person, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Jerusalem, "the City of the Great King" In the prophets and Psalms, Jerusalem is a famous theme. In Psa 48:1-2, the importance of Jerusalem in the plan of God is shown.

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." The Psalmist wrote, not primarily for his own time, but looking into the future, he was inspired to know that the time would come when Jerusalem should be "the joy of the whole earth."

Jerusalem was "the city of the great King," but that King mentioned was not David nor Solomon, but a coming King. Jesus Himself quoted that phrase in Mat 5:35 saying that none should swear by Jerusalem "for it is the city of the great King."

There would be no blasphemy in taking the name of a man in vain. This great King is Jesus, the Son of God, very God Himself. No one should swear by Jerusalem, because it is the city of Jesus, the great King-not because it is the city of King David. This proves surely that the literal city of Jerusalem will be the center of the reign of Christ. That coming great King will sit on His throne at Jerusalem, and then Jerusalem shall be the joy of the whole earth. When the Saviour returns to reign, when Israel is regathered and converted, when Jesus sits in the literal city of Jerusalem on the throne of David, then these prophecies about Jerusalem will be fulfilled.

Jerusalem Will Be "the Joy of the Whole Earth" In the days of David and Solomon, Jerusalem was a great city. The wealth of Jerusalem was its temple, palaces, and princes which were widely known. But Jerusalem was not "the joy of the whole earth." Other cities had their palaces and kings reigning over more people than David or Solomon. Other cities had their worship of idols and heathen deities, attended by more people than the worship of God at Jerusalem. David was a king, but not THE great King.

These verses were not then fulfilled:

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King" (Psa 48:1-2). Nor were they fulfilled in the personal ministry of Christ.

Rome, not Jerusalem, was the center of the world. The people of the whole earth did not take joy in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was "the city of the Great King" only in prospect, for they crucified their King, and He did not reign in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is not now "the joy of the whole earth." The holy mountain is traversed alike by pagan, Mohammedan, infidel, Jew and stranger. Nor does the great King reign there. No, this blessed prophecy that "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King," simply means that God has eternal purposes for Jerusalem. It will be "the city of the Great King," "the joy of the whole earth," when Christ rules from the throne of

David over the whole earth. The Pillar of Cloud and Fire Which Led Israel in the Wilderness, Will Be Over Jerusalem in the Kingdom Age When Christ returns, when Israel is gathered, judged, and then, as the Holy Spirit tells us through the prophet Isaiah, the pillar of cloud by day and the fire by night which led Israel in the wilderness, will abide over the city Jerusalem. Read now the last of that fourth chapter of Isaiah.

"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. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of MOUNT ZION, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." This prophecy is to be fulfilled in Jerusalem. It could not be the heavenly Jerusalem, because it will come 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." The heavenly Jerusalem has never needed purging, and the Heavenly Jerusalem has never had the blood of violence.

Israel is to be regathered from all the earth, and in the wilderness of wanderings they will be assembled where the Saviour will plead with them face to face (Eze 20:33-44). At that time the rebels will be purged out and the remnant will "pass under the rod" and God will bring them "into the bond of the covenant." When that judgment shall have taken place, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the blood of Jerusalem, then we are told that the eternal presence of God over the city will be pictured day and night by the pillar of cloud and of fire. When the Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, we are told that:

"The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" (Exo 13:21-22). The Lord was in the pillar of cloud and of fire. With that pillar of cloud He led them in the daytime; in the fire He watched over them by night. From that cloud and fire He defended them against the Egyptians (Exo 14:24-25). It was the visible evidence of His presence with His people. That cloudy pillar descended, after Israel's sin in the matter of the golden calf, and from that pillar, the Lord talked with Moses (Exo 33:9-10). Over the tabernacle, day and night, was this cloud of the Lord in the sight of all Israel and through all their journeys (Exo 40:38). God was leading His people from their bondage in Egypt into their own land. But again the children of Israel are in bondage.

- They are scattered throughout all the world.
- They have no temple, no priesthood, no sacrifices.
- They have rejected their Messiah and crucified their King.
- The wrath of God is upon them. But one day He will gather them again to the "wilderness of wanderings," purge out the rebels, cleanse the city Jerusalem, and entering that lovely city, will make that His home, His throne, His temple! At that day, the cloud of the Lord will cover every dwelling place in the city of Jerusalem; and at night, as a flaming fire, He will be visible above all the city where He has sworn that forever His name, His eyes, and His heart shall be. Then

Jerusalem shall be the city of the great King. The River That Shall Flow From Jerusalem in the Kingdom Age How many details God gives us about the marvelous kingdom age that is coming!

It is sad that multitudes of Bible students have ignored or explained away the wonderful promises of God's Word concerning the coming kingdom. But it is a happy truth that enough is revealed for the careful, prayerful, humble student of God's Word to have a clear picture in mind concerning this future kingdom. Many physical details concerning that kingdom, the nation, the throne, and the city Jerusalem cannot be imagined as having taken place. For instance, the pillar of fire and cloud prophesied in Isa 4:5 has never stood over every dwelling place in Jerusalem. So it is with the wonderful river of water which shall flow forth from Jerusalem during the kingdom age. At present there is no river at Jerusalem and there has never been. The nearest river is the Jordan, several miles away. The tiny brook Kidron (Cedron) which flows on the east of Jerusalem, has never been called a river, and it is not in the city of Jerusalem. But the Scriptures tell us that the time will come when a great river will flow out from the city of Jerusalem, originating where the temple did stand. The Garden of Eden had a river which "went out of Eden to water the garden" (Gen 2:10). The new Jerusalem, the heavenly city, will have also a river, "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev 22:1).

Now study with me a bit and learn the interesting fact that these two, the Garden of Eden and Heaven, will both be united in the literal city Jerusalem, in Palestine, and that the river of water of life will flow out from the site of the ancient temple there. The Psalmist tells us: "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High" (Psa 46:4). The time mentioned is future. In your Bible you will find the words "there is" in italics, meaning those words were supplied by the translators. The time is not present, but future. "The streams whereof SHALL make glad the city of God." The rest of the Psalm makes clear the time spoken of is future.

- Verse Psa 46:5 of the same Psalm says: "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." The river will make glad the city when God is in the midst of her.

- Verse Psa 46:6 next tells about the moving of the kingdoms and the melting of the earth when God shall speak.

- Verse Psa 46:8 tells of the terrible tribulation He will bring before His kingdom.

- Verse Psa 46:9 then tells us that "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire" (Psa 46:9). When God makes wars to cease, then the Kingdom of Christ will be begun.

- Verse Psa 46:10 tells us that God "will be exalted in the earth." So during the kingdom age, we are told about "a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High." That River Begins to Flow at The Second Coming of Christ The river mentioned is a literal river of water, and the city of God is the literal city of Jerusalem. How do we know? Because the Scripture expressly tells us how that river will spring up at Jerusalem, at the second coming of Christ.

Zec 14:1-21 is a clear picture of the return of Christ and of the battle of Armageddon. Compare it with Rev 19:11-21 and you can see that it is the same. The Lord will return from Heaven to reign on the earth. He will bring with Him His saints (Zec 14:5) who will have been resurrected and translated before this and caught out to meet Him in the air. He will find Jerusalem compassed with the armies of the Antichrist and the city itself falling under the onslaught of the armies of the world, under the leadership of the wicked Man of Sin (Zec 14:1-2). The Lord will fight against these nations and utterly destroy them in that day (Zec 14:3, Rev 19:20-21). The Lord shall stand with His feet upon the Mount of Olives in that day (Zec 14:4), and violent physical changes shall take place, "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."

It will probably be caused by an earthquake, and the people shall flee from it as they have from other earthquakes (vs. Zec 14:5). And then in the same chapter we are told about the river that shall spring up in Jerusalem, in that day, when the Lord shall be King over all the earth.

"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zec 14:8-9). The river mentioned is a literal river, just as the Mount of Olives mentioned in the same chapter is a literal mountain. The literal city Jerusalem shall be attacked by the armies of all nations and rescued by the Lord from Heaven. And IN THE SAME DAY the living waters shall flow out from the literal city of Jerusalem. This is the "river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." The River Will Spring Out From Under the Temple at Jerusalem

Several chapters in the book of Ezekiel are given over by the Holy Spirit to a detailed discussion of the temple, the sacrifices, the worship and other physical details concerning Jerusalem and the land during the reign of Christ. Eze 34:1-31, Eze 35:1-15, Eze 36:1-38, Eze 37:1-28 repeat again and again the promise of the restoration of the people of Israel to their land as a nation. Eze 40:1-49, Eze 41:1-26, Eze 42:1-20, Eze 43:1-27, Eze 44:1-31, Eze 45:1-25, Eze 46:1-24 tell about the temple at Jerusalem, the place of God's throne there, the altar and worship. Then Eze 47:1-2 tell the details about that wonderful river, "the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God," mentioned by the Psalmist.

We are told:

"Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side."

Ezekiel tells how the angel measured the water and found it first ankle deep, then to the knee, then to the loins, and then water deep enough to swim in, too deep to wade.

Other verses of the passage continue the story of how this wonderful river will flow out from Jerusalem and go to the sea. Zec 14:8 tells us that the waters will divide "half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea," that is, half to the Mediterranean Sea, and

half toward the Dead Sea. Ezekiel tells us how the waters from this river that make glad the city of God will heal the Dead Sea until it will not any more be the salt sea as it is now.

Eze 47:8-11 say:

"Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-ge-di even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt" (Eze 47:8-11).

Note that this is not somewhere up in the heavens, but on earth. This river will flow out from Jerusalem, and half of it will go eastward into the Dead Sea. There fish will live and fishers will fish and spread their nets. Salt marshes will be left, because in the kingdom age we will eat the fish and salt them with salt even as Jesus ate a piece of a broiled fish and an honeycomb (Luk 24:42-43) after His resurrection. This is the river of water of life. In the same chapter, Eze 47:1-23, Eze 47:7 and Eze 47:12 say:

"Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other" (Verse Eze 47:7).

"And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine" (Verse Eze 47:12). The river is the river of life. The trees are the trees of life, for the same story is told in Rev 22:1-2. Compare Eze 47:7; Eze 47:12, with Rev 22:1-2.

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev 22:1-2). This passage in Revelation certainly is telling about the heavenly Jerusalem which will come down to earth from God the Father and will abide on the site of the old Jerusalem as the capital city of the world. The book of Revelation makes clear that this heavenly Jerusalem will come down at the close of the thousand years' reign of Christ when the Father comes down to take over the reins of government with His Son (1Co 15:24; Rev 21:2-3), but during the thousand years and afterwards, the promises are to Jerusalem, just the same. The river will flow from Jerusalem, making glad the city of God. And this river of water of life will have beside it on either bank, the trees of life which bear twelve manner of fruits and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

Honest hearts will rejoice in the promises of God, and will long to see that lovely city Jerusalem when it becomes actually "the joy of the whole earth . . . the city of the great King," with the river of God to make it glad! (Psa 48:2). The prophecy of Zechariah has much to say about that coming

time when, during the Great Tribulation, Jerusalem will be oppressed under the Antichrist. The name Jerusalem appears in those brief fourteen chapters thirty-nine times! Read the following verses: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zec 13:1).

Zechariah tells of the trouble in Jerusalem at that time, but he also tells of how salvation will come to Jerusalem, when her King comes.

Zec 14:1-21 tells how the Antichrist will bring his armies against the literal city of Jerusalem to sack and destroy it, but the same chapter tells how Jesus will return in person to save that literal city Jerusalem. Then "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east" (Zec 14:4).

Then Zec 14:16 tells us, "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." In that day Jerusalem will reach her destiny and her promised glory! With saved Israel, living in their own blessed, happy land, again a land flowing with milk and honey, the Lord Jesus shall rule, and we are told that:

"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts" (Zec 14:20-21).

It becomes clear to the dullest mind, if it be opened to spiritual meaning at all, that God's promises to Israel are literal. The promises about the land of Canaan are literal. The promises about Jerusalem, or Mount Zion, are literal. Literal Israel according to the flesh will be brought back to their own land and there gloriously converted. Christ, the great Seed of David, will sit on David's literal throne in the literal city Jerusalem. What a glorious kingdom is coming! The New Jerusalem on the New Earth to Be at the Same Site For a thousand years we are told that Christ will reign in person on the earth before He shall turn the kingdom over to His Father (Rev 20:4; Rev 5:9-10; 1Co 15:24). In the judgment that will follow on this earth, every disease germ, every thorn and thistle, and every mark and remnant of sin must be utterly destroyed by fire. God has purposes for this planet that cannot be fulfilled as long as one sinner sets foot upon it, as long as a single mark of the curse remains upon it. 2Pe 3:10-13 tells how "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." In that holocaust the present heavens, or firmament, will be changed, and everything that fire can destroy will be destroyed, while the entire human race is present, out in space, at the judgment of sinners ("in the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men"). But we have seen that God cannot do away with the elements that make up this world. He has promised to Abraham and his seed forever the land Palestine. He has set His name perpetually and forever at the place of the temple in Jerusalem. The temple has been destroyed three different times, and at least one other is to be built and fall; but God's name is placed at Jerusalem, His eyes are over it, His heart is centered upon it forever, as He Himself said (1Ki 9:3; 2Ch 7:16). The land must be made fertile and inhabited again, and God Himself has promised to plant it again like the Garden of Eden. Eze 36:33-35 says:

"Thus saith the Lord God; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited." But what about Jerusalem? As God will make out of the old material a new earth, so God will provide a new Jerusalem. No sooner does God tell us about the new Heaven and the new earth, than God inspired John to tell of that new city Jerusalem which God will bring down and place where He has placed His name forever! In Rev 21:1-3 we are taught that:

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with him, and be their God[*i*]." The New Jerusalem is the Father's house of many mansions of which Jesus spoke in John 14:2! This marvelous city, the home of God Himself, will be brought down to earth to be literally another Jerusalem at the place which God chose thousands of years ago. All of God's promises about Jerusalem will be fulfilled. The promises are literal-they will be fulfilled in a literal city, a literal Jerusalem on a literal earth, in the literal land of Palestine. Then God the Father, Himself, as well as the Son, will be King, in "the city of the Great King."

There are some who teach that the New Jerusalem, that great city of God twelve thousand furlongs square, is simply to hover above the earth. Some teach that this heavenly Jerusalem will be inhabited by those converted in this gospel age which they call "the church," and that the earth will be inhabited by the Jews. But the Bible makes no distinction. In the first place, that heavenly city is really "the new Jerusalem." When Chicago was destroyed in the great Chicago fire, a new Chicago was built on the site of the old Chicago. Jericho was destroyed by the children of Israel when they entered the land of Canaan. Later a new Jericho was built on the site of the old Jericho. So the New Jerusalem will be really Jerusalem, and on the site of the old Jerusalem. It must be a city on the earth, then. When the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos was shown "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Rev 21:10), he evidently saw that city as coming down to rest upon the earth and to be literally a new city Jerusalem at the ancient site. The ancient site itself is sacred. God's promises refer continually to "Mount Zion," and to "this place," and throughout Bible prophecy, Jerusalem is regarded as one eternal city, to be destroyed and then rebuilt, but continuing to inherit the same blessed promises.

Actually the New Jerusalem, that wonderful city described in detail in Rev 21:1-27 and Rev 22:1-21, will be the capital city of the new earth when it is purged from every taint and stain and mark of sin and disease and death. Christ Himself must reign there, sitting on David's throne. And we who suffer with Him shall also reign with Him on the earth.

03.10. World-wide Righteousness, Peace and Pros...

CHAPTER TEN World-wide Righteousness, Peace and Prosperity Promised in Christ's Kingdom
IN THE FIRST chapter of this book we set out to find the answers to certain great questions. The second question was: "Will this war-torn world ever have a real, permanent, worldwide peace?" The third question was: "Will the curse placed on this world because of sin ever be removed so that man can live here in a new Garden of Eden?" This chapter will answer these questions. During the reign of Christ on earth, the curse brought on nature because of sin will be removed. Wars will be no more, righteousness will prevail on the entire planet, and happiness will be universal. This wonderful era, this golden age, will be on this literal planet, the earth. We are not talking about Heaven, except in the sense that Heaven will be on this earth as it certainly will. In previous chapters we have proved that the kingdom of Christ will be set up on this earth and that He will reign on David's throne, and now we want to discuss the happy conditions that will prevail in that golden age.

Animal Nature Changed; Gentle Lions!

We have called attention before to the promise of the Messiah's kingdom as given in Isa 11:1-16. There we were told in verse Isaiah 11:1 that "there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." Isa 11:2-5 tell of the wisdom, justice and judgment of His reign on the earth. Then verses Isa 11:6-9 tell us how even the nature of animate will be changed until a little child can lead the wolf, the leopard or the lion.

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious" (Isa 11:6-10).

What a great change in animal nature! The wolf, leopard and young lion will no longer be beasts of prey and will do no harm to the lamb, the kid and the fat calf. A child can play, in that day, with the beasts of the field, as he might today with a puppy. There will be no more carnivorous beasts, but "the lion shall eat straw like the ox"! Babies may play with poisonous snakes with no danger of harm, during the blessed kingdom of Jesus on this earth!

How like the Garden of Eden that will be! At that time God brought every fowl and beast to Adam "to see what he would call them" (Gen 2:19). We cannot imagine that animals in the Garden of Eden were enemies of mankind, and there is no hint in the Bible that animals were ever wild until God said to the snake, "Thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field," and "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed" (Gen 3:14-15).

The snake was cursed "above all cattle;" that certainly means that all cattle and beasts were cursed because of man's sin but that the snake was cursed more. When Jesus comes to take charge of the earth, the curse on animal nature will be removed. We may be sure that that change will reach even to insects and disease germs. If the lion will eat straw like the ox, and wolves, leopards, and poisonous snakes will be safe playmates for the babies, we may be sure that people in that happy time will be safe from the sting of insects, from infection and bacteria or from harm by any of God's creatures.

Isaiah is full of glowing promises of the kingdom age. In chapter Isa 65:25, the prophet tells us again how the nature of animals and men will be changed in that day.

"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" (Isa 65:25). Even if "dust shall be the serpent's meat" in that day, no animal will hurt nor destroy "in all my holy mountain," says the Lord. The Curse on the Ground Removed The saddest day this world ever saw was when the serpent of sin first put its slimy head in the Garden of Eden and led away from God Adam and Eve and with them all mankind. Because of this sin, animal life was cursed and then all the ground was cursed. We are told in Gen 3:17-18 :

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field."

Since that curse on the ground, thorns and thistles have made life miserable for mankind. Animal life and plant life alike on the earth are against man. There is a curse on nature itself so that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom 8:22), because of the curse of sin. This is the reason for storms, hail, floods, drought, barren land and deserts. For an illustration, the land of Palestine was once a land 'flowing with milk and honey' (Num 13:27). Giant cedars of Lebanon were in Palestine, and the grapes of Eschol were so fine that a bunch had to be carried between two men on a staff (Num 13:23). It was a well watered, rich and happy land. But sin has brought a curse upon it. The soil has eroded. The trees have been cut down. The springs of water and brooks have dried up. Some of the land is desert and much of it is semi-arid. But the Holy Land will not remain under a curse, for the Lord has promised Israel that they should be brought back to their land and the land should be blessed again.

Eze 36:29-30 says:

"I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen."

Then verse Eze 36:35 in the same chapter says, "And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden." In some sense, the curse will be removed from all the earth, but more especially will that be true, it seems, in lovely Palestine; and it will become a veritable garden of the Lord. In Isaiah, all of Isa 35:1-10 tells of the wonderful transformation of the earth, particularly Palestine and Jerusalem during the reign of Christ.

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Even the earth itself will "be glad," "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" in this kingdom of Christ on earth.

It is important to see that these passages are to be taken literally.

If the first Garden of Eden was literal, so the second will be literal. If the trees and animals of the Garden of Eden were literal, then will these be literal in the kingdom of Christ on earth. Notice the names of literal places, "Lebanon," "Carmel," "Sharon." Zion, in verse Isa 35:10, to which the ransomed of the Lord shall return with songs and everlasting joy, is the literal Mount Zion upon which the city Jerusalem rests. The water that shall break out in the wilderness and streams in the desert (verse Isa 35:6) reminds us of the "river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God" (Psa 46:4), which we discussed in the chapter on Jerusalem. The wonderful blessings of Isa 35:1-10 will not come to pass until it can be said to them of fearful heart, "Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you" (verse Isa 35:4). This is the return of Christ to establish His kingdom when "he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isa 11:4).
The Curse Removed From Human Bodies, Too

It makes us happy to know that all nature will be glad, that the curse will be removed from beasts and from the earth itself. But happier still is the thought here expressed-that when Jesus returns to reign, the curse will be removed from our poor human bodies!

Isa 35:5-6 tells us that "then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."

Read verse Isa 35:10 of the same chapter and see the redeemed hosts of the Lord coming to Jerusalem at the beginning of the kingdom!

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." No lame people! No blind, no dumb, no unmusical, and thank God, no sad people will live in the lovely city

Jerusalem in that happy and prosperous reign of Christ. The Sunday before this was written in Dallas, Texas, there joined our congregation an old man who is stone deaf. Though he sat near the front, he could not understand what I said. He felt the presence of God. He rejoiced when sinners came. But only the loudest noise can pierce into the silence of his mind. But in that happy kingdom, the Spirit tells us that "the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped" and my brother will hear again!

Today some women went to see Mother Lindsey. She is infirm and palsied and blind. She has heard me preach many times on the radio, and today she wept as she told the visiting ladies that she longed to see me and wondered what I looked like. She prays to live long enough and be well enough to come to join our church and be present in person in our services. But even then, she will have to be carried or led, for she cannot see. But in the reign of Christ, we are told that "the eyes of the blind shall be opened," and Mother Lindsey will see again.

World-Wide Righteousness

Sin is responsible for all the trouble in this world and sin brought the curse of God on man and beast and plants of the field. If the curse is to be removed from these in the kingdom age, then we know that it will be because of righteousness. It will be a happy, peaceful, and prosperous age because a righteous one. The people of the earth will never be righteous unless they know the Lord. True righteousness is godliness. There can be no true morality without true religion. Christ is the Light of the world and the world will never be light until His light shines to every corner of the globe. People must know about God and know God through Jesus Christ before there can ever be any worldwide righteousness. This, we are told, will be true in the happy kingdom age. The Scriptures tell us that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the whole earth during the reign of Christ. Isa 11:9 says: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." The accompanying verses tell us that will be in a day when the great root of Jesse and Branch of David shall come and regather Israel and rule on the earth. The knowledge of the Lord will be everywhere. A similar statement is found in Hab 2:14 : "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Satan Will Be Chained During Kingdom Age With all the preaching and teaching of nearly two thousand years, the earth has not yet been filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Bibles have been printed by the millions, and thousands of missionaries have spent their years all the way from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand telling the story of Jesus. Multitudes have learned about the Lord, and many have been saved by His power, but we must admit that even yet there are multiplied millions in the earth today who know nothing of God, of His Son Jesus Christ, nor of the Bible, God's Word.

Why the terrible spiritual darkness that covers the earth in spite of all the good gospel agencies? The answer is given in one word, Satan! The prince of darkness blinds the eyes of the people, stops their ears, hardens their hearts. The enemy sows tares among the wheat, puts leaven in the meal and makes the pure seed of the gospel into a denominational tree of human organization which becomes the home of wicked birds of unbelief. This world today is in darkness because Satan, the god of this world, makes it dark.

Then if the knowledge of the Lord is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, Satan must have his influence stopped that the light may shine on human hearts. And that is exactly what the Bible says will happen. In Rev 20:1-3 the story is told:

"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." This immediately follows the return of Christ in glory to destroy the armies of the wicked and to set up His kingdom, as told in Rev 19:1-21. Thus at the beginning of the kingdom of Christ on earth, Satan will be bound and shut up in the bottomless pit "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." Of the thousand years, and of the loosing of Satan for a little season, we will speak in another chapter. But mark well that the golden age of world-wide righteousness, peace, and prosperity will be made possible because the Lord will shut up Satan. Then the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth. Do not misunderstand me. The Bible does not say that every person alive on the earth during the kingdom age will be a Christian. A study of Rev 20:1-15, will show that some unsaved people will live on through the thousand years, unsaved. At the close of the thousand years, when Satan is released, he will cause them to rebel; but until that time they will live in morality and without rebellion against God, submitting outwardly, at least, to His laws.

Jerusalem Will Be the Center of Worship and Knowledge for the Whole Earth The prophet Micah, too, was inspired to tell of the kingdom of Christ on earth. The fourth chapter of Micah tells of that happy day, and verses Mic 4:1-2 read:

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Jerusalem, Mount Zion, will be the center of worship, "for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

People all over the world will say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob [the temple]; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." Jerusalem will never fulfill its destiny until it is really the center of the earth. The people who come up to Jerusalem will once a year keep the feast of tabernacles. And those Gentiles scattered throughout the earth who do not come to Jerusalem to worship Jesus, "the King, the Lord of hosts," on them there shall be no rain. That is what Zec 14:16-17 tells us.

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain." The reign of Christ on earth will be a reign of righteousness, a spiritual reign, and the knowledge of the Lord will cover the whole earth.

All Israel Will Know the Lord

Among the Gentile nations of the earth, as we have said, it is evident that some will be unsaved, but nominally will serve the Lord without rebellion while Satan is chained. But among the Jews and at Jerusalem everyone will be devout and sincere children of God. Paul said concerning this time, "And so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom 11:26).

Elsewhere we will discuss the time of the marvelous conversion of all Israel. But now it is enough to notice that during the reign of Christ all Jews left alive will be Christian Jews as well as those saved Gentiles who will live with them near Christ in the Holy Land.

Jer 31:33-34 tells us how everyone of the house of Israel will have the law of God written in his heart and personally know the Lord in forgiven sins.

"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer 31:33-34). The kingdom age will be an age of righteousness, with all the blessings that righteousness and godliness bring. A Warless World

All that human education can do has never elevated mankind above strife and war. Peace treaties are scraps of paper. War grows more terrible with every invention of science, every centralization of government, every refinement of culture. Even Jesus Himself did not put a stop to war. Instead of that, He told how a few short years after His ascension Jerusalem would be utterly destroyed. And of the temple He said that "there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Mat 24:2). Of the course of this age, Jesus said that:

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Mat 24:6-8).

War! Pestilence! Famine! Earthquakes! These are the characteristics of this wicked age in which we live. The kingdom which is promised was not set up at the first coming of Christ, nor since that time; but for it we must look to the future when Christ shall come in power to reign, when with the last great battle He will make an end forever of wars. Wars and rumors of war curse this earth, cause rivers of blood and tears. The bitterness, the hate, and the crime of war have blasted the hopes, broken the bodies, snuffed out the lives and damned the souls of uncounted millions. But thank God, it will no longer be so in the kingdom of Christ on earth. A bit ago we studied Mic 4:1-2. That is found almost word for word in Isa 2:1-22. Mic 4:1-13 is a wonderful picture of the kingdom, and verse Mic 4:7 says that "the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever." The chapter certainly discusses, then, the reign of Christ on earth. Now let us read verses Mic 4:3-4.

"And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword

against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

Christ's Reign on David's Throne "According to the Flesh" In Peter's sermon at Pentecost, he took occasion to mention, as he usually did, the resurrection of Christ and His position as the coming King of Israel.

All the apostles knew that Jesus in the future would take His place as the King of Israel and sit on David's throne. They preached it again and again. They looked for that to occur at any time, just as they had been taught to watch continually for the second coming of Christ. In Acts 1:6, they had asked, "Lord, wilt thou AT THIS TIME restore again the kingdom to Israel?" and they were told that the time was not for them to know. In Acts 2:25-28, Peter quotes the sixteenth Psalm to prove the resurrection of Christ, and then explains it in Acts 2:29-31 as follows:

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

Notice verse Acts 2:30.

David knew God had sworn to him with an oath that "of the fruit of his loins, ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." The resurrection of Christ was primarily looking toward the reign of Christ. The resurrection was a bodily resurrection, "according to the flesh."

"According to the flesh" Christ will sit on David's throne! The reign of Christ, then, will be a literal one. With His literal, physical body, the body with the nail prints in the hands, with the side that Thomas touched, with the feet that "shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives" (Zec 14:4), with the body that ate broiled fish and honeycomb before the disciples (Luk 24:42-43), Christ will sit on the throne of David at Jerusalem and rule over the house of Jacob, as David did, except in a much greater fashion and with an everlasting kingdom! The kingdom of Christ on David's throne will be "ACCORDING TO THE FLESH." In the revised version, Acts 2:30 does not use the term "according to the flesh" but says: "Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne." The fact still stands out that Christ, in order to reign on David's throne, must be resurrected in the body. In the resurrection of Christ, God the Father primarily had this in mind, that Jesus should reign on David's throne. David had a human body when he reigned on his throne. His reign was a literal reign, a physical reign over subjects with physical bodies. So Christ, to sit on the throne of David, must have been raised from the dead with His glorified, human body. Do you see how this proves the literal reign of Christ? His reign will be different from any reign that could be administered without a human body. Jesus before His coming in the flesh could not have reigned on David's throne. After His death, He could not have reigned on David's throne, in the way the Scriptures foretold, without a human body. He must be raised from the dead. The Scriptures about His reign would not be fulfilled if Christ should not reign on a throne over such subjects and in such a

kingdom as involved a literal, resurrection, glorified, human body.

03.11. The Saved and Glorified to Reign with...

CHAPTER ELEVEN The Saved and Glorified to Reign with Christ On Earth after His Coming

CERTAIN simple truths have become clear in your mind as you prayerfully studied the Scriptures in the preceding chapters.

- Israel is to be regathered to Palestine as God promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and the whole nation.
- A remnant of the race will be brought back alive to Palestine and be converted and will possess the land.
- With them will come the resurrected, saved Jews of past ages.
- Saved Gentiles, too, will come to live with Christ on the earth. The kingdom of Israel will be restored again, and Christ will sit on the throne of His Father David and reign forever at Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be the joy of the whole earth.

Surely, if you believe the Bible, by this time you must be convinced that the reign of Christ will be a literal reign, on a literal earth, over a literal people with physical bodies, and on a literal throne. If the Bible means what it says, and if it can be taken at face value, then these promises are to be taken as true and understandable, and will be literally fulfilled.

Last but not least, in the preceding chapters it must have become clear that this wonderful era of peace and righteousness and joy, of the kingdom of Christ on earth, must follow the second coming of Christ. The King must come before His kingdom shall cover the earth.

Every Saved Soul in the Universe Will Be on This Earth

If Heaven is going to be on this earth, then we must expect that all the saved will be here, and that is true. Several Scriptures make clear that all the saved will be on the earth with Christ when He returns and rules over it in person.

First, all the saints, living and dead, will be changed and resurrected when Christ calls us into the air to meet Him.

1Co 15:51; 1Co 15:52 says:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Here Paul is inspired to say plainly that though "we shall not all sleep" (die), yet "we shall ALL be changed." The book of First Corinthians is addressed to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's" (1Co 1:2). It is addressed to all the saved of all ages, and to these Paul says, "We shall ALL be changed." Every saved person then dead will be

resurrected, and every saved person then living will be changed in a moment to meet Christ in the air. In Heb 12:22-24 we have a picture of that assembled host, raptured, called up to meet Jesus in the air for our honeymoon in Heaven, before He begins His reign on earth. The "church" which is His body, all the redeemed, will be with Jesus at that time.

Read the passage carefully and notice that the assembly is not a partial assembly but a "general assembly." Notice that that called-out assembly is composed of "the firstborn," those "which are written in heaven;" again, "the spirits of just men made perfect." That assembly in Heaven will surely include every person saved up to that time. That happy occasion, so often called "the rapture," is also pictured in 1Th 4:16-17 as follows:

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 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 dead in Christ shall rise first, not a part of them, but all of them. Then we that are alive and remain, not a part of us, but all of us, the saved, will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. No hint is made here of any who have ever been saved being left behind. The Resurrected Saints Must Go Where Christ Goes

Now notice the concluding statement in verse 1Th 4:17, "so shall we EVER be with the Lord." From this time on, the saved are the bride of Christ. Where He goes, they will go. When He returns to reign on the earth, they will return to reign with Him. Not one of these saved people will ever any more have any real separation from Jesus Christ. That is the one reason that that time is spoken of as a marriage. The Bridegroom will meet His bride. Sweethearts will become husband and wife. After that, they are yoked together; and in this case, what God has joined together man cannot put asunder. Christians will be with Jesus wherever He is from that time forth.

We have spoken here about the time when Christians will be called up into the air to meet Christ. There we will meet the Saviour and have the wedding supper. There we will be judged, each one at the judgment seat of Christ. (That will not be a judgment to determine whether we are saved or not, nor even to declare it. It will be a judgment to announce rewards for service, which will greatly vary.) During our time in Heaven with the Saviour, the terrible reign of the Antichrist will begin, cover the whole earth, and come to climatic ruin. And then the Saviour will return to this earth in person to set up His kingdom - and we will come with Him.

"The Lord My God Shall Come, and All the Saints With Thee" In Zec 14:1-21, the Holy Spirit gives us a clear picture of "the day of the Lord." That is the time when the Lord Jesus shall come into His own, when He shall defeat His enemies and establish His kingdom on the earth. That "day of the Lord" is mentioned many times throughout the Bible, and the term refers to the entire period from the setting up of Christ's kingdom on David's throne when Christ returns through a thousand years' reign and until sinners are judged and the kingdom is turned over to the Father, after which Father and Son will reign together on the earth. The "day of the Lord" begins at the literal return of Christ to the earth to begin His reign.

Zec 14:1-21 starts off with the statement, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh," and then tells of all nations being gathered against Jerusalem to destroy it. In the midst of that destruction, verse Zec 14:3 tells us, "Then shall the Lord go forth," and verse Zec 14:4 says that "His feet shall stand in

that day upon the mount of Olives." Then in verse Zec 14:5 we are told, "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Following that, verse Zec 14:9 tells us that "The Lord shall be king over all the earth." When Jesus returns to reign, to be King over all the earth, then "ALL THE SAINTS" will return with Him. And with the living Jews, regathered to Palestine and converted, will be all the saints in the universe with Christ when He reigns on this earth.

These saints will cover the earth, we understand, and will not all live in Palestine.

Tribulation Saints Will Be Here Too

During the tribulation time, while the church, that called-out assembly, is with the Saviour in Heaven, others will be converted here on this earth.

- Rev 7:1-8 tells us of an hundred and forty-four thousand Israelites who will be converted during that time.

- In Rev 14:1-4 we are given a vision of them again, standing on Mount Zion (at Jerusalem), and we are told that they are the "firstfruits."

Evidently these Jews, converted during the Great Tribulation, are firstfruits in the sense that at the close of the tribulation, when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, then "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom 11:24-26). So some Jews will be converted in the tribulation period, as firstfruits of the great revival among Jews. In Rev 7:9-14 we find a description of a great number of others who are not Jews, ". . . a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." Then in verse Rev 7:14 we are told, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Here are tribulation saints, converted during the time of tribulation on earth when those of us who are now Christians will be at the wedding supper in Heaven. What will become of these Christians when Christ returns to reign on the earth? The answer is, they will reign with us and with Him. In the same chapter, verse Rev 7:15 says about them, "And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them," and verse Rev 7:17 says that the Lamb "shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." They too will be with Christ where He is when He returns to reign on the earth. In Rev 19:1-21 and Rev 20:1-15, we have again a description of the return of Christ to reign on the earth, of the battle of Armageddon, and of the happy millennium. In Rev 20:4, we are told how even those put to death for Christ during that tribulation time will be resurrected to reign with Him.

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

Verses Rev 20:5-6 after that tell us that the unsaved dead will not be raised until a thousand years later, but that all who are in the first resurrection shall reign with Christ.

"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."

"We Shall Reign on the Earth" (Rev 5:10)

It is hard for some people to believe that saints will reign with Christ on earth. So lest some should misunderstand and think the reign mentioned here will be in Heaven, it is well to go back to the fifth chapter of Revelation where we are expressly told that these saints will reign literally on the earth. The church age is pictured in Revelation, closing Rev 3:1-21. Rev 4:1-11 begins with the rapture of the saints, and soon afterward the book tells of the Great Tribulation. John was caught up into Heaven to behold a throne set in Heaven (Rev 4:1-2) and around the throne were beautiful living creatures (improperly translated beasts) which remind us of the cherubim and seraphim mentioned in the Old Testament. And around that throne were twenty-four elders. These twenty-four men are not named, but they say that they are simply redeemed men, redeemed by the blood of Christ from various nations on the earth.

Now Rev 5:8-10 tells us that these elders, then seen in Heaven with Christ, will reign on the earth.

"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 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; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev 5:8-10). In Rev 5:9-10 these elders said, "Thou . . . hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign ON THE EARTH."

Then Rev 20:6 says, "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." The reign of the saints is on the earth with Christ. These elders and all others who will be in the first resurrection, the resurrection of the saved, will reign on earth with Christ.

Again I am reminded that some people think that the heavenly Jerusalem will be hovering up above the world somewhere instead of coming down to the site of the present city Jerusalem. They think that Gentile Christians, including those saved in the present or church age, will live in the heavenly city up above the earth and perhaps in some fashion reign over the earth. With this in mind, they call attention to the marginal reading of Rev 5:10. By the word "on" is a reference letter, and in the margin of the Scofield Reference Bible we are told that the word "on" should be really "over." So we might translate the statement of these twenty-four elders of every kindred and tribe, "We shall reign over the earth" instead of "We shall reign on the earth."

It is true that the Greek word here could properly be translated "over," but it does not necessarily mean physically "above." In the Greek, as in the English, the word for "over" often refers to authority and not to physical position above. If I should speak of Hitler's rule over Europe, I would not mean that Hitler was suspended in the air over Europe, but rather that he exercised authority over Europe. Joseph Stalin rules over Russia, but that simply means that he has authority over Russia, not that he is hanging in the air somewhere over Russia. So these twenty-four saints of God up in Heaven praising the Lord Jesus merely say that Christ has made them kings and priests, "and we shall reign on the earth."

I remember that this was made clear in an article in The Sunday School Times by Dr. James Oliver Buswell.

Thus we see that the saints of God will literally be on the earth as Christ will be on the earth. He will reign from the throne of His father, David, at Jerusalem; the twelve apostles will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel; and Christians, on earth with Christ, will help Him reign. According to our Saviour, in the parable of the pounds, to one faithful Christian Christ will say, "Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." And to another, "Be thou also over five cities" (Luk 19:17-19).

I find no Scriptural authority whatever for the idea that the New Jerusalem will be suspended up in the air and that it will be reserved for a favored group called "the church," while Jews will live on the earth. No, the great Bible teaching is, as I see it, that the New Jerusalem will be the capital city of the world. It will be, naturally, on Mount Zion, in Palestine, where Jerusalem has always been. And this city will be the center of the kingdom of Christ and of God. Saints of Christ will reign on the earth with Him.

You can see, then, that even the saints converted during the tribulation time will reign with Christ on the earth. Every saved soul in the universe will be on the earth with Christ during that time.

Two resurrections are mentioned in the verses we quoted above, in Rev 20:4-6. The first resurrection is a resurrection of saved people only. Part of the first resurrection takes place at the rapture and the rest of the first resurrection takes place when Christ returns to reign and when the tribulation saints receive their resurrection bodies. The second resurrection is a thousand years later and will be composed of the unsaved alone. The twentieth chapter of Revelation will make this plain. The passages you have studied thus show that every Christian who ever died will be resurrected to reign with Christ on the earth, but that every lost sinner who ever died will still be in Hell and his body in the grave during the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth.

Literal Flesh and Bone Bodies

Strange it is how the Devil tries to make Christians believe that the promises of God are not literally true. Satan has made many people believe that Heaven is afar off, an unreal place of disembodied spirits. And Christians generally have been made to believe that in the resurrection we will not have literal bodies of flesh and bone and blood, bodies that eat and drink. This idea of the unreality of the future and of resurrection bodies is widespread. I am shocked when I hear the question over and over again, "Will we know our loved ones in Heaven?" That question shows how far wrong has been the teaching which most people have received on this question. I answer back that we certainly will know our loved ones. They will have physical bodies as real as the bodies they have now, and as far as we know, of the same size, and made out of the same materials and readily recognizable to the eye.

Whatever mark of sin there is will be removed, but we will have literal, physical bodies, bodies with normal functions, bodies of flesh and bone, bodies that eat and drink.

"Will We Know Each Other in Heaven?"

Yes, we will know our loved ones in Heaven and when we come back to this earth to rule with Christ in a Heaven on this earth, not only will we know people's outward appearances and

recognize our loved ones, but then we will know people's hearts even as God knows our hearts today. We will know even our most intimate loved ones far better than we have ever known them in this life. On this matter, 1Co 13:12 says: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Yes, we will know each other as Moses and Elijah and Jesus knew each other on the Mount of Transfiguration. We will know each other even as my mother on her death bed looked into Heaven and said, "I can see Jesus and my baby now." Now we see through a glass darkly.

- We see people's faces but not their hearts.

- We hear people's words but not the cry of their souls.

- We see what people accomplish; we do not see what they hoped for, but never did.

God does see, and one day we shall see as He sees, and know as He knows, not looking through a glass darkly, but face to face, and we will know each other in Heaven, and on this earth. The bodies of resurrected Christians will be like the resurrected body of Christ, and we are clearly told about what kind of body He had. In Luk 24:36-43 we are told how Jesus appeared to the apostles after His resurrection, and how He showed them what kind of a body He had.

"And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" (Luk 24:36-43). The resurrected Jesus was not just a spirit. Jesus had a spiritual body in the sense that it was not carnal, with the taint of sin. But it was a literal, physical body. In verse Luk 24:39, Jesus said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." The resurrected Jesus showed them that His was a body with flesh and bones. Jesus encouraged them to handle Him and see for themselves, and when they could scarcely believe Him for joy, He further proved the literalness of His physical, resurrection body by calling for food. Before them He ate a piece of broiled fish and part of an honeycomb.

I have heard preachers say that the resurrection body of Jesus is the kind of body that can go into a room when the door is shut. But I remind you, Jesus could always do that, even in the body He had from birth. That was not in the nature of the body, that was in the power of Christ. This was a physical body of flesh and bones, a body that ate and drank. The Gospel of John tells us that Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus first appeared on the day of His resurrection (John 20:24-29). He did not believe the words of the other disciples about the resurrected Saviour and said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." But after eight days the Saviour came again and Thomas saw the print of the nails with his own eyes, and put his finger on those scars, and believed! So the resurrection body of Jesus was simply the old body glorified and made new. He had the same features, though glorified. He had the same wounds in His hands and in His side. It was a literal, physical body which Jesus had after His resurrection. The Same Jesus With

the Same Body Will Come Again When Jesus comes again to the earth to reign, He will have that same glorified, resurrection body with which He went away. In the first chapter of Acts we are told about the ascension of the Saviour.

Read Acts 1:9-11 with me and see that Jesus is coming back with the same body in which He went away.

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 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." This Scripture is to be taken literally. Jesus went away into Heaven and the angels said, "This same Jesus" will return again. It is remarkable how many details of Christ's ascension will be duplicated at His Second Coming. For instance,

- Acts 1:12 tells us that the ascension was from the Mount of Olives or Olivet. Zec 14:4 tells us that at His coming, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives."

- As He went away, Acts 1:9 tells us, "A cloud received him out of their sight." His return to reign will be with clouds also, for Rev 1:7 tells us, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him."

- Mat 24:30 tells us that "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven."

- His ascension was visible, and His return to reign will be visible.

- His ascension was that of a physical body, His return will be that of a physical body.

- He stood on the Mount of Olives before He went away, and His feet shall return to that place when He comes in glory.

- A cloud received Him. out of their sight, and behold He cometh with clouds!

It is the same Jesus, the Jesus with a resurrected body, the Jesus who ate and drank before them who shall come again to the earth.

It was this that Jesus had in mind when He gave the Last Supper and said to His disciples in Mat 26:29, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Our Bodies Like His Body

Now comes the happy thought that the bodies of the saved will be like the body of Jesus, that is, a literal body of flesh and bones and blood when we live with Him on this earth after His coming. At the first resurrection, Christians will receive glorified bodies. When Jesus comes into the air to receive His saints, the trumpet shall sound and "we shall all be changed."

Then the mortal bodies will put on immortality, then corruption will put on incorruption. Then our bodies will be like Jesus' body.

Php 3:20-21 tells of this blessed hope of a Christian.

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Our vile bodies will be changed, and "fashioned like unto his glorious body" when Jesus raises and changes His saints and calls us to meet Him in the air. So whatever kind of body Jesus had after His resurrection, the kind He has now, that will be the kind of body we will have as we reign with Christ and enjoy the blessings of God in a Heaven on earth. That is what Jesus meant in the verse quoted above, Mat 26:29, where He said, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Jesus said, "I will drink it new WITH YOU."

Jesus will drink grape juice in His kingdom on earth and will eat and drink as He did when He appeared to His disciples after His resurrection. And praise God for the thought, we will have bodies like His and will drink grape juice with Him in the happy kingdom which the Father will give to Him on this earth!

Some one will quote 1Co 15:50, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," as evidence that we will not have literal bodies of flesh and blood in the kingdom age. But I remind you that Jesus Himself has already said that He had flesh and bones and was not just a spirit, and we will find how the same Jesus is coming back again and how Christians will have bodies like unto His glorious body. To be sure, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom. If that is all it took, then every descendant of Abraham would be in the kingdom. But the promise is by faith, and not just by flesh and blood. It is not just a kingdom inherited by natural bodies according to a fleshly birth. The inheritance of this kingdom is based on a new birth and not on the first birth. That is what the Holy Spirit evidently meant in 1Co 15:50.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, that is true; but glorified flesh and blood certainly will be in the kingdom, inherited by saved souls.

Some good people teach that resurrected bodies will have flesh and bones but no blood. The Bible never says so. But when the apostles eat and drink at Christ's table in His kingdom, as He has said they shall (Luk 22:30), and when He drinks with them grape juice in this kingdom (Mat 26:29), then certainly the human body will have liquid in it, and the digestive processes will be carried on.

If one objects that the blood of Jesus was poured out on the cross, why, of course that is true. But He also poured out His soul unto death (Isa 53:12). But God would not leave His soul in the place of the dead nor leave His dead body to see corruption, and the same miracle that brought again Jesus Christ from the dead and raised that body into a glorified body could restore the blood as well as the flesh and spirit.

I beg you, my Christian people, take the Bible at face value and believe that we will have literal bodies of flesh and bones and blood, bodies that eat and drink, bodies that we will recognize, and yet sinless and strong and glorious, in the kingdom of Christ on earth.

"The Lame Man Shall Leap As an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb Shall Sing" In Isa 35:1-10, we have a glorious description of the earth and mankind during the kingdom age. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose"

then, we are told.

Evidently the curse of sin on this earth will be removed and there will be no more droughts, pestilences, thorns, and thistles as the consequence of man's sin. At least those evils will be under control, though we are told in Zec 14:17-18 that temporary droughts may be permitted during that time as a disciplinary measure. But the land of Palestine will have the curse removed and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. In that chapter we are also told that the curse will be removed from the resurrection bodies of the saved.

Isa 35:5-6 says: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."

These verses teach that we will have bodies with literal eyes that see, literal ears that hear, that we will really leap and sing. These are the functions of a physical body. But even better than that is the teaching that we will have perfect bodies. Blindness, deafness, lameness, and dumbness will all be corrected in our resurrection bodies. Whatever of frailty and weakness we suffer now, there will come a good time when it will be removed, thank God!

These verses indicate that all the saved will have resurrected bodies. In the rapture, when the first part of the first resurrection takes place, we are plainly told that "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed," so all those who are saved up until that time, the living as well as the dead, will be given resurrection bodies. Then Rev 20:4 tells us that the tribulation saints, put to death because of their faith in Christ, will be resurrected. Certainly we would expect those saved during the tribulation period who remain alive when Jesus returns to the earth to reign to be changed likewise at that time. And Isa 35:5-6 indicates that that will be true. All the saved will have glorified bodies with no blind or dumb or deaf or lame. The perfect health which God will give His people during that period will be blessed.

Isa 33:24 says: "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." With sins forgiven, then the disease that follows sin will be conquered and people will no more say, "I am sick," but will rejoice in the perfect use of eyes, ears, limbs and voice to the glory of God.

Food During the Kingdom Age

Jesus made clear that the saved will eat and drink with Him in the coming kingdom (Luk 22:30, Mat 26:29). Where will the food come from? Will the earth bring forth crops as it does now? Evidently it will, only without the limitations of drought, insect pests, thorns and thistles, which came upon the earth as a curse because of man's sin. Plants will grow, much more as they did in the Garden of Eden than as they do now. In Eze 47:1-23, a wonderful river of water is pictured flowing out from the sanctuary of the temple in Jerusalem. We are told that trees bearing "new fruit according to his months" shall grow on either side of this river that shall make glad the city of God. The same passage tells how half the river will flow out to the Mediterranean Sea and half of it will flow into the Dead Sea and the salt water will be healed so that there will be fish in the Dead Sea as there is fish now in the Mediterranean Sea.

Read Eze 47:7-12 and see about some of the food of the kingdom age.

"Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."

It seems clear that the people in the land of Palestine at least will eat fish from the Dead Sea and have them salted with salt from the marishes thereof. Certainly the fruit of the trees will be food also. Doubtless, every wonderful food the earth had in the Garden of Eden will be here again. This is a kingdom of literal people with literal bodies, bodies that eat and drink. We may be sure that all the saved, resurrected and glorified, will have the same kind of bodies.

03.12. Some Unsaved, on Earth, in Natural....

CHAPTER TWELVE Some Unsaved, on Earth, in Natural Bodies, During Millennium

HERE WE ARE come to a rather difficult question. Will there be unsaved people on this earth during the millennium, the thousand-year reign of Christ? The answer unquestionably is, Yes. Strange as it may seem, during the millennium, that first thousand years of Christ's reign before the Father comes down and the New Jerusalem from Heaven, this earth will have sinners on it. Several Scriptures prove that this is so. For example, Isa 65:20 says: "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed."

"The SINNER being an hundred years old shall be accursed." That Scripture certainly indicates in that time of rejoicing and joy in Jerusalem, yet there will be sinners on the earth. However, if there is yet doubt, turn to Revelation the twentieth chapter. There we are told how Satan will be chained and shut up for a thousand years "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years shall be fulfilled." The blessed reign of peace for a thousand years is described with Christ reigning, and His saints with Him, over the entire earth. Then we are told how Satan will be loosed out of his prison and will deceive the nations again, bringing them even to open rebellion against God. As you read that chapter, you will become convinced that on the earth during the thousand years there will be unsaved sinners, certainly some lost people without resurrection bodies.

Read Rev 20:1-3; Rev 20:7-8.

"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 shall be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."

It is clear that Satan will be bound because there will be people on the earth whom he might deceive during the thousand years. I do not believe he would be likely to deceive glorified, perfected Christians. But Satan is chained and shut up in the bottomless pit until the close of the thousand years.

During that time the Scriptures make clear there will be no open rebellion against God. Whatever weakness there is by nature in man's heart, it will not break out into vicious and open sin. The occasion is lacking. Satan himself, during that thousand years, will be shut up away from mankind. This proves a personal Devil who deceives individuals and leads them to sin. But at the close of the thousand years, we are told that Satan will be released and will deceive the nations again. We

are told that Satan shall deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, and so set them against Christ that they will gather armies as the sand of the sea for multitudes against Jerusalem, the Holy City. Then we are told that fire will come down from God out of Heaven and devour them.

It is unthinkable that saved people, made perfect, and with glorified bodies, could be so deceived that they would be brought to fight against Christ in person. Such open and wicked rebellion against Christ, such seeking even to destroy Christ and His kingdom, would prove that those who take part in the rebellion are not glorified Christians, to say the least. This is the act of unsaved sinners in natural bodies. Their end is destruction, and the Scripture tells us that they will be destroyed by fire from God out of Heaven. This again is proof that they are not glorified saints. It seems certain that a glorified saint will never sin. It seems also certain that a glorified body will never be destroyed. When that which is mortal puts on immortality (1Co 15:53) and corruptible put on incorruption, then the body will be as incorruptible and as immortal as the soul, and God will not bring fire down from Heaven and destroy His glorified saints. No, these rebels are unsaved men on the earth who will be kept in strict subjection during the thousand years while Satan is chained. Then when Satan is loosed for a season, he will deceive them and bring them to an open and violent rebellion against God and Christ.

Zec 14:16-18 indicates that there shall be some left of the nations of the earth who will be unsaved, and shows how God will keep them disciplined and in strict obedience during the thousand years.

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." (Zec 14:16-18).

Here we have pictured people, some of whom did not want to go up to Jerusalem "to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."

During the personal reign of Christ on earth, there will be people who must be punished and disciplined, even when Satan is chained and shut up in the bottomless pit. We might believe that even Christians, if we were then weak as we now are with our unredeemed bodies, might need such measures to force us to go to worship the Lord Jesus Christ. But we cannot believe that would be necessary with glorified saints. Surely these men who refuse to go to Jerusalem to worship Christ are unconverted, mortal people, people in natural bodies. But remember also that these are not people deceived by Satan.

Christians these days are often deceived by the enemy of our souls. But how could a Christian sin if Satan, the Deceiver, were shut away from us completely and were never allowed to mislead us nor suggest an evil thought or deed? I believe that even Adam and Eve would never have sinned but for Satan's deception and leading. And yet Adam and Eve were not glorified saints in resurrection bodies having been redeemed by the blood of Christ. They were perfect and sinless, having never been lost and so never saved. They were in the image of God, and yet they did not

know good and evil before their sin. Surely it is true that with Satan chained in a bottomless pit, those who refuse to obey Christ during the kingdom age will be unsaved people who must be disciplined by drought, according to the verses above.

These same unsaved people will come to active, malicious rebellion when Satan is loosed for a season.

How Will Unsaved Ones Get into the Kingdom of Christ? That subhead asks a hard question. We know certainly that to all the unsaved accountable men and women of this age, we can safely preach, as Jesus did to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3; John 3:5).

Certainly the unsaved people who have rejected Christ as Saviour during all past ages of the world will be shut out of this kingdom of Christ. Of that there can be no doubt. If the sinners without a new birth cannot even see the kingdom of God, much less enter it, then how will it happen that there shall be unsaved people on the earth during the millennial reign of Christ? That is a difficult question, but we must try to find what the Scripture has to say about it and not go beyond what is written.

First, it seems likely that these unsaved people, in natural bodies, will not be born from the Christians in glorified bodies. Remember that the Sadducees came to Jesus with the story of seven men, brothers, who successively had one woman as wife, and asked whose wife she would be in the resurrection. They thought this would prove there was no resurrection. But Jesus answered them, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (Mat 22:29-30).

Evidently then in the resurrection saved people will not marry nor have husbands and wives. With no marriage, we have no reason to believe there will be children born from these glorified saints. Any children born during the millennial age would proceed from others in natural bodies. Who are these unsaved people, in natural bodies, on the earth during the first thousand years of Christ's personal reign?

Zec 14:16, noticed above, gives us a hint. "And it shall come to pass," that verse tells us, "that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem" are to go up to worship the Lord and keep the Feast of Tabernacles; and if they do not keep that appointed feast in Jerusalem annually, they will be punished with drought.

Evidently, then, these mentioned are remnants of the nations who will be on the earth in the Great Tribulation time. "Every one that is left of all the nations" must mean that some individuals out of all these nations are gathered over into the kingdom in their natural bodies and there given a chance to trust in Christ and be saved.

We would suppose that if they should trust in Christ and be saved, they would be given resurrection bodies. Certainly many Jews will so trust in Christ and be saved after Christ returns in person to Palestine. The Lord has not revealed many details along this line, so let us learn what we can and be content. If it were good for us to know more, the Bible would tell us more.

Some Unsaved Left on Earth After the Judgment of the Living Nations

Zec 14:1-21 tells how the armies of the nations, under the leadership of the Antichrist, will be gathered against Jerusalem in the day when Christ returns visibly, bodily, to the earth to establish His kingdom. That battle of Armageddon, in the vale of Megiddon outside of Jerusalem, will bring to a close the reign of the Antichrist and so likewise will close the Great Tribulation period and the times of the Gentiles. That will be the end, forever, of the Gentile kingdoms of this earth, and Christ will establish the throne of David, and it shall fill the whole earth. In Rev 19:11-21 that return of Christ in glory is pictured and the great battle of Armageddon against "the beast," that is, the Antichrist or world dictator; and we are told how this wicked ruler and his false prophets will be cast alive into Hell, and how the remainder of his army of millions will be put to death and their bodies devoured by the fowls of the air. But when the army of the Antichrist is disposed of, or the armies of all the nations under the rule of the Antichrist, there yet remains a civilian population of the earth to deal with.

Mat 25:31-46 tells us how Christ will assemble the nations of the earth together before Him for a judgment. That passage is not long, and if you who read it get in mind carefully the setting, that this is a judgment of living people on this earth at the beginning of the reign of Christ, you can understand it and be blessed by it. This is not the last judgment of the unsaved dead, with bodies brought out of the graves and spirits brought out of Hell, for that judgment is at the close of the thousand years as told in Rev 20:11-15. No, this judgment in Mat 25:1-46 is a thousand years earlier, the judgment of the living Gentiles of the earth, the civilian population left alive after the battle of Armageddon. Christ will sit on the throne of His glory at Jerusalem and pass judgment on them as told in the following verses:

"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: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 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: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Mat 25:31-46).

Notice there are sheep and goats and brethren present at that judgment.

- The brethren are Jews, the blood kin of the Lord Jesus, who was born of Mary, a Jewess of the tribe of Judah.
- The sheep are Gentiles who will befriend the Jews during the Great Tribulation.
- The goats are Gentiles who favored the Antichrist.

Now from these Gentile nations in some way there shall be some left to go into the millennial kingdom, for Zec 14:16 refers to "every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem." Will some of these Gentiles who befriended the Jews and lived godly lives be unsaved Gentiles who never trusted Christ? I do not think so. Will little children of these Gentile nations, unaccountable infants, be carried over into the kingdom in natural bodies? It seems very likely.

Certainly we know that God would not slay little children and send them to Hell if they were unaccountable. On the other hand, the Scripture does not expressly say that such little children will be changed and transformed, being given glorified bodies. Therefore I believe it likely that such little children might grow up in the glorious kingdom age without open rebellion, and yet without a change of heart, and still in their natural bodies. Such people in natural bodies would grow to maturity, would marry and have children. Thus it would not be difficult to account for the multitude as the sand of the sea which would rebel against Christ at the close of the thousand years when Satan is loosed out of his prison for a little season to deceive the nations again (Rev 20:7-9).

Two things are certainly clear.

First, unsaved people who reject Christ as Saviour are plainly told that they cannot enter the kingdom of God. If Nicodemus must be born again before he could even see that kingdom, the same is true about all other accountable sinners. There is not the slightest room for any unbeliever to expect that God will take him into the kingdom on earth without a change of heart.

Second, There Will Be Natural Bodies on Earth During the Reign of Christ

Isa 11:8 clearly tells us that there will be sucking children on the earth during the millennial reign of Christ. Of whom will these children be born, and whose breasts will they suck? The inference here is that babies will be born and nurse at their mother's breasts during the reign of Christ. But if resurrected people neither marry nor are given in marriage, then these children must be born of unsaved parents, in natural bodies.

Isa 65:20 must mean no babies will die as so many now do, at just a few days of age, but that natural-born children, during the millennium, will die an hundred years old. But if people die at all during that happy time, they must be people in natural bodies, not the resurrected and glorified saints.

Read that verse again and you will see it must be the picture of unsaved people, in natural bodies, on the earth during the millennium.

"There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be

accursed."

Under ideal conditions, mankind will fail again. The history of the human race is a story of failure. Adam and Eve, made perfect in a perfect Garden of Eden, listened to the tempter and fell into sin. With them fell in crushing ruin the whole unborn human race. The Millennium-The Last Probation for the Human Race

Outside the Garden of Eden, God made a new covenant that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and I believe Adam and Eve put their faith in that coming Saviour, were forgiven and saved. But the first child ever born, Cain, became a murderer; and from that time forth the whole race degenerated until it repented God that He had made man; and He blotted out all the race but eight souls in a terrible flood.

After the flood God made a covenant with Noah, and Noah, coming out of the ark, built an altar and offered sacrifice to God. But next he planted a vineyard, and next we see him lying drunk and naked. Soon the whole race was building the tower of Babel, and God scattered them to all the earth by the confusion of tongues. In the midst of idolatry everywhere, God called Abraham and made a new start, with a new race, Israel. But the history of Israel is a history of wickedness and idolatry. They were carried captive to Assyria and Babylon in punishment. When a remnant was brought back to Palestine, and in due time the Saviour came, Israel first rejected and then crucified the Lord of glory. Forty years later God had the city destroyed by the army of Titus, until not one stone of the temple was left upon another; and the long foretold dispersion of Israel to every nation under Heaven took place. But God had chosen a little handful of Galilean followers, and these started to carry the gospel to all the world. Empowered by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they made a marvelous beginning, and there were never days on this earth, I suppose, like those early days of New Testament churches; revivals, power, rejoicing, and spreading of the gospel. But too soon the fires began to cool. The gospel seed became a tree of denominationalism and human organization, and in the tree, the foul birds of wickedness and modernism come to make their nests. In the three measures of meal, a woman hid leaven until the whole was leavened. Paul was inspired to write Timothy that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse" (2Ti 3:13), and that "in the last days perilous times shall come" (2Ti 3:1). In Rev 3:1-22, the last period of the church age is pictured as one where God's people are neither cold nor hot and nauseate God by their indifference until He spews them out of His mouth. During the church age, as during all other ages, mankind has failed God. But in the coming kingdom of Christ on earth, God will set out a thousand years for the last time when mankind will be proved. The Saviour Himself will rule the whole earth. His saints will rule with Him. Even Satan will be chained in the bottomless pit until not a sinner will be deceived as to the facts concerning Christ and righteousness. It will be a new Garden of Eden on the earth. And mankind, that is, unregenerate mankind, mankind after the flesh, will fail again under those conditions as he has under every other condition. Does not God know that sinful mankind will fail, even under the best of circumstances? Yes, He knows, but He wants all the redeemed to know it, all the doomed in Hell to know it, all the angels to know it, and all the demons to know it throughout the millions of years of eternity!

One thing must stand out in every dealing of God with man, and that is this: salvation is wholly of Christ!

Man never did, and man never will, earn the favor of God. God seems determined to prove to every created being His great mercy toward mankind. A review of these facts ought to help you to see the truth of Eph 2:4-9, which says:

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Knowing that God wishes to show His mercy and to be publicly justified in the sight of all creation in His dealing with men, we can understand how He will allow unsaved people to be tested on the earth during the millennial reign of Christ.

03.13. What must Come Before the Kingdom....

CHAPTER THIRTEEN What must Come Before the Kingdom - Looking for Jesus THE BIBLE, the Book of all books, gives so much space to prophecies of the future that it is impossible to discuss them all in this volume. This book is about the coming kingdom of Christ, not about the rapture of the saints, the tribulation period, the reign of the Antichrist nor the Battle of Armageddon. So we will not discuss those events in much detail. This chapter will only seek to give a brief outline of the events that must come before the kingdom of Christ begins on earth.

It is very important to know that the reign of Christ is not the next or first event on God's program.

Casual, unspiritual or unbelieving readers of the Bible have sometimes said that there were contradictory Scriptures concerning the second coming of Christ; that some Scriptures appeared to teach that Jesus might come at any moment, while other verses appeared to teach that other things must intervene before the coming of Christ. Such readers were confused by not distinguishing between the different phases of Christ's coming. Truly, we are commanded, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Mat 25:13). But that Scripture refers to Christ's coming into the air to take away His saints, the event often called the rapture. Such Scriptures do not refer to Christ's physical appearance on this earth with saints and angels to take over the reins of world government in a literal kingdom. In Bible times, some Christians were confused about this very matter. At Thessalonica, some had been taught to expect "the day of Christ" or "the day of the Lord," that is, the day of Christ's enthronement and reign, to begin at any time. This is made apparent in 2Th 2:1-12.

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a jailing away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 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: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." From the above Scripture, it is evident that the day of Christ, that is, the period of His vengeance and reign, is not to be expected immediately. First, the Scripture says that there must come a falling away and the Man of Sin be revealed. According to verse 2Th 2:8, this Man of Sin will reign until the day of Christ when he will

be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming.

Suppose we check by this Scripture certain things that must come before the reign of Christ on earth.

1. A great "falling away" (v. 2Th 2:3).
2. The One who now hinders or lets will be taken out of the way before the Man of Sin is revealed (vs. 2Th 2:6-7).
3. The Man of Sin will sit in the temple showing himself that he is God (v. 2Th 2:4). (This is evidently the abomination of desolation mentioned in Dan 9:27 and Mat 24:15).
4. Multitudes will be deceived by this Man of Sin, or Antichrist, being turned over to a reprobate mind to believe lies (vs. 2Th 2:10-12).
5. The Man of Sin will be destroyed with the brightness of His coming (verse 2Th 2:8). The above passage clearly shows that all five of these matters must occur before the reign of Christ on earth. We must not expect the reign of Christ on earth to begin at once. Some other things must come first. The Great Falling Away-Sin and Worldliness Among Christians 2Th 2:3 says, "That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first."

I believe that this refers to the rapture of the saints, when the invisible ties of gravity will be broken and we will suddenly fall away into the air to meet Jesus. Many believe that this refers to a falling away from sound doctrine, from godly living, from soul-winning devotion. Certainly there is that kind of apostasy. There is modernism and worldliness. But I remind you that before New Testament days had passed, this falling away had set in. Paul began the gospel work at Corinth, and yet a little later found it necessary to write back to his converts, rebuking them for all kinds of sin and worldliness: division, strife, drunkenness, adultery, going to law with Christians, and disorders in the church services. His Galatian converts turned back to legalism and were misled by the Judaisers, thinking circumcision necessary to salvation. New Testament churches of which we are given continued record all came to their time of falling away. A clear example is the case of the church at Ephesus, perhaps the most spiritual of all New Testament churches. There Paul spent three years. But Christ, in Rev 2:4 sent the message to this church at Ephesus, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." The church at Rome whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world (Rom 1:8) became the mother of the papacy. The falling away which was to come before the reign of Christ is not new to the present age. It has been in progress ever since the ascension of Christ.

It has only gotten worse as the centuries have gone by. The Rapture of the Saints-the Next Thing on God's Program The first fulfillment of prophecy that we should expect, the next thing on God's program as revealed in the Bible, is Christ's coming into the air to receive His saints and to take them away for a honeymoon in Heaven. The falling away is a progressive matter. On that, the Scripture is already fulfilled. But repeatedly, in the gospels and in the letters of Paul, we are commanded to expect the coming of Christ at any moment.

Notice the following warnings from the mouth of Jesus:

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

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mat 24:44).

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Mat 25:13).

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:32-37).

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luk 21:36).

Jesus told even His own disciples to watch for His return. If the Scripture may be taken at face value, and if Jesus meant what He said, then His return was an event for which no date was set, one that might occur at any moment. In other words, the return of Christ for His saints is imminent. By this term we mean that at any time since the ascension, Jesus might have returned, and it has been the duty of every Christian to watch for the coming and expect His coming every moment since that time. No one knows the time when Jesus will return, but every Christian should be ready at any moment. Paul expected to be alive when Jesus returns for His saints.

1Th 4:15-18 says:

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 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."

Paul said, "WE which are alive and remain shall be caught up. . . ."

Paul expected to be alive and remaining on the earth when Jesus comes. In this he was obeying the plain command of Christ to watch. Only shortly before his death was it revealed to him so that he could say, "The time of my departure is at hand." The coming of Christ for His saints and their rapturous ascent with Him to Heaven is referred to in 1Co 15:51-52 as follows:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." From the above Scriptures several things are clear about the rapture.

1. It will come very suddenly, Jesus said, as a thief in the night (Mat 24:43; 1Th 5:2), in a day and hour when people are not expecting it.

2. It will be marked with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God.
3. Instantly, "in the twinkling of an eye," the bodies of the Christian dead will be resurrected, glorified, caught up in the air to meet Christ.
4. The living saints will likewise be changed "in the twinkling of an eye" and caught up with those who are resurrected out of the graves. Both groups together will meet Christ in the air and go with Him to the place which He has prepared for us in the Father's house of many mansions. Jesus said in John 14:3, "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." This is the great event for which Christians should constantly watch and be ready. Jesus is coming! He comes not to reign on the earth as yet, but He may come today to take away His bride. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Mat 25:13).

"The Man of Sin" Must Be Revealed 2Th 2:8 says that the Man of Sin must be revealed before the day and reign of Christ on earth. The Man of Sin is known by several terms in the Bible.

- He is called "the Man of Sin," "the son of perdition."
- He is pictured by the "little horn" in the head of the beast in Dan 7:1-28.
- He is "the prince that shall come" of Dan 9:26.
- In Rev 13:1-18, he has become not just one of the horns, but the whole "beast," the absolute ruler of the restored Roman Empire.
- He will be the incarnation of Satan's power, for we are told, "The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Rev 13:2).

We are told that this terrible figure, this man of whom Pharaoh and Judas Iscariot were types, must be revealed before the Lord Jesus comes to reign, and then he will be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming. This Man of Sin is not yet revealed, and he cannot be named. However, so many details are given about his character, location, people, rise and rule that the study is of fascinating interest. Notice the following facts:

1. This ruler or dictator will arise among the ten kingdoms which are the fragments remaining after the dissolution of the Roman Empire (Dan 7:19-24). He rises among the ten horns, out of the beast that was Rome.

Again, he himself will be a Roman, of the same people as the army of Titus which destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (for he is the prince mentioned in Dan 9:26, a prince of the people that destroyed the sanctuary).

He will make a treaty with the Jews, allowing them to return to Jerusalem, rebuild their temple, and begin anew their Old Testament sacrifices (Dan 9:27). The covenant will be for one seven of years (translated week). This week must be a week of seven literal years, as a study of Dan 9:24-27 plainly shows. Seventy weeks of national history were assigned to Daniel's people Israel, in their land, Canaan. Sixty-nine of those weeks, or 483 years, were to last from the time that the command went forth to restore Jerusalem in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah down to the first coming of Christ. Those sixty-nine weeks have already occurred and each week was seven years

as prophesied. Then when Jesus came, and was rejected, the veil of the temple was torn down, Jews were soon scattered to all parts of the world, and God called "time out" for the Jews until the last week begins. The last week will be this week of seven years when many Jews will be brought back again to Jerusalem and will start their sacrifices in their temple at Jerusalem. That week, then, like the sixty-nine others which have already occurred, must be seven years; and half of it will be three and one-half years or forty-two months, or 1,260 days. The Antichrist will make a treaty with the Jews, allowing them to return to Palestine and restore their temple and worship for a literal period of seven years. This indicates that the Man of Sin will have a mandate or a political control over Palestine.

Since this treaty or covenant with the Jews is the first clearly taught and unmistakable public act of the Man of Sin, it appears likely that by this treaty he will be revealed to the world as the Man of Sin. Any man who arises as a dictator in Italy, gains control over Palestine and makes a treaty with the Jews of the world, allowing them to rebuild their temple and begin their Old Testament sacrifices, that man will obviously be known by the Scripture as the Man of Sin or Antichrist.

Afterwards, in the middle of the seven years of the covenant with the Jews, the Man of Sin will enter into the temple at Jerusalem and commit the abomination of desolation, causing the sacrifices and oblation to cease, "showing himself that he is God." Read 2Th 2:3-4 with Dan 9:27. This must happen three and one half years, or half the week, after the Man of Sin is made known. The last half of the week of seven years, the Man of Sin will reign with an absolute dictatorship over the whole world, "over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Rev 13:7). Then his terrible world-wide reign will continue three and one-half years. This is the "time and times and the dividing of time" of Dan 7:25 and the "time, and times, and half a time" of Rev 12:14. It is the forty-two months of Rev 11:2 and of Rev 13:5. It is the 1,260 days of Rev 11:3 and Rev 12:6. These three and one-half years are often called "the Great Tribulation" from Mat 24:21 and Rev 7:14.

During this time of great tribulation, the Jews will be in rebellion against the Man of Sin and will be terribly persecuted, and many will be put to death. The woman who brings forth a man child in Rev 12:1-17, is evidently Israel, from whom Christ came according to the flesh. When she flees away into the wilderness for 1,260 days (Rev 12:6) that will evidently be this great time of tribulation. It is called in Jer 30:7 "the time of Jacob's trouble."

Man of Sin Cannot Be Revealed Until After Jesus Comes for His Saints As we have said before, the next thing on God's program is the sound of the trumpet and the voice of the archangel that will call the bodies of sleeping saints in glorified form from their graves and will change the living saints in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and catch us all away to meet Jesus in the air. Many Scriptures warn us to be ready for the coming of the Saviour. Clearly then, the rapture of the saints must take place before the Man of Sin is revealed. This is taught in 2Th 2:7-8 which we have studied above. Those verses say:

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 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."

There is One, a powerful Person who hinders the appearance of the Antichrist or Man of Sin. The Man of Sin cannot be revealed until this One is taken out of the way. Who is He? He has been in

the world these 1,900 years; so it cannot be any living man. This does not refer to Christ, because Christ with His physical body was taken away and ascended to Heaven where He now sits at the right hand of the Father. It was not even the church, since the Scripture never refers to the church as "he." This One who hinders the Man of Sin must be the Holy Spirit. At the rapture of the saints, we believe, the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way of the Man of Sin so that he may be revealed.

I do not mean that the Holy Spirit will not work anymore in this world. The Spirit of God is everywhere on the earth and always has been. The Scripture shows that some will be saved during the tribulation time (Rev 7:1-14; Rev 20:4). The two witnesses will prophesy in the power of the Spirit during the tribulation time (Rev 11:1-12). The Holy Spirit will not be out of this world after the rapture. But certain it is, that when the bodies of all the saved people in the earth are caught up to meet Christ in the air, in that sense, the human temples of the Holy Spirit will be taken away, and His influence through these will be gone. That is, the influence of the Holy Spirit on the world through the lives and testimonies of born-again people will be removed and the Man of Sin will then be revealed, the Scripture teaches.

Those of us who live now, having trusted in Christ for salvation, will not see the Man of Sin nor suffer under His rule of Satanic power and wickedness. We will be with Christ at the wedding supper, prepared by the Father for His dear Son and for us, the Son's bride. The Man of Sin cannot be revealed until after the rapture of the saints. The Plagues of the Great Tribulation The reign of the Man of Sin will be such a time of tribulation as was never in this world before "no, nor ever shall be" (Mat 24:21). We can only suggest some of the sorrows of that time. A comparison of the book of Revelation with Exodus will show that the plagues in Egypt were only types which faintly foreshadowed the more terrible plagues that will be on this earth.

- Pharaoh was a type of the Antichrist, the Man of Sin, as Moses was the type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Egypt was a type of the world. As in Egypt water was turned to blood, so it will be during the tribulation period.

- The locusts in Egypt were types of the "locusts" in Rev 9:1-21, really demons from Hell who will enter into the followers of the Man of Sin and his army.

- The plague of frogs in Egypt pictured the frogs which are the spirits of devils, which during the great tribulation will deceive the kings of the East and lead them to their utter destruction in the Battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:13-14).

- And the death of the firstborn in Egypt was only a taste of what will occur in the Great Tribulation.

First, one fourth of the population and then one third of the remainder will die of war, famine and pestilence (Rev 6:8; Rev 9:15). Later, the entire army of the Man of Sin, two hundred million soldiers (Rev 9:16) will be slain in a day at the Battle of Armageddon (Rev 19:11-21). Their blood will make a river two hundred miles long and as deep as the bridles of the horses (Rev 14:20) and the beasts of the earth will devour the flesh of men and captains and bondmen and freemen as well as their horses. Then the Lord Jesus will smite the Man of Sin with the brightness of His coming, and he with his false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire. The Glorious Return of Christ

to Reign The most awful and terrifying event this world will ever see will be the literal, personal, bodily return of Christ to reign. Of this return, the two angels who stood by in white apparel said to the apostles after the ascent of Jesus: "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).

Jesus was caught up into Heaven until the clouds received Him out of their sight (Acts 1:9). He will return in clouds, for Rev 1:7 says: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

Mat 24:29-31 tells us likewise that Jesus will come with clouds:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened:, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the -jour winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Jesus ascended to Heaven from the Mount of Olives or Olivet, and Zec 14:4 says, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east."

Jesus went away with a physical body, a body that ate and drank, a body with hands and feet, a body of flesh and bones; and He will return the same way. The glorious return of Christ! No wonder "all nations shall mourn because of Him!" That is, the people on earth who do not love and serve Him will be seized in an agony of apprehension when they see the Lord Jesus! For He comes this time not the suffering Servant, not the meek and lowly Saviour, not the gentle "Lamb of God that taketh the sin of the world."

No, when Jesus returns in clouds to reign, He will come as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," to trample under feet His enemies, to shed their blood in vengeance instead of His own in atonement. Christ will come the second time, to the Jews, as the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings and will open up to the house of David a fountain for sin and uncleanness, because at that time the whole nation of Israel, then alive, will turn and seek Him and love Him, and with penitent hearts will receive Him. But to the nations as a whole, living in wickedness and violence under the rule of the Man of Sin, Christ will come as a terrible Judge.

Let us allow the words from the Book of God to tell us again of this coming of Christ.

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

KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (Rev 19:11-21).

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. 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. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." (Zec 14:1-9). The Judgment of the Living Nations No one part of the Bible tells the whole story. In the gospel of Matthew, the Lord tells of another great event that follows the Battle of Armageddon after the soldiers in the armies of the Man of Sin are all put to death in one day. Then Christ will sit on the throne of His glory and judge the civilian population which remains alive on the earth. Mat 25:31-46 tells the story as follows:

"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: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 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: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee, or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have

done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Notice who are those judged: before Him shall be gathered all nations (v. Mat 25:32). THIS IS NOT A JUDGMENT OF THE DEAD.

It has often been misunderstood and confused with the great white throne judgment in Rev 20:11-15. The two judgments are not the same. This is on earth. That in Rev 20:1-15 is out in space. This one is at the beginning of the thousand years reign, that in Rev 20:1-15 is at the end of the thousand years reign. This in Mat 25:1-46 is a judgment of the LIVING nations, but in Rev 20:1-15, John says, "I saw the DEAD, small and great, stand before God." The two are not the same. Here the dead do not appear. This is a judgment of the civilian population of the earth at the close of the Battle of Armageddon and after Christ first sits upon the throne of His glory.

Those mentioned as present in this judgment are three classes, sheep, goats, and brethren.

- The "sheep" are Gentile Christians, converted during the tribulation time. The proof that they love God is that they will have sided against the Man of Sin who will claim to be God on earth and taken sides for the Jews who will still believe in the God of Heaven and refuse to worship the Antichrist.
- The "goats" are unsaved Gentiles.
- The "brethren" are Israelites, Jews, the brethren of Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

Notice that the saved Gentiles will hear the words of Christ. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (verse Mat 25:34). The unsaved Gentiles who were left alive after the Battle of Armageddon will receive the condemnation: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The Jews will be assembled from all the world back to Palestine and there will be converted. The unsaved Gentiles will be sent to Hell, and the saved Gentiles will enter into the kingdom with Christ and the Jews and with all the redeemed who have returned with Christ from the wedding in Heaven. The millennial reign of Christ then will be well begun.

03.14. No Sign of Christ's Coming

CHAPTER FOURTEEN No Sign of Christ's Coming

TWICE this book has been reset in type and each time this chapter on signs of Christ's coming has been revised. Each time I needed to modify further the teaching. Now for a fourth edition, after months of prayer and study, I am led to rewrite the chapter entirely. I find it did not heretofore emphasize, as much as it ought, the one great central teaching of Christ and the apostles, that Jesus Christ may come at any moment, that His coming is imminent.

Christ's coming is imminent. That means that Jesus may come at any moment. That means that there is no other prophesied event which must occur before Christ's coming. Nothing else needs to happen before Jesus may come. No signs need precede it. Jesus may come today. He could have come at any time since Pentecost. It is a glad event hanging over us for which we should expectantly await. The coming of Christ is imminent.

I do not mean that "Jesus is coming soon," as so many people say. He may come soon; He may not come for five hundred years. I do not know, no one knows. But His coming is possible at any moment and we should expect it.

I do not mean that certain signs have appeared which indicate that Christ is coming soon. We do not need signs; we simply need to believe and heed His plain statements in the Bible. He commanded us to watch, and we should watch, knowing that He may come at any time.

I do not mean that there is any special evidence that we are "in the end of the age" or that these are "the closing days," as so many people say. I believe that is wrong and unscriptural. I do not believe that anybody in the world knows how close to the end we are. When I say that the coming of Jesus Christ is imminent, I do not mean that there is any special evidence that anybody can give that this age is drawing to an end. I simply mean that He may come at any moment, as He said He might, and we should watch for His coming.

I do not mean that we should expect Christ's coming because of world events. No, we should expect His coming because He said for us to expect Him. We should expect His coming not by sight but by faith, not by the newspapers, but by the Word of God. At any moment, day or night, Jesus may come to call all the redeemed up in the air to meet Him, with those that sleep in Christ raised from the dead, and with us who are alive and remain changed in a moment and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. This is the one most important phase of the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming. It is the one part of that doctrine which is most emphasized in the New Testament. To get this matter straight and clear in our minds will keep us from many heresies and mistakes and from many a false emphasis.

We Are Commanded to Watch Always for Christ's Imminent Coming

That Christ's Second Coming is imminent, that every Christian should watch continually for it, is made clear by the commands of the Lord Jesus. Also the teachings of the apostles are that

Christians are to watch, to wait, to look for Jesus.

1. Note How Definite Are the Commands of Jesus to Watch for His Coming In Mat 24:42 Jesus said, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." The therefore refers to what Jesus has just said above, that the coming of the Son of man will be as sudden and unexpected as the coming of the flood in the days of Noah. He said that of two in a field, one shall be taken and the other left; of two grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left; and therefore, because of the unexpected suddenness of Christ's coming, we should watch.

Again read the command of Jesus repeated in the next verses:

"But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mat 24:43-44).

Here the Saviour's return for His saints is said to be as sudden and as unexpected as the coming of a thief in the night. Therefore a Christian is to be ready, always ready, "for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Then the following verses tell how blessed is the servant who watches for his master and how displeased his master will be with the servant that does not look for his master and is not ready when he returns. In Mat 25:1-46 we have the story of the ten virgins and of the midnight cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." And we are told of five foolish virgins who had no oil and were left outside the wedding. Then Jesus gives the application, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Mat 25:13). The same command to watch is repeated again and again in the words of Jesus. In Mark He says:

"Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:33-37).

How solemn, how urgent is the command! Verse Mark 13:33 says, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."

Verse Mark 13:35 says, "Watch ye therefore."

Verse Mark 13:37 says, "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

Now it is quite clear that if any one of the disciples watched daily for Jesus after He went away, and thought He might return at any moment, he was only taking at face value the solemn words of the Saviour. And we must say that if at any time since Jesus went away a Christian, reading these words, expected his Lord's return and solemnly prepared each day to greet the Master, or each night thought that his sleep might be interrupted with the glad trumpet sound and the voice of the archangel, he could not be accused of unfaithfulness. He did exactly what Jesus said a Christian was to do. And today we are commanded to watch and expect Jesus' coming at any time. These Scriptures certainly teach that the coming of Jesus Christ may occur at any moment and that all of us ought to be ready and waiting for that event.

2. Other Scriptures Likewise Command Us to Look for Christ's Coming at Any Moment

All through the rest of the New Testament, if one reads observantly, he will find this attitude of expectancy is taught, just as in the gospels.

Read with me these inspired words written to the Philippians:

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Php 3:20-21).

Here the word conversation means citizenship. Our citizenship is in Heaven. We are to have our minds on Heaven, not on this world, because from Heaven is coming the Saviour for us. ". . . whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ . . ." Every New Testament Christian was taught to look for the Saviour's coming. We today have the same command. When Paul began his work among the Thessalonians, many of them were saved. And when they were saved Paul taught them that they were to wait for Christ's coming. He says:

"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1Th 1:9-10. When the people of Thessalonica turned to God, they turned "to wait for his Son from heaven." To these Christians the second coming of Christ in the future was as glorious and real as His first coming to redeem them. This expectant attitude, taught by the Spirit of God through Paul, means that the coming of Christ must be imminent; that is that Jesus may come at any moment. He could have come then or He could have come at any time since then. Likewise, He may come today. In 1Th 4:13-18 Paul gives an inspired account of the coming of Christ, when those who are asleep in Christ will not be left behind but Jesus will come from Heaven with a shout:

". . . 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."

Note that here the Thessalonians were to comfort one another with glad expectancy of meeting their loved ones at Christ's Second Coming. They were not taught to look forward to death, but to look forward to Christ's coming. That means that Jesus could have come at any moment, even during their lifetime, and may come now at any moment. In 1Ti 6:14 Paul was inspired to command Timothy, "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." Timothy was to expect Christ's coming in his lifetime.

Paul taught young preachers that they must teach the imminent coming of Christ. In Tit 2:11-13 we read:

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Here we see that it was an integral part of the gospel message that Christians should continually be "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus was to teach people to look for Christ's coming. So it was proper for them to expect that Jesus might come at any moment. Christ was to be expected before there was any World War I or World War II, before any of the so-called present-day signs of Christ's coming could appear. The second coming of Jesus Christ is to be expected continually, without any other basis except that He plainly promised He would return and that He commanded us to watch.

What should be the attitude of a Christian in this present world? He should be "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Now the clear teaching of Christ and of the inspired writers is that every Christian should be watching, should be looking for, should be waiting for Christ's coming. An honest God who puts those things in His Bible must mean that His Son may come at any moment. There is no other honest and fair meaning to be drawn from these plain words. Every Christian should watch daily, hourly, for Christ's return.

3. Paul Himself Continually Expected Christ to Come During His Lifetime

It seems that, just before Paul was beheaded at Rome, God revealed to him that he would die. And he wrote Timothy, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2Ti 4:6). But before that, in his epistles, Paul had, by divine inspiration, expressed the glad hope that he himself would be alive and remaining to meet Christ at His Second Coming. For example, see what Paul says in 1Co 15:52, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Here Paul says that two groups will be wonderfully transformed when Christ comes. The Christian dead, those asleep in Jesus, will be raised from the dead. The Christians left still alive on the earth will be changed in a moment. And with which group did Paul expect to be numbered? He expected to be with those still living! "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and WE shall be changed", he says. God put in Paul's heart the glad expectation that he would be alive when Jesus came. The same thing is clear in the way Paul wrote the Thessalonians. He said, "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 . . ." (1Th 4:16-17). Here Paul clearly counts himself as likely to be with those still alive when Jesus should come.

Now mark very carefully what Paul said. He did not say that it was revealed to him that he would be alive when Jesus returns. He disclaims any knowledge of when Jesus would return. But God had Paul put down in Holy Writ his glad expectation. Was Paul wrong? No, he was right! He was looking for Jesus to come. He did not claim to know, but in the language used it becomes clear that he hoped that Christ would come in his lifetime. He was simply looking for the Saviour, waiting for the Saviour, watching for the Saviour, exactly as Christians had been commanded to do, and as we today are likewise commanded to do.

Certainly it becomes clear from the Scriptures we have used that the imminent coming of Christ is a New Testament doctrine. The coming of Christ was gladly expected in New Testament times. And if we, like they, obey the Saviour, we too will be looking for Jesus to come at any moment.

We should remember, too, that New Testament Christians were never exhorted to look for Jesus because of certain signs or historical events. They were simply commanded to watch, and they were to do that by faith, because it was commanded. In view of this solemn, oft-repeated command to watch for Christ's coming, we know that Jesus could have returned to earth any time after Pentecost. There was no event foretold, after Pentecost, which must precede Christ's coming. So Christians are not to wait for any signs. Christ could come before any wars, any growth in wickedness, before any origin of a new nation Israel. World events are not to influence the Christian in this matter. We are simply to watch for Christ to come because He commanded us to watch and because we know He may come at any moment. No One Knows or Can Know When Christ Will Return

It is surprising and saddening to find how many ways people try to get around the repeated and plain statements of the Bible, that no one is to know when Christ may come. Despite repeated warnings that no one is to know the day, the hour, the time, the season, many people try to find evidences or inferences or signs-by which they may foretell approximately or exactly when Jesus will come.

Perhaps half of the false cults are started by leaders who think they have some new knowledge about the time of the second coming. The Millerites and Seventh-Day Adventists tried to set the time encouraged by a misinterpretation of Dan 8:14 and by a meteor shower, and first thought that Jesus would come in 1843. That date failing, then October 22, 1844. The British Israelites have set dates for Christ's coming judging by measurements in the great pyramid. Others have thought that they could make a day mean a year in the book of Daniel and so estimate when Christ should come. Martin Luther thought that the papacy was a sign of Christ's soon coming. Others have thought that the rise of Napoleon, of Kaiser Wilhelm, of Mussolini, of Hitler, of Stalin indicated the soon return of the Saviour. Every major flood, earthquake, or famine has been used as a sign. The rise of modernism, the rise of communism, of the false cults, have all been cited as evidences that Jesus must come by a certain time. The founding of the modern nation, Israel, is often so cited. But all who try to prove by any signs or evidence that Christ will come within any specified time sin against the plain statements and the plain command of Jesus Christ. See again what Jesus said.

1. In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus Said That Neither Man Nor Angels, Nor He Himself Knew When He Would Return In Mat 24:36, speaking of the Second Coming, Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." In Mark 13:32-33, we have Jesus' words as follows, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."

Here we are told that "no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son," but only the Father knows when Christ will return!

We believe that Christ now, in His exalted and glorious state, knows when He will return. But here I understand Him to claim that while on earth He did not know. If Jesus did not know, it was because He had emptied Himself of the outward evidences and marks of His deity. Certainly it is clear that no man in the world knows or can know when Christ will come and the angels themselves in Heaven do not know. That means that there are no signs by which one can know, no way of figuring by the Bible, or of marking things by world events. And again, in the next verse,

Jesus solemnly warns, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." Not only are we told that we do not know when the time of Christ's return is, but we are told that this is a part of the plan of God. It is a solemn duty to take heed, watch, and pray, and God has planned it this way so we will walk by faith and not by sight. God simply does not intend us to know when Christ will return. By comparison of the Scripture in Mat 24:1-51 and in Mark 13:1-37, we come upon another striking illustration given by the Saviour. In Mat 24:43; Mat 24:44 we read the following statement: "But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Here the illustration is used of a man, a householder, who has the misfortune of having a thief break into his house and steal. The point is that the coming of the Saviour will be as sudden, as unheralded and unexpected as the breaking in of a thief. And we are told that "the goodman of the house" will not know even what watch of the night, which of the three-hour periods into which the Roman night was divided, the thief would come. And the indication is that likewise we cannot even tell what watch it will be when Jesus comes. This is a dark age in which we live. For the Christian, Christ is the bright and morning Star, a light in the darkness. When Jesus returns to reign on the earth, the darkness will be over, and so He is spoken of as "the Sun of righteousness" who will arise with healing in His wings for Israel. But this age is a dark age. It is the time of the Gentiles. The world is largely ruled by Satan, "the prince of the power of the air," who is called, "the god of this world." Now suppose that this long period between Christ's first coming and His second coming be divided into four watches. If it should turn out to be the year 2,000 before Jesus came, then each watch would be 500 years. And one cannot tell in which watch Jesus will come. The same idea is expressed in the words of the Saviour in Mark 13:35, "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning." Here the four watches of the night are named; the Evening Watch, roughly from 6 P.M. till 9 P.M.; the Midnight Watch, which ends at midnight; the Cock-crowing Watch, ending at 3 A.M.; and the Morning Watch, ending at 6 A.M.

We learn that no man can know the day nor the hour when Jesus comes. But here we also learn that no one can even know the watch when Jesus will return. If the whole age should be divided into four parts, no one has any evidence by which they can foretell in which watch Jesus would return.

We do not know what watch it is even now, according to God's schedule, and we do not know when Christ will return. No one can know the day nor the hour or the century when Christ will return. But He may come at any moment.

2. The Risen Saviour Warns the Apostles, "It Is Not for You to Know the Times or Seasons"

We know how sorely tempted people are to try to set dates for Christ's coming. Evidently the apostles were as anxious about that as other men. After Jesus was risen from the dead, He talked to His disciples. "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4-5). Did the disciples now look forward to being filled with the Spirit and starting out to win souls? No, they did not. They immediately began to find out when Christ would

return and set up the kingdom on earth, sitting on David's throne. "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

How many others would rather speculate on the time of Christ's return than to be filled with power and win souls! Now hear the Saviour's answer, "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:7).

Jesus did not tell them when He would return. He did not say when He would set up the kingdom. In fact, He plainly told them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." It is simply not God's plan for Christians to know the future! The word times is used more than once in the Bible to represent years, and it may mean years here. In Dan 7:25 we are told that the saints shall be given into the hand of the Antichrist "until a time and times and the dividing of time." These three and one-half years are clearly expressed elsewhere (Rev 13:5; Rev 11:2-3). Rev 12:14 also speaks of these three and one-half years as "a time, and times, and half a time." If one is not to know the time, then one is not to know even the year in which Christ will return. And in Acts 1:7, Jesus said that one is not to know the season of Christ's return. I judge that this means some extended period of time. So we may safely say that one is not to know the day, or the hour, or the watch, or the year, or the era in which Jesus is to come. The time of Christ's return is deliberately and intentionally left in the realm of the unrevealed. It is presumptuous for people to set out to know what God has plainly declared is not to be known.

Nearly all the fortunetellers play on this carnal longing to know the future. Nearly all the false cults some way appeal to men on this basis. So the coming of Christ must be imminent. No signs need precede it. No preliminary warning comes of the end. No one can know when we are "in the closing days of the age." No one can know even approximately when Jesus will come. We are simply commanded to watch by faith and look for Christ's coming because He said to watch. The Only "Signs" of Christ's Coming Will Be After the Rapture We know from the Scripture that there will be two phases of Christ's coming.

First, He will come into the air to receive His saints. At that time will occur the first resurrection, the living Christians will be changed, and all together will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and taken away for the wedding supper and the judgment seat of Christ in Heaven. On earth, meantime, will be a great tribulation.

Then will come the second phase of Christ's Second Coming, when Christ will return with saints and angels, will appear on the Mount of Olives, with a mighty army of all the angels following Him. He will fight the Battle of Armageddon, set up His throne at Jerusalem, judge the Gentile nations, and reign for a thousand years. **THE ONLY SIGNS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE FOR CHRIST'S SECOND COMING REFER TO HIS REVELATION, WHEN HE COMES TO REIGN ON THE EARTH, IN THE SECOND PHASE OF HIS RETURN.**

That, I believe, becomes evident on further study of the Scriptures.

I have been compelled to alter my previous position. During thirty years of ministry, I found that preaching on signs of Christ's Second Coming did not turn out satisfactorily. I once thought the rise of Mussolini might be a sign that the Roman Empire was about to be restored. I know now I was wrong. I have found that events which seemed very significant at the moment later faded into

insignificance when Christ did not come when expected. I find that more and more false cults and heresies tend to arise out of stressing signs of Christ's coming. I find that preaching on signs of Christ's coming tends to cause people to sin by setting times or dates or approximate dates for Christ's return. More important, I find that the Bible doctrine of the imminency of Christ's coming does not fit with signs, and that in fact, we are not promised any signs whatever of the coming of Christ to receive His saints into the air!

I am convinced that the only signs of Christ's coming mentioned in the Bible are the signs which must occur after Christ comes for His own at the rapture, signs which will occur during the tribulation time or afterward.

1. A Definitely Foretold, Measured, Scheduled Period of Time Like Daniel's Sev-entieth Week May Have Signs of the End; This Unscheduled, Undefined Age May Not The Bible tells us that after Christ comes into the air to receive His saints, there will be a seven-year period called Daniel's Seventieth week. In Dan 9:24-27, we are told that seventy weeks of Jewish history were foretold. We are told, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

Those sixty-nine weeks of years, 483 years, were fulfilled from the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, unto the coming of the Saviour. Then the Saviour was cut off, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the history of Jews as a nation lapsed. But after the rapture of the saints, the Man of Sin will make a covenant with the Jews for this last seventieth week of years. In the midst of that period, after three and one-half years, he will commit the "abomination of desolation" and begin his terrible persecution of the Jews. And this 3 1/2 years, 42 months, 1,260 days, is called "the Great Tribulation."

See how definitely this period of time is outlined in the Bible. The first sixty-nine weeks have already been fulfilled, so we know that really they are weeks of years, or more literally, sevens of years. We do not know whether the prophesied covenant with the Jews by the Antichrist, a cov-enant for seven years, will be made immediately after the rapture, or a little later. But after that covenant is made, anybody left on the earth knowing the Scriptures ought to be able to count and find about when the Lord Jesus would return to destroy the Antichrist and set up His kingdom on earth.

We are told that the abomination of desolation, when the Man of Sin will claim to be God on earth, will happen "in the midst of the week" (Dan 9:27). That will leave three and one-half years as the time when the Man of Sin or Antichrist will persecute the Jews and persecute the saints. This period is called "a time, and times, and the dividing of time," three and one-half years, in Dan 7:25. It is the same 42 months of Rev 11:2; the 1,260 days of Rev 11:3, it is the "time, and times, and half a time," 3 1/2 years of persecution of "the woman," Israel, mentioned in Rev 12:14; it is the 42 months in which the Antichrist will continue, mentioned in Rev 13:5.

Obviously, after the rapture when Christ takes His saints into the air, we shall enter into a scheduled period of time well outlined.

Recently as I rode a Pennsylvania train from Chicago to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, I could tell when we approached Lancaster by the stations we went through. We were at Pittsburgh about nine

o'clock, and I knew we were hours away from our destination. But later we passed Johnstown; we were getting nearer. At Altoona, I knew that time was shorter. When we arrived at Harrisburg, I knew that the next stop of the fast train would be Lancaster. You see, on approaching a scheduled and timed event, one can see the end approaching. In that case there are signs of the end, or milestones.

However, such is not the case in this present age. There are no milestones to go by, saying that the end is coming, because the end is promised to come suddenly, without warning, so that no man can know when it approaches. If the coming of Christ be imminent, that is, that Jesus may come at any time, without any preliminary warning, without any scheduling of previous events, then there can be no signs of Christ's coming into the air to receive His saints. This coming of Christ into the air to receive us is to be as sudden as the coming of the unexpected flood in Noah's day, as sudden as a thief coming in the night, so that the goodman does not know what watch of the night the thief will come. It is to be like a master unexpectedly returning in the midst of the night from a long journey. We are to watch because there will be no warning, no sign, no preliminary events to warn us. For example, if Jesus could have come in Paul's day, and if Paul was right to expect His coming and to teach the Thessalonians to "wait for his Son from heaven" (1Th 1:10), then it is obvious that World War I, or World War II, or the return of the handful of Jews to Palestine, could not be signs of that coming! The coming of Christ to receive His saints is an unscheduled matter, the time is kept secret, and there are no events which can herald the approach of Christ's coming.

We will be saved grief, heresy, and trouble if we will remember the thing the dear Saviour stressed the most, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Mat 24:42).

2. The Signs Promised by the Saviour in the Olivet Discourse Are to Follow the Rapture, Not to Precede It

How many thousands of preachers preach sermons on "Signs of Christ's Coming"! So did I. But I was wrong, because I misunderstood some Scriptures and did not look closely enough to see what they said. In the Olivet Discourse, as recorded in Mat 24:1-51, let us see what questions were asked Jesus and what He really promised.

First, read what Jesus said and the disciples' questions.

"And Jesus said unto them, 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. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Mat 24:2-3).

Note the two questions:

1. "When shall these things be?" that is, the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. Obviously, this happened in A.D. 70, and is already passed.
2. "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The question as recorded in Mark 13:4, is, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?"

Now which phase of Christ's coming is meant in this question? Are the disciples asking about when the rapture will take place, when Christ will come into the air, when we shall be caught up to meet Him? Or are they speaking about His return to reign, when His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, when He shall destroy the enemies of the Jews and set up His kingdom at Jerusalem?

Naturally, Jews would be more concerned with the revelation of Christ, His literal descent to the earth to regather all the Jews and save them and re-establish David's throne at Jerusalem. Throughout the Old Testament the prophecies about Christ's Second Coming are nearly always concerned with this second phase of His return when He is to come all the way down to the earth and regather Israel, save them and restore the Jewish kingdom. The rapture is scarcely mentioned in the Old Testament and we can see why. When these same apostles asked Jesus about His return in Acts 1:6, they said, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" That question is only a few days after this one in the Olivet Discourse. You see, it is the return of Christ after the tribulation, with saints and angels, which is meant here. That is made specially clear because the question has two parts. "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" That means the end of Gentile rule, the times of the Gentiles. And this age will not end at the rapture, but after the tribulation time, when Christ sets up His kingdom on earth. So the sign of Christ's coming mentioned in Mat 24:3 is a sign of His coming in power and glory, bringing us back with Him after the tribulation. That is the way Jesus answered the question, too. Later in the chapter we read:

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

After the tribulation, that is, after we have been caught up in the air to meet Christ and have gone with Him to Heaven, after Daniel's seventieth week is finished, after the tribulation is over, then will appear "the sign of the Son of man in heaven" and people shall "see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." In the tribulation time, anybody who is left here, converted in that time and called to preach, might well preach on the signs of Christ's coming. But now there are to be no signs until after the rapture, and after we shall be taken to Heaven.

3. There Is No Prophetic Significance in the Present Partial Worldly Establishment of a Jewish State in Israel

Thousands of Christians suppose that when a handful of unconverted Jews by worldly methods seized part of Palestine and part of Jerusalem and were proclaimed a separate nation May 14, 1948, that that was a definite sign that Christ must come soon. But they base that teaching on a misunderstanding of what Jesus said in that Olivet Discourse, as I will show you.

Now read Mat 24:29-33 :

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the

earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."

I wanted you to see those verses all together. Note that everything in these verses happens "immediately AFTER THE TRIBULATION." The things prophesied here do not happen before Christ comes to call us out to meet Him at the rapture. Rather, they come after the tribulation time.

Someone says that the fig tree in the Bible always represents Israel; therefore the establishment of Israel as a nation is a sign that Christ must come. But here we see that these words are not for our times at all. The present small and partial establishment of the nation Israel in unbelief is an entirely different matter from the tremendous, miraculous event which is foretold in the Bible. When Christ comes to the earth bodily, in glory, to set up His kingdom, "immediately after the tribulation," His sign will appear in Heaven, and all men shall see it coming.

Then "he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect [Israel, the chosen nation, all the Jews left alive in the world] from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Note that this regathering is to be miraculous, is to be done by the angels of God, and is to be complete. Every Jew in the world will be miraculously regathered to Palestine.

If you will read the Old Testament prophecy of this event in Deu 30:1-6, you will see that every Jew will be re-gathered miraculously, that every one will be circumcised in heart, that is, born again, and all will be brought "into the land which thy fathers possessed," Palestine. But no such miraculous and universal regathering of Israel has yet taken place. The prophecy has not been fulfilled. It will be fulfilled "immediately after the tribulation." What has happened in Palestine is not the prophesied event which will come later, after we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air and when we return with Him to reign. So when we speak of signs of Christ's coming, we ought to mean signs that will occur after we have been caught up with Christ in the air, after the tribulation.

4. Daniel's "Time of the End" Does Not Refer to Our Day, but to the Tribulation Time In Dan 12:4 are these words often misunderstood by those who preach on signs of Christ's coming. We read, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

Many people suppose that the truth about preliminary events before Christ should return to catch away His bride were hidden from people in Daniel's time, but would be revealed in "the time of the end." And such good Christians often suppose that the term "the time of the end" or "the end time" refers to the last few years of this church age, before Christ shall come into the air to receive His saints. But they are wrong. "The time of the end" refers to the tribulation time. In the Scofield Bible is a very clear and helpful note on this question. On page 919, Dr. Scofield says:

"The 'time of the end' in Daniel. The expression, or its equivalent, 'in the end,' occurs, Dan 8:17-19; Dan 9:26; Dan 11:35; Dan 11:40; Dan 11:45; Dan 12:4; Dan 12:6; Dan 12:9. Summary: (1) The time of the end in Daniel begins with the violation by 'the prince that shall come' (i.e. 'little

horn,' 'man of sin,' 'Beast') of his covenant with the Jews for the restoration of the temple and sacrifice (Dan 9:27), and his presentation of himself as God (Dan 9:27; Dan 11:36-38; Mat 24:15; 2Th 2:4; Rev 13:4-6), and ends with his destruction by the appearing of the Lord in glory (2Th 2:8; Rev 19:19-20). (2) The duration of the 'time of the end' is three and one half years, coinciding with the last half of the seventieth week of Daniel (Dan 7:25; Dan 12:7; Rev 13:5). (3) This 'time of the end' is the 'time of Jacob's trouble' (Jer 30:7); 'a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation' (Dan 12:1); 'great tribulation such as was not from the beginning of the world . . . nor ever shall be' (Mat 24:21). The N. T., especially the Book of the Revelation, adds many details." A careful study of the Scriptures mentioned will convince one that Daniel's "time of the end" is the tribulation period, and that none of the things mentioned are signs to us who live now and will be called out to meet Christ before the tribulation begins.

5. The Preaching of the Gospel to All the World Now Could Not Be a Sign of Christ's Coming

Some are wrong in supposing that Mat 24:14 refers to this present time. In my humble judgment, one is entirely wrong to suppose that the present-day preaching of the Gospel in all the world, now, is referred to in Mat 24:14. In the first place, the Gospel has already been preached in all the world, long, long ago, and that is not a peculiar sign of this age. The Gospel was preached in all the world, even in apostolic times. At Pentecost, we are told, "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven," and these had the Gospel preached to them, and in turn they preached it to their people. In Rom 1:8, Paul says, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." If the whole world had heard of the Christian faith of the saints at Rome, then the whole world had heard the Gospel. And in Col 1:5-6, Paul speaks of ". . . the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world . . ." So all the world had already heard the Gospel in apostolic times. In the second place, in Mat 24:14, Jesus clearly had in mind the end of the age, that is, the "times of the Gentiles," and that end of the age, or the end of the world about which the disciples asked in verse Mat 24:3, will not come until after the rapture, after the tribulation, after the return of Christ in glory with saints and angels, and after the battle of Armageddon, with the setting up of Christ's throne. It is during the tribulation time that the Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world, again, and then will come the end of the tribulation and the end of the age. So the preaching of the Gospel now in all the world could not possibly be a sign of Christ's coming.

Some Other So-Called Signs Are Only Characteristics of This Whole Age In His discourse on the Mount of Olives concerning His Second Coming, Jesus gave the disciples plain warning that they should not be deceived about signs of His coming.

1. Wars, Famines, Pestilences, Earthquakes, False Cults Are Characteristics of This Whole Age, Not Signs of Christ's Second Coming When Jesus started to answer their question, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Mat 24:3), this is the warning He gave them:

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours :of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places" (Mat 24:4-7).

Jesus names a number of things here, including wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, etc., but He makes clear "for all these things must come to pass, BUT THE END IS NOT YET"! The things named here are not signs of the second coming. Rather, they are characteristics of the whole age!

We think that modern war is terrible. Actually more people died for the number engaged in the Civil War in America than in World Wars I or II. The Thirty Years' War in Europe was more destructive of life in the area covered than other wars since that time in Europe. The destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish nation a few years after Jesus gave these words was infinitely more terrible than has happened to any single nation since that time. Wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes are simply characteristics of this whole age and ought not to be counted as signs of Christ's Second Coming.

I am very familiar with the interpretation some give that the last two so-called world wars were "global" and that the others before were not. Actually, of course, there is a sense in which the Thirty Years' War in Europe involved most of the nations of the world. The Napoleonic Wars involved Europe, Africa, Asia, and Mexico. The wars of Caesar and of Alexander the Great involved three continents. Then it is equally true that World Wars I and II did not involve every nation in the earth. The difference in the wars was in degree but not essentially in kind. I believe that one has no right to say that Mat 24:6-7 taken at its face value pictures "global wars" that would not picture the wars before World War I. In fact "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" simply states that one nation will rise against another nation, and one kingdom shall rise against another kingdom. There is not even a hint here of a global war as such, or universal war. That very popular interpretation, it seems to me, is stretched to meet the needs of the theory, but that interpretation is not inherent in the Scripture itself. Can you say that a war is global if it does not involve all the nations? Is it total war which leaves untouched the scores of nations in South America, much of Africa, and much of Asia? At very best, the participation of a majority of the nations in the last World War was only a token participation, and did not seriously threaten the nations or occupy much of their manpower or resources or essentially immediately concern their destiny. The war was bad, but so are all wars.

Again, it goes against the context to say that in Mat 24:4-7 Jesus is speaking at all of any signs of His second coming. Only one "sign" was mentioned in the question (Mat 24:3), and only one "sign" is mentioned in Christ's answer (Mat 24:30). The disciples said, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Notice it is only one sign mentioned. And Jesus answers that in Mat 24:29-30. He says, "Immediately after the tribulation . . . then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." So the single sign here discussed in Matthew 24 will occur after the tribulation, and therefore after the rapture.

Neither the question nor the answer referred to the wars, false cults, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes mentioned in these verses, Mat 24:4-7. These verses describe the course of the age, and Jesus plainly says that "for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." They are not to be regarded as signs of Christ's coming. They are simply the marks of the whole age, concerning which Jesus plainly warns us that we are not to be deceived.

2. The Term "the Last Days" in the Bible Refers to this Whole Age, Not Simply to a Few Years Preceding Christ's Coming A number of times in the New Testament, terms are used referring to a certain period as "the Last Days" or "the latter times." People have sometimes supposed that such

terms refer to closing days or years of this age, just preceding Christ's coming into the air for His saints. So 1Ti 1:4, speaking of "the latter times," is supposed to give a sign of Christ's coming. 2Ti 3:1-5 is supposed by some to picture the terrible apostasy just before Christ returns, because it mentions "in the last days." 2Pe 3:3 mentions "in the last days" scoffers who will deny the second coming. This is regarded as a sign that Christ must soon come. But all these inferences are not justified by the Scriptures because the term "the Last Days" in the New Testament refers to this whole age, that is, the New Testament age instead of the Old Testament age. The term refers to this age of the Great Commission, the age of the church, instead of the age of the ceremonial law. That is easy to prove. In Acts 2:14-21 we find Peter standing up at Pentecost and explaining the miraculous happenings of that day. He said:

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass IN THE LAST DAYS, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (vss. Acts 2:16-17. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost partially marks the fulfillment of that prophecy, says Peter, by divine inspiration. So the last days must include the Pentecostal revival, and go on through until "that great and notable day of the Lord" (vs. Acts 2:20). "The last days" means this whole age.

Scriptures that tell of what will happen in the last days or the latter times mean certain characteristics of this whole age.

Again in Heb 1:1-2 we read a definitive passage of Scripture about the "last days":

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath IN THESE LAST DAYS spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

- Jesus Christ's public ministry began the last days.
- The last days included Pentecost.
- The last days go on through this age till "the day of the Lord," as we saw in Acts 2:20.

Thus the Bible passages referring to the last days do not mean a few closing days or years before Christ comes, but the whole age. So the events or conditions mentioned could not be signs of Christ's coming. Further study of every passage in the New Testament with the term "the Last Days" or its equivalent will show that the time then present was meant.

Another interesting passage which bears on this question is 1Jn 2:18 :

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

It was already "the last time" when John wrote his epistle. So the term "the last time" or "the Last Days" or "the latter times" refers to the whole age, and what people have thought were conditions which must immediately precede Christ's coming, are really conditions during the whole age, and have nothing to do with signs of Christ's coming.

Yet Other Scriptures Are Sometimes Misunderstood to Mark Signs That Will Precede Christ's Coming

Perhaps in one brief chapter we cannot answer every question, but there are yet two other Scriptures which have been misunderstood, and so have been used as a basis for preaching the signs of Christ's coming.

1. The "Great Apostasy," Supposed to Come Just Before Christ Returns, Is a Result of a Misunderstood Scripture

2Th 2:1-3 speaks of "a falling away" which is supposed to come before the day of the Lord, that is, before Christ returns to reign. Let us read the passage prayerfully.

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

Some Thessalonians had misunderstood Paul's first letter, perhaps, and they thought that the day of the Lord, when Christ will return to regather Israel and reign on the earth, was to come immediately. No, Paul wrote them by divine inspiration that certain other things must occur first before the reign of Christ.

These things are numbered:

- (1) "the falling away," first;
- (2) "And that man of sin will be revealed."

We are told that these two things must come before Christ returns to fight the Battle of Armageddon, regather the Jews, and reign on David's throne. There must come a falling away and a Man of Sin, the Antichrist, must appear, bringing with him, of course, the Great Tribulation.

Then we are told a little further that "the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed . . ."

Now it has come about naturally that many people thought that "a falling away" mentioned here is a spiritual apostasy. In fact in the margin of the Scofield Reference Bible is a note which says "the apostasy." And that idea comes from a very curious truth. The Greek word here is literally apostasy. The English word apostasy is not a translation, but a transliteration of the word. However, people are misled by this fact because the word in the Greek does not necessarily mean the same as apostasy means in English. In the Greek it means a loosing, a falling away; and so the King James translators properly translated it "a falling away"

It often occurs that when a word goes from one language to another it has a greatly modified meaning. For example, the Greek word *dunamis* came over into the English language as dynamite. But it does not mean dynamite in the Greek at all; it means power and is the word used in Acts 1:8, "ye shall receive power."

Another illustration is our English word impediment. It is really a Latin word, brought over into the English language. But in the Latin it means army baggage, as one who has studied Caesar's Gallic Wars might remember. The baggage was in the way in fighting and so it came to mean an impediment, a hindrance; but that is not the literal meaning in the Latin. So the Greek word for falling away does not mean necessarily apostasy.

Then what does it mean? It seems to me to definitely mean the rapture of the saints. One of these days the pull of gravity that binds us to this earth will be loosed in a moment, and we will be caught up to meet the Lord Jesus in the air. We will literally fall away from the earth to meet Jesus Christ. And this literal meaning fits the Greek fully as well if not better than to spiritualize the word and make it mean a falling away from Christ or doctrine.

Besides, this meaning is necessary. Look again at 2Th 2:3. Two conditions must be fulfilled before Christ comes to reign on earth. Those two conditions are the falling away and the Man of Sin with his persecutions and tribulations for the earth. But what about the rapture of the saints? Must not that come first? If the coming of Christ is imminent, and may come at any moment; if Christ's coming into the air to receive His saints is the next thing on God's program, then certainly the rapture must come before Christ's return to reign. If you make "a falling away" mean Christians falling away from this earth, caught up to meet Christ in the air, then the picture is complete. Without this you have an apostasy coming before Christ's reign, and the Man of Sin coming before Christ's reign, but nothing about the rapture at all!

Yet later in the same passage, the rapture is inferred, because the Holy Spirit is said to now hinder the coming of the Antichrist and his wickedness, until He, the Holy Spirit, be taken out of the way. The Holy Spirit will doubtless be caught up in the bodies of believers, and in that sense, He will no longer hinder the appearance of the Man of Sin. But the rapture is not mentioned as one of the things preceding the day of the Lord unless "a falling away" refers to the rapture, as I believe it clearly does.

How could Christ's coming be imminent, if Christ could not come until the theory of evolution became popular? Or how could Christ's coming be imminent, so that He might have come even in New Testament times, if He could not come before modernism gained such headway in certain American denominations? No, it simply doesn't fit. Apostasy in doctrine is no sign of Christ's coming. There are no signs by which anybody can know when the coming of the Saviour approaches. And 2Th 2:3 says that the rapture itself must precede the coming of the day of the Lord. Properly speaking, the only two things that precede the "day of the Lord" are the rapture and the Man of Sin with all the entails.

Apostasy? It happened in the first and second centuries so that not a single one of the churches mentioned as the seven churches of Asia in Rev 2:1-29 and Rev 3:1-22, now remain. Rome, with all her heresy, developed centuries ago.

- Does any reader believe that the awful apostasy which almost put out the Gospel light for centuries in the Dark Ages was preferable to the apostasy today?

- Does anyone believe that the Spanish Inquisition, the burnings at the stake, the massacre of whole cities and peoples was essentially better than modernism and false cults today? The simple truth is that the tendency of poor, carnal human hearts to fall away from the truth is inherent in the

race and happens in all ages. Apostasy was as much current in the seven churches of Asia as it is current today in American denominations. Those who think that modernism and worldliness are new manifestations have simply not learned from the Bible how wicked is the human heart in all ages, and have not learned from history how depravity thus has showed itself in every century.

Apostasy is not a mark of the close of the age, and has nothing prophetically to do with the second coming of Christ. We are to expect the dear Saviour to come at any time, signs or no signs, because He said He would, and because He commanded us to watch.

2. The Warning of Heb 10:25, "As Ye See the Day Approaching" Told the Jews in Jerusalem of the Near Destruction of the City in A.D. 70

Once I supposed that Heb 10:25 spoke of the Second Coming. It says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." However, on making a more thorough study of the book of Hebrews, I became convinced that this is a warning of the coming destruction of the city of Jerusalem which occurred in A.D. 70, at the hand of Titus and his Roman army.

We remember that Jesus had given most solemn warning of this coming ruin to the city He loved.

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luk 21:20-24). This destruction occurred A.D. 70, about thirty-seven years after Jesus made this prediction.

Later the book of Hebrews takes up the same kind of solemn warning. When the book of Hebrews was written, the temple seems to have been still standing in Jerusalem, the Levites and priests carrying on the regular sacrifices. Heb 10:11 says, "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." Note the present tense of that Scripture. The sacrifices were still being offered in the temple when the book of Hebrews was written.

Note also Heb 7:9 which says, "And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham." The priests and Levites, descendants of Levi, were even then receiving tithes in the temple at Jerusalem. And Heb 1:5 in the same chapter says, "And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law . . ." Note also Heb 13:10, "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle."

Priests and Levites even then, when the book of Hebrews was written, ate of other sacrifices brought to the temple at Jerusalem. So the book of Hebrews was written shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, probably A.D. 64.

Now throughout the book of Hebrews, Jews were being prepared for the final dissolution of all the temple sacrifices and services.

Hebrews tells:

- How Christ is better than angels, - How Christ is better than Moses, - How Christ is better than the high priests of Israel, - How the sacrifice made by Christ once and for all purchased salvation, as the animal sacrifices could not do.

We are told how the new covenant supersedes the old covenant and the old is ready to pass away. Then we are told in Heb 9:1-28, how the blood of Christ is infinitely superior to the blood of goats and calves, and the heavenly sanctuary is infinitely better than the temple at Jerusalem. Finally all this teaching comes to a mighty climax in Heb 10:18, "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." The Old Testament sacrifices are over. The temple will be destroyed, the priesthood scattered, the animal sacrifices offered no more! For now, through Christ, we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, we are told. If you will read Heb 10:18-25 with this in mind, you will see how God brings the subject to the mighty climax. The believers among the Jews are solemnly warned to meet together to exhort one another, to hold fast the profession of faith without wavering, as they see the armies gathering about Jerusalem and the inevitable destruction of it, as foretold by Jesus Christ, about to take place! ". . . so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

Now after building up to the mention of destruction in Heb 10:25, verses Heb 10:26-31 speak of the vengeance of God, His judgment and fiery indignation, and of sinners dying without mercy who have trodden under foot the Son of God. God's vengeance is coming! "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31).

Thereafter, properly enough, the rest of the book of Hebrews leaves off the discussion of the Hebrew temple, sacrifices, covenant and priesthood to speak of the heroes of the faith, of trial, and testing, and martyrdom, and chastening. And the one place which mentions again the Jewish altars and sacrifices is in Heb 13:10-14, which tells these Jewish Christians solemnly, "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (vss. Heb 13:13-14). Jerusalem will be destroyed. These converted Jews will be wanderers on the face of the earth now, without any continuing city, and so they are told that they may bear the solemn reproach of Christ and look for another city, when Jesus comes! A solemn study of Heb 10:25, in view of the whole book, seems to me conclusive proof that when Paul, by divine inspiration, warned the Hebrew people, ". . . but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" he was warning them of the destruction of Jerusalem which Jesus had clearly foretold and which was to occur within a short time. He was not warning of the second coming of Christ.

Nobody will "see the day approaching" when Jesus will come. Multiplied thousands have thought they saw it, but were mistaken.

- Martin Luther thought he saw it when he rushed his book on Daniel into print before the Saviour should come.

- The Millerites thought they saw it with the shower of meteors which they thought fulfilled prophecy and portended the coming of the Saviour.

- "Pastor" Russell thought he saw the day of Christ approaching, and solemnly promised that Christ would come in 1914, but he was mistaken.

No, we do not "see the day approaching" of Christ's coming. But Jews saw solemn portents of terrifying signs that the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed. And the book of Hebrews was written partly to prepare Jewish believers for the utter destruction of the temple and its sacrifices and the scattering of its priesthood. When Jesus said ". . . The kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luk 17:20), He certainly did not mean that people could see His coming approaching, but the contrary, as the context shows. When Jesus said, "No man knoweth the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" He certainly meant that we could not see the day of His coming approaching. The Danger and Harm of Date-Setting and Sign-Watching A deep concern has come upon me as I have seen the results of setting out to find signs on every hand for Christ's coming, and practically setting dates for Christ's return.

First of all, Jesus plainly said not to do it. He said concerning His Second Coming, ". . . It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:7).

Again He plainly said, ". . . The kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luk 17:20). That is, Jesus said, no one can now observe the approach of the kingdom. There are no signs, no preliminary events by which anyone can judge how near is Christ's coming. Surely we must be impressed with the thought that one who seeks to know what Jesus plainly said we were not to know, sins against the Saviour.

Such setting of dates tends to heresy. I call your attention to Jehovah's Witnesses, the Seventh-Day Adventists, the British Israelites, and all the other groups who pretend to know that we are in the very closing days of the age, and who claim they have special revelation concerning it which other cults do not have. The so-called Latter Rain is such a heresy. Currently there is a great turning of heretofore sound Bible teachers to believe that the church must go through the tribulation. They are "restudying prophecy," they say. The simple truth is that they have set so many signs, and then found their prophecies were not fulfilled and Christ did not come, until now many choose to believe that they were right about it being the closing days of the age, but they believe the tribulation time is simply coming on without the rapture, and that saved people will go through the tribulation. In this they sin against the clear Bible teaching of the imminence of Christ's coming.

- All this preaching on signs tends to put the emphasis on the newspaper instead of on the Bible.

- It tends to teach a doctrine depending on sight instead of depending on faith.

- Also, it cultivates a certain sensationalism, a clamoring for attention by bizarre and strange interpretations.

Preachers are spending much time preaching on the atomic bomb, on Russia, on the coming world war III, and political alliances with other nations, on "the kings of the east," instead of preaching Bible truths. How many have accused evangelists of being sensational because they preach on sin, Hell, and judgment! On these, good evangelists ought to create a sensation. But it

is infinitely worse to be sensational about simple worldly current events, trying to give them some eternal and prophetic significance beyond what the Bible speaks. That is wrong. This looking for signs, this preaching that we are in the closing days is a discouraging business. It leads people to believe we can have no more great revivals. It leads to defeatism in prayer and labor. It discourages soul winning. And one terrible result of all this speculation, and theorizing, and sign-finding, and date-setting is that great reproach is brought on the blessed scriptural doctrine of the premillennial return of Jesus Christ.

Let us come back to the Bible emphasis, brethren. Let all of us come back to teach and preach again, and warn our own hearts repeatedly that Jesus is coming, that no one knows when, and that we are to solemnly watch and wait and look for His coming as a matter of simple faith because He said to do it.

Signs there will be in the tribulation time, especially signs for the Jews, ". . . the Jews require a sign . . ." (1Co 1:22). But this day does not require a sign; it requires faithful obedience to the plain word of Jesus Christ. We are to be like the faithful porter waiting to open the door to the returning master, however late his coming. Jesus may come today. He may not come for a thousand years. But we can hope for His coming now, and be ready at any moment while we do His will.

03.15. Get Ready for Christ's Coming

CHAPTER FIFTEEN Get Ready for Christ's Coming

SINCE JESUS is coming, I beseech you to get ready. The wise virgins had oil in their lamps; the foolish had no oil and were left behind. Jesus said, "Be ye therefore ready."

First of all, those who know they are saved should so live that they will not be ashamed before Christ at His coming. This duty of all Christians to be ready for Jesus is expressed in 1Jn 2:28, which says, "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." I know I am saved, and therefore when Jesus comes, I will go with Him. But a child of God who is not on duty, not winning souls, not living right will be ashamed before Christ when He comes.

We will go with Christ to the wedding supper, but we should also remember that we go to the judgment seat of Christ. We must give an account of our stewardship and receive our reward. One for his faithfulness is to rule over ten cities, and another over five cities (Luk 19:17-19). We are to be rewarded every man according to his works. But our works shall be tried by fire (1Co 3:12-15). Our works may be gold, silver, and precious stones, beautiful things that abide, or they may be wood, hay, and stubble, temporary things that will burn and be destroyed. 1Co 3:14-15 says: "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

Even a child of God, saved by the blood, who is caught up to meet Christ in the air but finds all of his works burned up and with no treasures in Heaven, will be ashamed before Christ at His coming. I am not talking now about salvation, for that is forever settled when one believes on Christ. Salvation is given alike to all who trust in Christ and on the merits of the shed blood of Jesus. But after our bodies are glorified and after we are entered into everlasting life, then those who have labored well will have their rewards, and those who have none will be ashamed before Jesus at His coming!

Then Christian, do not waste the hours, but redeem the time, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh!

I recall some years ago in Fort Worth, Texas, a man had lost his little son twelve years old. It had been my privilege to win the boy to Christ, and the mother and father clung to me for comfort in their loss. I remember that the father came to me and told me how he had found the little boy's toys in the garage, lying where he had left them when he went suddenly and unexpectedly home to be with God. Then the father said to me, "Brother Rice, I have just realized that this business that I have built up and all my property and my interests here on earth are nothing but toys. One day I will go away and leave them just as my son left his skates and wagon and ball and bat."

Dear brother, the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal. Jesus is coming! Let us lay up treasures in Heaven while we can, and then we will not be ashamed

before Him when He comes.

Get Unsaved Loved Ones Ready

Several years ago after I had preached in a great church several times on the second coming of Christ, I went through the audience as they waited for a baptismal service, and a woman plucked me by the sleeve. I looked down and the tears were running down her face. Her voice trembled as she said, "Brother Rice, do you think Jesus is coming soon?"

I answered, "I do not know, but I hope and believe that He is. There are many signs that Jesus is likely to come soon. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, I am afraid He is!" she said. "You and others have been preaching on the Second Coming, and I have been reading my Bible, and I am afraid He is coming soon."

"Why are you afraid?" I asked. "Aren't you a Christian? Wouldn't you be glad to see Him?"

"Oh, I am ready myself," she said, "but my husband is lost, and I am afraid Jesus will come before he is saved, and I will have to leave him behind."

I urged the dear woman to do what she could to win her husband now. Her tears and her deep concern over her husband impressed me greatly. We talk about how terrible it would be for a sinner to be left behind when Jesus comes, and that is true. But we must not forget that much of the responsibility is on us. If you who read this have loved ones unsaved, I beg you, do your best to get them saved now. Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). So let us win them while we can.

One of the greatest joys of my heart as I look forward to the rapture and the meeting of Christ in the air is the thought of seeing those whom God has helped me win to Christ. That is what Paul meant, too, when he said in I Thessalonians, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (1Th 2:19).

I want to see Jesus first, of course, see the scars in His hands and kiss His feet. But then I want to see them as they meet Jesus, those to whom God has let me preach the gospel, those whose hands I have taken as they have taken Christ, those who came with penitent tears and surrendered hearts in country brush-arbors, in churches, in tents and tabernacles, open-air and theatre meetings all up and down this land! Oh! what a joy when I see them everyone greet the Saviour to whom I first introduced them in my poor ministry! That is my crown of rejoicing! That is my glory and joy when Jesus comes. And I want to win as many as I can, knowing that my joy and my reward at the coming of Christ will depend largely on how many others I have brought to Jesus. But Are You, Yourself, Ready to Meet Jesus?

It may be that some nominal Christian has read this book, some church member who is not sure he has ever been saved. Perhaps some casual reader has picked up this book who has never claimed to be a child of God and who has never been born again. If so, I beg you in Jesus' name, get ready, get ready, for Jesus is coming! The foolish virgins went out to meet the Bridegroom with no oil, and the door was shut in their faces. Their lamps went out.

Nothing will take the place of the oil of salvation, and I urge you today to put your trust in Jesus. You are a sinner. Your sins have brought condemnation upon you and the greatest of all sins is that you have not trusted in Jesus as your Saviour. John 3:18 says: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

If you have not trusted Jesus, then you are guilty of the same kind of sin as will be the Man of Sin, the Antichrist. The ruin that will come on the Man of Sin may be yours too, for if Jesus comes today and you are unsaved, you will be left behind to go into the reign of the Man of Sin and the Great Tribulation on this earth.

If you are left here when the Christian people are taken away, you are likely to commit the unpardonable sin.

Multitudes will, for every one whose name is not written in the book of life will take the mark of the beast, the Man of Sin; and when one does, he will be forever lost with no chance to escape. When mother and sister and wife are taken away, when every true church is closed, and when every saved person is gone, what will you do? Some will be saved, but many, many more will not. And if you miss the rapture, you miss the wedding feast in Heaven. Then, suppose you should be saved in the Great Tribulation, you would be marked for destruction, for persecution, and torture and death. For the Bible teaches that those who will not take the mark of the Antichrist will not be allowed to buy nor sell, will not be allowed to make an honest living, and will be hunted and hounded and must hide themselves in the caves and mountains because of the persecution. There is everything to lose if you are not ready when Jesus comes. And the most likely thing is that you will lose your soul. It is wicked to delay. The Scriptures say: "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Now is God's time. You can be saved right now if you will in your heart put your trust in Jesus. I hope you will. Nothing can make you ready for the coming of Jesus-not baptism, nor church membership nor moral integrity -no, nothing but being born again, born of the Spirit, becoming a child of God. And you can have that new birth today if you simply trust in Jesus Christ as your Saviour, depending on Him with all your heart. He loves you, and He died for you. Trust Him for salvation and be ready for the coming of Christ.

"Even So, Come, Lord Jesus!" When Handel had finished his oratorio, "The Messiah," and the glorious climax of the Hallelujah Chorus rang in his mind and heart and ears, he was transported with joy, and almost he could see the glorious coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I remember when after five years of toil I completed preparation of a correspondence course on the whole Bible with my lessons on the Book of Revelation. As I dictated the comments on the last two chapters I was so exalted and so thrilled I walked up and down in my study as I dictated. Tears ran down my face, and my voice trembled as I realized a little of the marvel of the glorious rapture of Christians.

What must have been the feeling of the beloved John when on the Isle of Patmos he wrote down the words that were given to him by Jesus Christ? The book of Revelation tells us of the coming revelation of Jesus Christ to all the nations of the earth.

John wrote down the plagues that would come on this earth.

- He wrote down the glorious return and the rapture of Christians.
- He wrote down that august scene of the twentieth chapter when he said, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God!"
- He tells us how the New Jerusalem is to come down out of Heaven to a new earth.
- He tells of a new earth surrounded by new heavens, and how God the Father and the Son are to be forever on this glorious paradise that needs no sun, for they are the light of it, and needs no temple, for they are the temple!
- He tells us how God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and how there shall be no more death nor pain nor sorrow, for the former things are passed away. And then the exultant John, on the highest mountain peak of divine inspiration ever given to mortal man, tells us, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev 22:17).

Then John writes down the solemn warning from God that no man is to take from or add to the words of this prophecy. And then he tells us how the Lord Jesus said, "Surely I come quickly." And finally when the words of Jesus rang out, "SURELY I COME QUICKLY," John answered back with all the inspired passion of his soul, "Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" So my heart cries it today. Come, Lord Jesus, come! The drought of a seared and parched land calls for You! The hatred and bloodshed and disappointment and terror of war call for You! The hungry hearts of Your children bleed! The whole world groans in travail! This earth which was once the paradise of God longs to be made whole! The desert should blossom like the rose! Instead of the thorns should come up the fir tree! From Jerusalem should go out the law! Thy saints should reign with Thee! The meek should inherit the earth! Wrong, now reigning, should be put down!

Come, Lord Jesus, come! Come! Amen!

AMEN JOHN R. RICE Wheaton, Illinois

04.00. The Fullness of the Spirit

The Fullness of the Spirit by Evangelist John R. Rice

John R. Rice (1895 - 1980) Although Dr. Rice served as pastor of Baptist churches in Dallas and Shamrock, Texas--in addition to starting about a dozen others from his successful independent crusades--his primary work was as an evangelist. He was a friend and peer of Billy and Ma Sunday, Bob Jones, Sr., W. B. Riley, Homer Rodeheaver, H. A. Ironside, Robert G. Lee, Harry Rimmer and other leaders of that era. He himself held huge citywide crusades in Chicago, Cleveland, Buffalo, Seattle and numerous other key metropolitan centers.

Called "The 20th Century's Mightiest Pen," Dr. Rice authored more than 200 books and booklets circulating in excess of 60 million copies before his death, about a dozen of which were translated into at least 35 foreign languages.

Preached in union revival campaign in Seattle, Washington, November 7, 1945.

04.01. Before Pentecost

"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." -- Luk 24:46-49

Before Pentecost Jesus told His disciples, 'Do not start any revivals yet. Do not begin to preach yet. Do not try to win souls yet. You are not ready. You tarry in Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high!'

Now the above Scripture is all the more remarkable when you consider that Jesus had taught these men for three and a half years. No preacher ever got as good seminary training as these apostles got under the personal teaching of Jesus. Remember also that Jesus had already risen from the dead, and for forty days had been teaching them concerning the kingdom of God.

Remember, too, that the day He rose from the dead, He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22), and they did receive the Holy Spirit to dwell in their bodies. You recall that Jesus had promised them in John 14:17 that the Holy Ghost "dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Then when Jesus rose from the dead, He breathed on the disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," and they did. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit began the day Jesus was glorified, the day He was raised from the dead. Yet Jesus said to these people who were saved, who were taught in the Scriptures, who were happy, whose faith was restored, these people who had the Holy Spirit dwelling in their bodies, "'tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." He said, 'I have a job for you to do. I want repentance and remission of sins preached in My Name in all the world. You are the ones to go to all nations. You are My witnesses of these things. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.'

04.02. Filling Often Mentioned in the Bible

Being filled with the Holy Spirit was a very important thing throughout the New Testament; yet it is much minimized in the modern pulpit.

Let me call your attention to Luk 1:15-16 the Lord said about John the Baptist, "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God." (Luk 1:15-16) John the Baptist would be filled with the Holy Ghost, would have great revivals, and many of the children of Israel would he turn to the Lord their God. In Luk 11:13 Jesus, teaching His disciples, had said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" We find an emphasis there on the Holy Spirit as a soul-winning power about which we do not hear very much these days.

I have read to you Luk 24:49 where Jesus said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

Now turn with me, please, to the first chapter of Acts. Beginning with verse 1 we read, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem." (Acts 1:1-3) 'Do not start out to hold any revivals. Do not start out to take the gospel to all the world yet. You are not ready yet,' Jesus said. "But wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Now I do not wish to make an issue of the word "baptized" here as if it had some special meaning. If you will allow me, without any controversy, I will say Jesus said, 'You are going to be overwhelmed, you are going to be covered, you are going to be surrounded, you are going to be filled, you are going to be taken charge of by the Holy Spirit not many days hence.' "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." Now Jesus is not talking here about the second coming of Christ and His reign on earth, when He speaks of being "baptized with the Holy Ghost." 'It is not for you to know when. That is not the thing I am talking about,' He said. And that is not what they were waiting for then. No, He said in verse 8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Jesus said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." (Acts 1:8) But I follow on. I want you to see how important in the Scripture is this term, is this matter of the Holy Spirit on people who are

already saved, on people who are already converted, on people who already have the indwelling of the Spirit. There is great emphasis on a special endowment of power, a baptism of the Spirit, a filling of the Spirit, a gift of the Spirit, a pouring out .of the Spirit. All these are Bible terms, and are emphasized throughout the New Testament. In Acts 2:1-47, again we read, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind." (Acts 2:1-2) Now the disciples were not told to wait for a miraculous sound of a rushing cyclonic wind. That was an incidental miracle, and not that for which they were told to wait. "And it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and sat upon each of them." That was an incidental miracle, and not that for which they waited. That was not what God promised. Listen: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The fullness, the baptism, the power, the gift, the endowment of power of the Holy Spirit, is what was promised.

Now in this case they began to speak in several languages. In the Bible the Greek word glossa is translated tongue, and it is translated language. It is here "language" and ought to be so regarded. The next verse says that there were Jews, devout men, out of every nation under Heaven in Jerusalem. There were fifteen different nationalities, and every man in his own language wherein he was born heard these men preaching the gospel. Now if you read further, you will find that three thousand souls were saved.

Let us not be thinking about the incidentals. No one has any right to make anything special of the fact that there was a cyclonic wind. That is not what Jesus promised and it was not repeated again, as far as we know; certainly not always, and certainly not promised. No one has any right to make anything special of the cloven tongues of fire sitting on the people. I do not care if people do have them. They are not promised, and were not repeated in Bible times, as far as we know. Certainly they are not to be expected. No one has a right to make an issue of the fact that in this case people talked in several languages to those who understood the gospel in their own language. That is not the point of the story. That is not what Jesus talked about. That is a special miracle. Someone says, "Here is a Chinaman. He understands only his own language. He cannot understand English." All right, as far as I am concerned, if God gives you the power to speak to him in Chinese and if he hears it and is converted, then that is Biblical; that is Scriptural; that is all right. That would be a miracle. It would be of God. I am not against that. But I say that is not the part God is talking about here. The important thing is that they were filled with the Holy Spirit, that they preached the gospel to everybody they saw, that they had multitudes saved. About three thousand were saved.

I am just going through some Scriptures, and showing you how important in Bible language is this matter of being filled with the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2:1-47, the people said, "What shall we do?" Peter answered them in Acts 2:28-39, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38-39) Notice now that "repent" is for salvation, and "be baptized" is pointing to, or with reference to that salvation. A study of the Greek shows that the word "for" there is really a translation of the little Greek word eis which means "with reference to." So it is not a matter of being baptized to get remission of sins. It is being baptized because of, or pointing to, or with reference to the remission of sins you got when you repented. Baptism does not save anybody. It is a good testimony you have been saved, if you have. Then read the rest of the verse. "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Notice, one repents and is saved. Then

the baptism means a laying of one's self on the altar, a heart obedience to the commands of God, a setting out to live the surrendered and crucified life. And then, "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 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 2:38-39). Now every one who is ever called to be saved is called to have the gift of the Holy Spirit, too, if he will, the Scripture says.

Read on further in the fourth chapter of Acts. Again the disciples met together. Again they needed blessing and power. Again they prayed. Acts 4:31 says, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." "Filled with the Holy Ghost." "Filled with the Holy Ghost." How often repeated!

Tun to Acts 6:1-15. Now the apostles said, 'We cannot continue always helping the widows with groceries and such matters. Look you out seven men, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, that we may appoint over this matter.' And the Scripture says, "And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost . . ." (Acts 6:5). Acts 6:8 reads, "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." Stephen was "full of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 6:8) In Acts 7:55, we see Stephen just before he is stoned: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven," (Acts 7:55) gave his testimony, and Saul of Tarsus was convicted and later converted.

Let us turn further in Acts 11:1-30. There is another man, Barnabas. Do you know what kind of a man he is? Acts 11:24 says, "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." "Full of the Holy Ghost." Now you see the point. The Bible makes much of that term "full of the Holy Ghost," or a synonym, "full of the Holy Spirit," which is used again and again and again in the New Testament.

Now turn with me to Acts 19:1-41. "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples [notice, these people were disciples], He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Now these had trusted in Christ. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). These were converted people. These were saved people. These were disciples who had trusted in Christ. "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Now Christians ought to, along with, or following conversion, have another experience. At conversion one receives an indwelling of the Spirit, but a baptism or filling with the Holy Spirit for soul-winning power and witnessing was needed. Paul referred to this filling.

I am not talking about sanctification now. I am not talking about sinless perfection. I am not talking now about speaking in tongues. I am talking about what God is talking about now. Listen carefully: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Is not that a strange question? "And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." They must have been going to churches whose pastors were afraid to mention the matter, as many of our pastors are afraid to mention it today! 'We have not so much as heard about that,' they said. 'We do not know about it.' "And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized?" I think Paul means this, 'Do you not remember that when Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came on Him, and He started His public ministry and went around filled with the Holy Ghost? Do you not remember when John the Baptist baptized people, that he told them, "I baptize you with water, but he that cometh after

me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost"? Do you not remember at Pentecost that Peter told the people, "Repent! and then you will be saved, but if you want to get the power of the Holy Ghost, then you must be baptized, you must lay yourself on the altar, you must set out to live the crucified life, to follow Jesus even unto death"? Why were you baptized if you did not mean to lay everything on the altar and have the power of God to carry out the Great Commission? You know the Great Commission is that you are to get others converted, get them baptized, teach them to observe everything Jesus taught the disciples, the apostles, to observe. What about that? When they heard Paul say this, they were baptized again. You know, baptism is a picture of a transaction that has taken place. It means the counting of self dead, the reckoning of self to be dead, and the starting out to live a new life. And if that did not happen, if you did not mean that when you were baptized, you ought to be baptized again and mean it.

Now this is the thing I lay on your heart. Here in the New Testament there is an emphasis on a certain experience, if you can call it an experience; an emphasis on a certain blessing, if you can call it a blessing; an emphasis on what the Bible calls being filled with the Holy Ghost. Again and again the Scripture says, "They were full of the Holy Ghost," or "They were filled with the Holy Ghost."

There are other cases in the Bible which I did not mention. In Acts 4:8 Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost. I did not mention Zacharias in the first chapter of Luke where the Scripture says, "Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied" (Luk 1:67) and "Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake..." (Luk 1:41-42) I say, here is a term often used in the Bible. Why don't we preach on it? Why don't we preachers, we Christians, seek this blessing that other Christians had?

There has been much quarreling, lots of fanatical, and I think, unscriptural teaching on this matter. Suppose someone went wrong on the blood of Christ. Does that mean I can never again preach on the blood? Certainly not! Suppose someone goes wrong on paying his honest debts. Does that mean I must never again preach on paying your debts? Must I never preach "thou shalt not steal" if somebody happens to misinterpret that Scripture? Does that mean I must leave it alone? Don't you see how wicked it is to ignore a plain and repeated emphasis throughout the New Testament just because there has been some fanaticism or some misunderstanding on the subject? Don't you see how wicked it is to ignore the plain teaching of the Bible that New Testament Christians again and again were filled with the Holy Ghost when they set out to win souls?

04.03. The Power of the Holy Spirit Promised

Now I am going to ask you the question in a moment, as Paul did, but first I want to give you the promise and command. In Acts 2:39 remember this promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost is to you and to your children: "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." Now that says the gift of the Holy Ghost is a promise to everybody who will ever be saved. There is a promise for you. It is the same thing that Jesus said to His disciples in Luk 24:49 , "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you" -- 'the promise,' 'the promise!' And Peter says at Pentecost, 'The promise is to you, too. It was promised to us apostles. The same promise is to you.' "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem," Jesus said, "until ye be endued with power from on high." That promise of power from on high, the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost, is to you, to your children, and to everybody whom God ever calls. In Eph 1:13 , Paul says, "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise"- the Holy Ghost that God promised you might have, whose power you might have, whose fullness you might have for soul-winning effort. And in Eph 5:18 is the plain command, "Be not drunk with wine." Now the Bible ought to be taken at face value. Here the Word of God commands, "Be not drunk with wine." Then getting drunk is a sin. Let us just take that part of the verse alone. How many believe that getting drunk is a sin? To be drunk with wine is a sin. How many believe that? Let me see your hands. All right. I wonder if you are the kind of a modernist that takes half of a verse and throws the rest of it away? Are you? Well, all of that verse reads, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit". Now I ask you, if violating the first half of that verse and getting drunk is a sin, then is not the failure to be filled with the Spirit the same kind of a sin? Do you think you can say you are a good Christian and take only one-half of that verse? No you cannot. You are not a good Christian until you take all of it. I did not say you were not converted. I did not say that a Christian never gets drunk. It would certainly be wrong to get drunk. It was wrong for Lot. It was wrong for Noah. And it is wrong for anybody else. But I am saying that just because you keep half of that and do not get drunk, that does not make you a good Christian. You are not a very good Christian until you keep all of the verse, including the part that says, "Be filled with the Spirit." You are not given any latitude. You are not left any choice in the matter. You are to be filled. There is the plain command of Jesus Christ, written down by Paul the apostle in the book of Ephesians. "Be filled with the Spirit."

Now let me ask you a question. What did Paul do? Wouldn't it be wonderful if preachers, every time they went to a new crowd, would ask the question Paul asked when he got back to Ephesus and found some converts there? He said to these new converts, 'Wonderful, I am so glad you are saved! That is fine. You believe in Jesus and that is fine. You have been baptized and that is fine. Now tell me, did you receive the Holy Ghost when you believed? Or after you believed, did you receive the Holy Ghost?'

'Well,' they said, 'we did not know there was any such thing as that. We do not understand about being filled with the Spirit.'

Then Paul explained to them, 'If you are saved, if you have been baptized and are saved, that old sinner that you were is dead, and you want to live a new life, and carry out the Great Commission and win souls. Well,' Paul said, 'how are you going to do that? How can you mean that? How can you live that? How can you have that power to do what you are trying to do unless you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, or the filling of the Spirit, or the baptism of the Spirit, or the pouring out of the Spirit?' (If you are sensitive about using those terms, just use the term of Luk 24:49 , "Endued with power from on high.")

I will tell you now, you had better hear me. God's people in this town of Seattle need to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Now, do you want to have revival? All right, I will tell you how we can have it just as they did at Pentecost, just as they did in other Bible times. I say, we can have a revival when God's people pay the price and are filled with the Holy Ghost. Now do not misunderstand me, we can have a marvelous revival if God's people are filled with the Holy Ghost. I want you to think about this a little bit.

04.04. What Pentecost Did Not Mean

I want you to first see what was the secret and principle of Pentecost. What was the meaning of Pentecost? The meaning of Pentecost is simply this: it was an old-fashioned, specimen revival when God's people got power to win souls and won them.

Many have misunderstood the meaning of Pentecost. When you talk about Pentecost, there are many people who think, "Well, that is the time the Holy Spirit came into the world." Oh, no! The Holy Spirit had come on Christians all down through the ages. Every sinner that was ever convicted and saved was done so by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the One who regenerates. And people were filled with the Spirit and witnessed for Jesus before Pentecost. No! No! The Holy Spirit did not just come into the world at Pentecost. Sometimes people talk about the descent of the Holy Spirit as if He had been in Heaven all the time. That is not the point.

Somebody says, "Well, Brother Rice, the Holy Spirit began dwelling in the bodies of Christians at Pentecost." I am sorry to tell you, my friend, but you are mistaken. That is not the time at all. That dispensation began at the resurrection of Christ, the day Jesus was glorified, the day Jesus was raised from the dead. That is when that dispensation began. We read in John 7:37-39, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" At the time of that feast Jesus was not glorified, was not raised up in His glorified body. So the Holy Spirit had not been given to dwell in the bodies of Christians.

Now turn to John 20:19-20 that Jesus came and showed them His hands and His side, then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord, and He said, "Peace be unto you." That is the peace of the blood; that is the peace of the assurance of salvation. "Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you... And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:21-22). Now the disciples, from the day Jesus rose from the dead, from the day He was glorified, received the Holy Spirit; and from that time on every Christian already has the Holy Spirit living in his body.

Don't any of you pray tonight for the Holy Spirit to come into your body. If you are converted, He is already there. Listen to 1Co 6:19-20 : "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." You see, every Christian has the Holy Spirit in his body. And the disciples had that before Pentecost. They had already had that for forty days. The Holy Spirit had been dwelling in them since the day Jesus rose from the dead. And now the Holy Spirit comes in when one is converted and lives in that body.

Now that had already happened to the disciples before Pentecost. Pentecost did not mean the beginning of the indwelling of the Spirit. They already had that. I am not trying to get anybody here

to ask the Holy Spirit to come and dwell in you. When you receive Christ by faith as your Saviour, then automatically the Holy Spirit comes in and makes you a Christian, regenerates you, and you are put into, baptized into, or buried into the body of Christ, and you drink in the Holy Spirit. He lives in your body. You become a part of Christ's mystical body, the church. I say, every saved person already has the Holy Spirit. That is not what Pentecost means. That is not what Pentecost meant to the apostles.

Somebody else says, "Brother Rice, I think that Pentecost means the rounding, the origin, the beginning of the church." Now I would not care to argue with you about it. I think if I had time I could show you that it does not mean that at all. I think if I had time I could show you that that is not when the church began. But I will not argue; you cannot show me a verse in the Bible that says anything about the church's beginning at Pentecost. All right; but suppose it did begin at Pentecost, then let us say nothing about it because that is not what God says, and God is not talking about that. I do not care especially when the church began; I am just anxious that you do not miss the meaning for Christians that God has in Pentecost.

04.05. The True Meaning of Pentecost

What is the meaning of Pentecost? I will show you very clearly. It is not the conversion of souls. These people were already Christians. It is not the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, for He already has taken up His abode in them. The meaning of Pentecost is not the origin of the church. Even if the church began then, the Bible says nothing about it, and the apostles say nothing about it. That was not what Jesus promised. That was not what they were thinking about. What was it? Go back to Luk 24:1-53. There the Lord Jesus said, 'You are to preach the gospel to all nations. You are the witnesses to do it. But wait in Jerusalem, tarry in Jerusalem. I am sending the promise of My Father upon you. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.'

Now what does Pentecost mean? "Power from on high," an enduement of power to do the work God tells you to do. That is what the disciples had. They were given the power to win souls. They were filled with the Holy Ghost to win souls. They had three thousand souls saved then, and they went on wonderfully winning souls day after day. Now do you see the meaning of Pentecost? The meaning of Pentecost is power for soul-winning testimony!

Now let us come to the first chapter of Acts. Here again we have a little resume'. As you know, the book of Luke and the book of Acts were written by the same man, Luke, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, recorded by Luke, "But ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." He did not say that the Holy Spirit will put you into the body of Christ, which is another matter, but that you will be overwhelmed, covered, surrounded, filled, overflowed with the Spirit of God for power. That is what He meant. And they said, 'What do you mean, Jesus? Jesus answered, 'I mean this: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Again, what is the meaning of Pentecost? "Ye shall receive power." Power! I am not talking about the cyclonic wind. That happened, but it was not what was promised. It is not the proof that the Lord is talking about. It is not the thing they are to get on their minds. And we ought not get our minds on it. It was not the tongues of fire sitting on their heads. That happened, but it was an incidental, outward miracle. I say, those outward signs may differ as they did then, but that is not the point. The point is that they are to receive power, to have witnessing power and to get people converted. That is the meaning of Pentecost. It isn't that they were talking in other languages. It happens that some of them did talk in known languages that people understood, and these people heard the gospel in their own tongues in which they were born. That is all right, but that is an incident. It was not promised that it would be specially in these certain particular languages. That is not the point. The point is that they got power to witness for Jesus and to get people saved. They had power. The meaning of Pentecost is power on your witnessing, power on your testimony, power on your soul-winning effort, power for the pulpit and the pew to take the gospel to sinners; in other words, revival power. That is it.

D. L. Moody said, "Pentecost was simply a specimen day." Yes, Pentecost was simply a specimen revival. If we want a revival, let us go back and have it as they did then. How is that? Let us get the power of God on us. Let us get the power of the Holy Ghost. Let us be filled with the Holy Spirit, or have the gift of the Holy Spirit, or be endued with power from on high. As Joel prophesied, and as Peter said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:16-17). Do you see the point of that? I do not care what term you may use. I prefer the term more often used in the Bible which is "filled with the Spirit," but I do not mind the term "baptized with the Holy Spirit," which was used by R. A. Torrey, D. L. Moody, Charles G. Finney, and some of the greatest evangelists who ever lived. The term "baptized with the Holy Ghost" is in some disrepute, however, because it has sometimes been misused. Nevertheless, I do not mind your using that just so you mean what the Bible means, that Christians can have an endowment from Heaven, can have the breath of God upon us, can have a miracle-working power upon us and in us, and we can be filled with the Holy Spirit and can do what God said to do. The meaning of Pentecost is simply the power of the Holy Ghost on Christians, the power of God in and through us to do what He said to do, that is, to carry the gospel to every creature. Remember Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Oh God, give us that grace!

04.06. Soul Winning Only Through the Holy Spirit

The power of the Holy Spirit is the only way to have a revival and the only way to win souls. Someone says, "Brother Rice, how am I going to know whether or not I am filled with the Holy Spirit? How am I going to know whether or not I am baptized with the Holy Spirit?" Well, I will tell you how. It is not going to be very difficult to tell you. In the first place, what are you looking for? What do you want? You say, "Oh, I want to feel as light as a feather. I want to hear angels' wings flapping. I want to see a great light shining around. I want to feel electricity come in my head and run out my fingers and toes." Well, you are talking about something entirely different from what the Bible is talking about. I am not interested in that. If everybody here today were to hear angels' wings flapping, were to see a great light shining, were to feel electric shocks running through their bodies, I would not give the snap of my finger for all that. If God wants to do that, all right. But that is not what He is talking about here at all. If everybody here were to fall under a spell and fall down, I would not be interested in that. That is not what the Bible is talking about. Let God do whatever He wants to do; I will make no complaint. But that is not what the Bible here is talking about. It is talking about being endued with power from on high. Do you see? What do you want? Do you want to know what it takes? Do you want to know what the sign is? What do you want?

You say, "Well, I want to be better than everybody else." That is not the point here. I say this, whatever there is in sanctification -- and there is a Bible doctrine of sanctification on which we might not agree as to all the details--but whatever it is, that is not what happened to these people here at Pentecost. Whatever it is, that is not what God is talking about. God is talking about power to win souls. Now wouldn't you know if you had power to win souls? You say, "What signs? What signs?" Well, listen to this: I tell you, my friend, you can know as I knew last Saturday night when I preached in Portland and sixteen people came to Christ. I knew Sunday night when I came in great weariness after having missed two nights of sleep, after having slept what I could with my clothes on on a bench and on the plane, and then on the straight seats coming up on the train from Portland another night. I came with a good deal of fear and trembling and burden, but God was here and we had a great number of grown men and women saved Sunday night. I knew God's breath was on me. I am not making any boast, for I am not worthy of anything. But I needed no other sign but that.

If we have Seattle broken down and the power of God comes; if Sunday night, or Sunday afternoon or Saturday night, or if tomorrow night, or if any other time the power of God is on me to win souls, I will know. That is what I am talking about. That is what I am praying for. That is its own sign. If you win souls, that is what you want, isn't it? That is the sign itself. What is the sign of the fullness of the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:8 gives it: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." What is the sign? The power! Power to do what? "And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." That is the point. Do you see that? This is the only way to have revival.

I have sometimes thought, Wouldn't Paul the apostle feel good if he had the chance I have to be on the radio so many times! (I have preached so many times on the Christian Business Men's program in Chicago. I have preached, I suppose, on a hundred or maybe more different radio stations. For years I carried on a daily program. And in my revival campaigns I preach somewhere nearly every day of the year on the radio.) My, wouldn't Paul the apostle envy my getting to preach to all those people! Paul, you know, had to walk. And he did not have even a church house in which to preach. He usually preached in the synagogue in a city until he got kicked out of there. He preached on the temple porch. He preached out on the street. He preached in a loft. My, I am so much ahead of Paul! He just did not have opportunities to compare with what I have!

Then there is Peter. I am satisfied that if Simon Peter could have been editor of a paper such as The Sword of the Lord and have 45,000 families read it very week, and have the gospel go out that way with the principal preachers in America as contributors, he would have felt proud. But in his time, he could not do it. Wouldn't Peter have been glad if he could have printed one tract such as my little booklet, "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" If he could have gotten out three million copies of that booklet alone and heard from about 2,400 people who had been saved through that little twenty-four page pamphlet alone, wouldn't Peter have been proud? I am sure ahead of him in opportunity, am I not?

I came to preach here with all of these preachers backing me. Why, I am so much ahead of Bible Christians! Yes, I am -- in the way I am talking about. We have good church buildings, the apostles did not. We have organized Sunday Schools. We have literature. We have degrees and seminary training and help. We are in good standing in the community. Why, preacher brethren, we have everything, don't we? We have so much more than the apostles had. Yes, we have everything but the one thing that counts. We have everything these days except the power of God. We have everything except the power of the Holy Ghost. We have everything except the only thing that matters! Do you see what I am talking about? Our trouble is not whether we have physical equipment. We have that, but it never did bring revival, and it will not bring it now! I would like to have had a larger neutral auditorium for this meeting, but if we had had it, that would not have brought a revival. No! No! We lack the one essential, and that is the power of the Holy Ghost on His people. I do not care what you call it, but you had better have it. Are you filled with the Holy Ghost?

You say, "Brother Rice, I talked to some about coming to the meetings, but I just could not get them here." How many of you have tried to get somebody to the meetings, but they would not come? Let me see your hands. All right. Now what was the matter? You must not have had the power of God on you. How many of you have children, or a husband, or a brother, or a sister, or a mother, or a father, or someone you love whom you have tried to get converted, but you could not do it? Let me see your hands. Now, what is the matter? Is the gospel no good? Is there anything wrong with the gospel? Is that it? Is God dead? Is the gospel out of date? Is the Bible now passe' and not for this age? What is the matter? Or is it simply that you do not have the power of God on you? Now what do you say? Do you see where the trouble lies? Oh, I wish God would help us to believe it and to understand it. D. L. Moody said, "How wicked and how foolish it is to do the work of God without the power of God!"

Oh, in Bible times people had the power! I wish I could preach as John the Baptist did! Do you know why John the Baptist won so many souls? Jesus said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." He preached in the spirit and power of Elias. Do you know why? He was filled with the Holy Ghost, so that many of the people of Israel did he turn to the Lord their God, the Scripture says (Luk 1:16). That is the only way anybody could ever have a revival. Do you know how the Lord Jesus won souls? I remind you that you cannot find a word about Jesus' winning souls until He was thirty years of age. He lived a perfect, sinless life. But from the time Jesus was baptized and prayed and the Holy Ghost came upon Him, He went with the Spirit of God on Him, with the power on Him. And oh, the marvel of His gracious words! He was endued with power from God. Jesus is, of course, the Son of God; but He emptied Himself of His glory as the Second Person of the Trinity, and then came in the power of the Holy Spirit to preach. He loved to call Himself the Son of man. He made Himself a model for us. Jesus did His miracles and His wonders in the power of the Holy Spirit. Do you know how it was at Pentecost? They waited. They all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women and with Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren. They waited and prayed until they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; then they won three thousand souls in one day. A ten days' prayer meeting! We preach ten days and try to pray an hour; then we wonder why we do not have a revival. If we would pray ten days and then have one good day of preaching, we would have something happen here. Don't you see that?

What is the trouble these days? Listen to me. Lay aside your talk about fanaticism. Lay aside your talk about signs and wonders. Let me ask you a solemn question. Do you believe you are filled with the Holy Spirit? Listen to what the Bible says: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? If you are not what excuse do you have? Jesus commanded that. The Bible commands that. Christians ought to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is a joke to you about coming to the choir; it is a light matter to you about bringing somebody with you to church because you are not filled with the Holy Ghost. You have not the burden and passion He would give you. That is why your loved ones do not come. When you talk with them, nothing happens. That is why your own children do not believe in your religion. That is why you do not have boldness and fire and power in your witnessing. What we need is for the Holy Spirit of God to have His way with us. Revivals, I say, come through the power of the Holy Spirit and no other way. In 1936 I drove, with my family, through New York City. We saw many of the interesting sights. We went down to the Battery and saw the Statue of Liberty. We saw the aquarium. We saw Fifth Avenue. We saw Brooklyn Bridge. We went over the George Washington Bridge. We went through the Holland Tunnel. We saw Riverside Drive, Riverside Church, Grant's Tomb, the Little Church Around the Corner, the lower east side -- we saw all those things. Then we drove down Wall Street. As I sat looking down that little narrow canyon of a street only two or three blocks long, I choked up, and tears filled my eyes. I said to my children, "There is the financial center of the world." But that was not what I was thinking about. There was the stock market. There were J. P. Morgan's headquarters. The financial center of the world was down that little short block and that little narrow street, but that was not what I was thinking about. I remembered that D. L. Moody came once to seek some gifts for one of his schools. As he visited from office to office, he said, "Oh, my heart was not in the begging for money. I was thirsty for something else!" Down there in that little narrow street the Spirit of God came on him in power, and he was overwhelmed. Somebody with him said, "Are you sick, Mr. Moody? Shall I call a doctor?" "No! No!

Leave me alone! Leave me alone!" "Well, what shall I do?"

"Don't do anything. Leave me alone!" "Well, how can I help?"

"Get me in a room, and get everybody' out and leave me by myself!"

They put him in a room and he said there the waves of God's power seemed to overwhelm him and overflow him and run over him. Finally Moody said, "Lord, You will have to stop or I will die! I've got all I can hold! God, it is about to kill me!" Later he said, "I would rather lose everything in the world than to lose what I got then!" When he went to preach he said he used the same outlines, he used the same Scripture; the preaching wasn't any different. But where there had been seven or eight saved, now there were hundreds! The difference was in the power! Do you know D. L. Moody's secret? It was not personality. It certainly was not education. He said "ain't." He mispronounced many of his words. He had gone to about the fifth grade in school. What was the secret of his power? He was filled with the Holy Ghost. That was it! That is the Bible term "filled with the Holy Ghost."

Oh, how God's power came on Charles G. Finney! Soon after he was converted, he would go to meetings and take time off to pray all night, and the power of God would come on him. One time he walked into a mill, and a girl there saw him. She suddenly began to tremble and could not do her work. Then she began to sob and fell down on her knees and began to cry. Other workers felt the power of God so that they could not go on with their work. The unconverted mill owner said, "Everybody stop the machinery. Better have the power of God on us than to have the mill running. Mr. Finney, preach to us." He did, and many were saved. Why? Because the power of God was on him. That is it; the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit. That is what we need. That is what R. A. Torrey had. That is what made great soul winners. The power of God is what we need. You cannot explain Billy Sunday with education. You cannot explain Billy Sunday with brains. His sermons were good sermons. Most of them he did not write himself but hired a man to work with him getting material. Then this man helped write out the sermons and Billy Sunday memorized most of them. But even at that, they were not profound. It was not Billy Sunday's brains. It was not education. He had a good personality, but it was not personality. The truth of the matter is, there came a time that when Billy Sunday preached he did not have the crowds, he did not have the power, he did not have people saved. I knew him in those days. What I am saying is that the secret of the great revivals always has been one thing, a supernatural enduement of the power of God on His people. God's people had the power of the Holy Spirit. They were filled with the Holy Ghost. That is the point. I say, that is God's secret for revival.

04.07. How to Be Filled With the Holy Spirit

Now I come to the last point, and that is this: how to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I want to give two or three preliminary things before I tell you how. In the first place, I want to remind you again that this is commanded. This is not to be left up to your judgment. Anyone who is not filled with the Holy Spirit just is not in the will of God. Anyone who is not filled with the Holy Spirit is living a life of disobedience, a life more or less of fruitlessness. The reason you are not winning souls is that you are disobedient, is that you are not seeking and not having upon you the fullness of the Spirit of God.

I remember back in World War I when I was acting corporal, we were out on the parade ground. The squads broke up and I had my squad out there with the close order drill. "Forward, march! One, two, three, four"; and, "Squad, right! March!" We marched back and forth. I would drill my little squad. After awhile the captain, the commanding officer, came up. I was embarrassed, and so I said, "Halt!" My squad halted awkwardly, shifted around, tried to line up and come to right attention. The captain looked them over and said to one fellow, "Button that button on your blouse." To another he said, "Hold your chin up." Then he told me a thing or two. When he got ready to go, he said, "Say, what was that command you gave as I came up?" I said, "Sir, I said 'Halt!'" "Was that correct?" he asked. I replied, "No, Sir, it was not." "What should you have said?" "I should have said it in two counts, 'Squad, halt!'" "Why didn't you?" "Sir, I was scared." "Well," he said, "the next time do it right." As he started to leave, I saluted and said, "Thank you, Sir!"

He turned to me sternly, looked me through, then said, "Don't thank me. I'm not giving advice; I'm giving orders!" So in this matter I am not just giving you good advice: "It would be nice to be filled with the Holy Spirit." I mean to say the shame of God's people is that you are living in sinful disobedience as long as you do not have the power of God on you. I mean the shame, the sin that is damning your hundreds of thousands, your nearly 600,000 in the greater Seattle area, is that you have churches that are filled with everything else but the Holy Ghost. That is the trouble. Your children are going to Hell because you are not filled with the Holy Ghost. You talk to people; it does not do any good. Why? Because you are not filled with the Holy Spirit. Year in and year out Sunday School teachers have unsaved children in their classes but never get them saved. Why? Because they are not filled with the Holy Ghost. Your own children grow up to the years of accountability, and year in and year out you never win them. Why? Because you are not filled with the Holy Ghost. We preachers, God forgive us preachers -- I am for the preachers; I do not mean to be critical of them -- do you know what is wrong with us preachers? We have nearly everything in the world; we have good training; we have degrees; we have good organization; we have good literature; we have good equipment; we have everything except the important thing, that is, the power of God, the power of God!

"Well," you say, "I wish I were filled--" Wait a minute. Do you really want to be filled with the Spirit? I warn you now, it will cost you something. Do not say that unless you mean you are willing to die. Do not say that unless you are willing to be scorned, hated, thought a fanatic and a fool. Do not

say that unless you mean to pay a price for it.

Remember in Isa 44:3 the Lord says, "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Once I was reading a book by D. L. Moody. Moody didn't do what I do in my books: he didn't give the Scripture references. In one of his books he said, "God says, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty.' "I said, "Oh, my! That is sweet to my heart! I wonder where that is." I got my concordance and looked until I found over in Isa 44:3 , "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Are you really thirsty? Oh, unless you are thirsty, unless your heart cries out, you are not going to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If you do not mean business you will not pay the price. You will not pray long enough. You will not be content to give up the favor of man to have the power of God. You do not mean it unless your heart thirsts for God and thirsts for His power with a deep desire for souls. Do you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit? If you really want to, two conditions must be met. One of them is obedience. I do not mean just to set out to go through a certain rigmarole. I mean obedience such as Jesus showed when He came to die, when He was baptized, when He prayed in the garden. The two things are in there. Peter said in Acts 5:32 , "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." Obey Him? "You mean as the apostles did?" you ask. Yes. They were slain one way or another. Peter was crucified head downward, we are told. And another, I think, was boiled in oil. And another was dragged behind a horse and killed. John, an old, old man, past ninety, was exiled on the Isle of Patmos for his faith. "Do you mean like that? Do you mean follow Jesus if it kills you? Do you mean give up your own plans and dreams and count self dead, and live a new life?" That is exactly what God means. Are you ready to lay self on the altar, count self dead, crucified? And when self is crucified, will you come and follow Jesus, do what He says about soul winning? That is the kind of obedience the Bible is talking about. If you are not setting out to win souls with a holy passion, you do not mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You may want some ecstasy, but you do not want what God wants to give you. You are not going to have it unless you are after what God is after, and that is the conversion of sinners and the power of God to witness to them. The thing that God said He wanted you to have He will give to you if you will use it for what He wants you to do. He commanded you to go and preach the gospel, to go carry the gospel to sinners, to get people saved. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me." If you do not plan to witness for Jesus with the power, if that is not your point, if you do not mean it, if you are not obedient, then you will not have it. You do not have the first requirement. Obedience even to death; even a self-crucifixion. Are you ready for that? That is why it takes so long sometimes. Why did it take ten days of waiting before Pentecost? It is an over-simplification merely to say that the day of Pentecost had not come. Jesus had not promised that the power would come on the day of Pentecost. No, the real truth is that they needed plenty of time to confess their sins and judge their hearts and make things right with one another, and to wait on God.

And. what is the second requirement? To ask God, to keep on waiting on God. That is what Jesus meant in Luk 11:13 , "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" If you will give yourself wholly to the Lord and wait on Him, you may have His power. "Ye have not, because ye

ask not." We have not the power of God because we ask not. We have not a Pentecost because we do not seek it, because we do not believe it, because we do not want it, because we do not pay the price for it. We can have it. "Ask?" you say. Yes. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." That is the way they got Pentecostal power. That is the way they got the baptism or the fullness of the Spirit. That is the way they had the enduement from Heaven. That is the way they received the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, or the gift of the Holy Ghost. They waited with pleading, burden, confession, begging God, prayer, supplication, and in due time the power of God came. Are you filled with the Holy Ghost? I wonder how many here are contented with the life you are now living. Are you contented to go through life and never win a soul? God have pity on these seat-warming church members, these good-paying church members, these choir-singing church members, these official-board church members, these Sunday-School-teaching church members! Is that all there is to being a Christian? Why, no! What God wants is for you to be a Spirit-filled soul winner with the power of God on you. What does it matter, all the "do," "do," "do," "do"? Why, that is an abomination to God; just machinery within machinery, and wheels and wheels; just clanking, sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. What does God care about that? God does not care how much machinery you have in your church, how many ladies' meetings, how large a Sunday School, how much money you raise. That is not of interest to Him. If it does not result in one main thing, that you really have the power of God on you and get people converted, God is not concerned about it. You say, "I gave some money to missions." Yes, I know. But do you think God is broke? Do you really think that the God who made the universe wants a little silver or some paper with the United States stamp on it? Do you think that is what God wants from you? That ought to be given as a type, as a token, as a picture, as a reminder of your love, certainly. You need to give of your means. But God does not need to receive your money. That is not what He wants. Primarily God wants your life, your hands, your feet. God wants your heart. God wants self on the altar. He wants self made over and anointed and endued so that you can be a soul winner.

04.08. Are You Filled With the Holy Spirit?

Let me ask you this question, again. Are you filled with the Holy Ghost in the Bible sense? Do you really believe you have what Bible Christians had? Do you have what John the Baptist had when he was filled with the Holy Ghost so that much people of Israel turned to the Lord their God? Do you have what Barnabas had? He was a good man, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and people were added to the Lord as a result of Barnabas' ministry. Do you have that? Do you have what dying Stephen had? He was full of the Holy Ghost and faith. Multitudes of men and women believed. Do you have, I ask, what these Bible preachers and Bible laymen and Bible women had? Do you have the fullness of the Holy Ghost? "Daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). And the power; why, it spread like wildfire. And Jerusalem was turned "upside down." That is what they said, "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine" and that Paul "turned the world upside down." I wonder, do you fill Jerusalem with your doctrine and turn the world upside down as they did?

We would not need to do so much advertising if we had a little more to advertise. We would not have to work so hard to get a crowd if we had anything to give the crowd when they came. Do you believe that? Our trouble primarily is with the people of God; our sinful carelessness, our powerlessness. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" Jesus said (Mat 5:13). Do you have saving power in you? Then what good are you as salt? "Ye are the light of the world." But if your light does not shine to sinners, what good is it? Do you see that? I wonder whether or not you are satisfied to go on never filled with the Holy Ghost? Are you?

How many can say, "Brother Rice, in the month of October," -- that is just one month past now -- "within the last thirty days I thank God I have won at least one soul"? Let me see your hand. I want to help you now. We are not bragging. All right. Now how many can say, "Brother Rice, sometime in the year 1945, I have won a soul"? Let me see your hand. Some of you have. But some of you have not had power to win one soul this year. How many can say, "I haven't won souls this year, but sometime in my life I have won at least one soul"? How many here have at least some time in your life taken the Bible and shown somebody how to be saved, and gotten them saved? How many have walked with someone down the aisle, have gotten them to trust the Saviour and confess Him? How many have led someone to Jesus? How many in your life ever did that? Hold your hand high just a minute. Thank you.

Now I want you to see several things. The first thing is that there are probably more than half of this crowd who never were filled enough with the Holy Spirit in the Bible sense to win even one soul by their own testimonies. And here is another thing. Many of you who did win a soul one time have not won one in a year's time. Now that means that you have lost some freshness, some power, some blessing that you once had. You need to be filled with the Holy Spirit anew, don't you? Some of you have won souls in the year, but you have not done it in thirty days. God help you! What is wrong when a Christian cannot win one soul in a month's time? It must be you are not

filled with the Holy Ghost!

How many preachers are present? God bless you, you are my friends. I will not make it embarrassing for you. Now let me ask you something: Preachers, haven't you felt this -- I have some time or another -- haven't you sometimes felt a holy breath of God on you? These are evangelical preachers. These are men who believe the Bible. These are soul-winning preachers. You preachers know what it is to have the breath of God upon you. You knew when you had it. You knew when the power was there, when souls were converted, when there was fruit to your ministry. You have known that, haven't you? How many of you can say, "Brother Rice, bless God, I do know I have had that sometime or another"? I say humbly, I know I have. Let me say this now for all of us. How many will say, "Brother Rice, I want to confess that now I do not have the fullness of blessing I ought to have. I am not filled with the Holy Ghost as Bible Christians were. I do not have the power I ought to have, that God could give me if I paid the price"? Will you say, "I want to confess that"? Most of us here ought to. Would you say, "I want to confess that though I have had God's blessing and great power sometimes, I feel I ought to confess I do not have now the fullness of God's power on me as I ought to have, and I need to be filled anew with the Holy Spirit"? Let me see your hand. I am holding mine. God bless you.

Now how are you going to get it? I would go home and I would say, "Lord, I am going to search my heart and have a house cleaning. First, I am going to set out to do the will of God about soul winning." That is the main thing Jesus died for. That is the main thing the Great Commission is for. After you are saved, that is the thing God wants you to do more than He wants anything else in the world. I would say, "I will give myself to do the will of God, I will get ready for it, I will clean house, and I will be surrendered to it. I will!" I would do that and set out to be what He wanted me to be in soul winning and I would say, "By God's grace, I am going to wait on God until I am filled with the Holy Spirit's power." My people, if you do not listen to me now, we have two of the saddest weeks before us we have ever spent. We have heartsickness and failure and shame to face if we do not have the power of God on us. Now you hear me. Don't anybody here believe that is a thing for one preacher to have and that everybody else may be seat warmers and hangers-on. Don't believe the cup may overflow and you may get a little splashed on you. At Pentecost "they were ALL filled with the Holy Ghost." That is the Bible pattern. It is not just for one preacher, not just for one man. "And they were ALL filled with the Holy Ghost" -- that is the pattern in Acts 4:31 . Do you see that? God has commanded that for you as much as He commanded it for me. It took as much of the blood of Christ to keep you out of Hell as it did for me. God commands you to be filled with the Holy Spirit just as He does me. If we do not have the power of God, we are going into that big auditorium Sunday with small crowds, with mediocre services, and with few results. If we do not have the power of God, an anointment from Heaven, we will come here with a crowd that dwindles and wanes, with boredom in the air, and defeat upon us. Do you see what I mean? We ought to wait on God, then. Do you want the power of God enough to wait on Him, to clean house, to surrender to His perfect will, to get things out of the way, and then wait and plead with God until His anointing comes upon you, until His breath comes upon you, until you get power for soul winning?

Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could go to that boy of yours and talk to him and he would be all broken and would come when you say come? If you could go to your brother, or your business partner, or somebody you know, and they would be broken up and the Spirit of God would cut them to the heart as it did in Bible times when Spirit-filled Christians talked to sinners, wouldn't that

be wonderful? Do you want a Bible revival? You cannot have it without Bible power, the power of the Holy Ghost? That is what we need. God forgive me that I have not preached more about it. God forgive me that I have not sought more of His power and fullness. God forgive me that I have not put the emphasis all the time where the Bible puts it; that the people who had revivals were filled with the Holy Ghost. People who won souls were filled with the Holy Ghost. We can have this power too. But we will have to come the same way, with the same wholehearted obedience, with the dying of self day by day, and then waiting on God for His power as much as is necessary. "Tarry until . . ." "Tarry until" what? Ten days ? No! No! "Tarry until ye be endued." That is it. "Tarry until ye be endued with power."

D. L. Moody said he waited two years. I know I have had some anointing, but again and again I need a new fresh breath of God on me. I want you to pray for me.

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