

E-Herald of the Coming Kingdom

"The time has come, and the Kingdom of God is near. Change the way you think and act, and believe the Good News."

Mark 1:15 GW

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Giving Thanks

Our Thanksgiving Day

The Day of the Lord in Zechariah

Will He Find Faith on the Earth?

The Threat of Amillennialism

**Dedicated To Spreading The Good News
Of God's Coming Kingdom To Be Established When Jesus Returns**

EDITOR'S NOTE

Co-Editors: Wally Winner - Kent Ross



Here in the States, we have been occupied with politics as the elections have approached. Many of our early leaders questioned whether or not they ought to be involved in the world's systems and I respected and respect those who chose not to vote. On the other hand some have felt an obligation to vote feeling that the old adage about the "only thing necessary for the triumph of evil was that good men did nothing."

Be that as it may, it has occupied much of the news we see, hear and read. Sadly it is so negative, so many sordid details are leaked about all the candidates, dirty, lying tricks are done to make negative news bytes, that most of us here are thoroughly sickened and are soooo anxious for it to be over. And whatever the results here, or in Britain, or Australia, or wherever people are allowed to vote, it is still men and women for whom we vote, with then the sad expectation of failure for winners, and it seems we will again be losers.

But it is also true that things such as national elections occupy us to the extent that we take our eyes off the skies. We may very well be approaching the end of time, and Jesus told us to "watch" and the Scriptures tell us to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem." Islamic leaders are looking for their "12th Imam," a Messianic figure, who others see as being or representing the anti-Christ, He is to come in the midst of a time of war, which is justification for Iran's nuclear program and threatening posture toward the west AND Israel.

As these "signs" come to pass, we need to be diligently concerned about "evangelism." There are people hungry for a good word of a Coming Righteous Kingdom. True many aren't interested, but some are, and they need to be "snatched from the flames." Right now our national organization is under real financial stress. A mighty effort is being made to right things, and those involved are to be commended for their efforts.

But "evangelism" is being diminished. But it is not the national organization that is down-playing its significance. We ought not to be looking to them before WE do our part. It isn't on a national level that people are brought to faith. It is in our local churches. It is from among us!

God will take care of national and international politics. He will handle it in His time and in His way. It is our task to "Go and make disciples." That's our task and it seems to be being minimized. Several years ago, I remember reading of one church that had as one of its goals for that new year to reach "one" person. While that saddened me, I also realized that some, maybe many, would see this as a reasonable goal.

Yes, it is God that gives the increase, but we are the ones to sow the seed. There are countless opportunities for sowing the seed through the Internet and other technologies. Those are wonderful, BUT as wonderful as they are, it was to us . . . common people, such as fishermen, tax-collectors, you know, common folk that Jesus charged with continuing His mission of proclaiming the coming Kingdom of God.

There are so many places in our world where persecution of Christian is becoming endemic. Christians are being killed. Homes of Christians are being destroyed, families, especially women are being brutalized, and even children are suffering terribly by those who do not respect Christ, not Christianity . . . even those who believe there is but one God.

Pray, Pray, Pray . . . and Love and Teach and Watch! He is coming!

The articles in this issue of the E-Herald are to enlighten and encourage you in the faith of Abraham. Some need to be studied, some read for pleasure, some with joy, but all will be a blessing.

A special thank you to our writers who give so generously of their spiritual insights. We welcome your submissions. Send to kenthross@gmail.com



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Some Thanksgiving Blessings

The Priscillia Organization of the Church of God is made of the spouses of the Church of God Pastors. The Priscillas are presently involved in gathering a listing of 100 Blessings from their group. Here is a sampling from a couple of Priscillas.

Susan Cain

- 1) My new teaching position to inner-city children;
- 2) Our church's new building is underway;
- 3) Amber's college experiences at ABC;
- 4) Mine and Alan's 25th anniversary is in December
- 5) Knowing that Father will take care of those I love always

Paula Kirkpatrick

The wedding of our son.



WILL HE FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH?



By Paul Rankin


Jesus concluded one of his parables in Luke 18:8 with the words, “Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes will he find faith on the earth?” What does our Lord seem to imply in his question? Will Jesus find any faith on the earth when he comes? Will faith be totally lost?

Jesus gave us a hint about the condition of faith upon the earth in the last days when he said. “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of man be’ (Matt. 24:37-39). Jesus draws a parallel between the last days before the flood and the last days before the Son of man returns, giving us an understanding of what we can expect.

In the days of Noah (Gen. 6:5,11,12), God looked down from His place in the heavens and “saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually . . . the earth was corrupt before God and the earth was filled with violence. . . all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.” These days of Noah were over 4,500 years ago, but how many of us, when we read that description, wonder about today’s world society, its vain imaginations and all the violence? How much worse will it get? How will our faith be put to the test? Will we lose our faith?

Let’s look at Noah for a moment. Noah had a heavy burden to bear. In the middle of a very perverse society, he was a follower of the one true God, a preacher of righteousness proclaiming impending judgment. He also was a husband and father and an example to three sons and their wives. He was able to walk before God as a just and upright individual in spite of all that was around him. Imagine teaching and training children while surrounded on all sides by such great wickedness. That would seem to be a losing prospect, yet Noah was able to do it by keeping his faith in God. You would think that Noah would feel small, insignificant alone, but he worked through it knowing that God was true to his word. I picture Noah much like his descendant Lot, as a man “vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. . . [and it] vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds,” but yet he knew that “the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations” (2 Pet. 2:7, 8). We too should be distressed by the sin we see around us, but know that God is always with his faithful.

Hebrews 11:7 states that Noah saved his household by his obedience and faith. Do we ever think in terms of saving our own households and our own families based upon our faith and upon our actions, as Noah did? In 1 Tim. 4:16, Paul reminds Timothy to “take HEED unto thyself, and unto the DOCTRINE, continue in them: for in doing this you shall SAVE yourself and those who hear you.” How important do you think it was for Noah that his family heard the true message, doctrine, teaching about the impending judgment? What sort of opposition was there to the truth of



Noah's message? Enough opposition that only eight out of the whole world were saved. How important is truth then in God's saving plan?

Hebrews 11:6 mentions this important fact, that "without faith it is impossible to please him, for he who comes to God must believe that HE IS and that he rewards those who diligently seek him." So many people today do not even believe that God actually "is" that he exists as the Creator of this universe. A day is coming, though, when all the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD, but those who refuse to have faith today will experience weeping and gnashing of teeth. We cannot be pleasing to our God if we do not truly believe in him or his plan for salvation through His begotten Son. Accepting him is to listen and hear clearly what he asks of us as his followers.

Jesus said the gates hell would not prevail over the church (Matt. 16:18). In other words, Christ's church and the faith in that truth and the coming kingdom would not cease to exist. However, 2 Pet. 3 informs us that scoffers, the ones who lack faith, will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." These words probably sounded similar to the scoffers who heard Noah's preaching of the coming flood. We must recognize that faith and truth are going to be in short supply in these last days before Jesus returns, but it will survive and remain in the earth until the coming of our Lord Jesus. Paul says in 2 Thess. two that there will be a failing away from the faith, from the truth, from within the church, and that this "mystery of iniquity" was already at work in the apostles' day. The reason Paul gives for this departure is that "they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Despite this, Paul tells the church in verse 13 that "God has chosen you to salvation through the sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth." Each individual, each follower of Christ, needs to have "the love of the truth," the true message, the true teachings of God's word, thereby being sanctified, made holy, and set apart by that truth, just as Noah was. Paul again says in 1 Tim. 4:1, "that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils . . . [But] if you put the brethren in remembrance of these things, you shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto you have attained." A good minister or a good servant of Christ is only concerned with the truth and with the faith that Jesus and his Apostles taught. It's the only solution Paul gives for combating any sort of departure from the faith and protecting against devilish teachings.

Peter draws an interesting parallel between the saving of eight souls during the flood and the saving waters of baptism, which should not be just an outward show of renewal, but of an "answer of a good conscience toward God," or in other words, a true acceptance of God's word from the heart and mind of each individual. Faith, though, requires works, just as Noah's faith required him to build the ark that would save him and his family.

One of the first works of faith for the Christian is baptism. Baptism shows openly to others that you have faith and that you are willing to renew your life, changing your ways from worldly to godly. However, faith and works do not stop at baptism. Faith must continue to grow from that point forward. As Peter says, "add to your faith." James 2:17 mentions that true faith without works is dead, but by works faith is "made perfect." So it is extremely important for us to be living our faith and continuing to increase, grow, and add to our faith, not by our own endeavors or works, but by the works that God has ordained us to do (Eph. 2:10). The blessed man is not "a

forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work” (Jas.1:25). “This is a faithful saying, and I will that you affirm constantly, that they who believe in God might be careful to maintain good works” (Titus 3:8). Faith must be about maintaining good works or it is vain.

The moral decay of this present evil age has historically caused God’s church to stand out, and standing out is not always an enjoyable experience. The Apostles exhorted the early church to “continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). Paul said his faith was a struggle and a fight, but he looked forward to his precious reward. He said “I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also who love his appearing.” With this sort of mindset, enduring tribulations and the testing of our faith can be counted as joy, knowing all the while that the coming reward is so much greater.

We need to prepare ourselves to stand firm in our faith, just as Noah did, no matter what troubling situation may present itself in these last days. Paul told Timothy that the days ahead of them were going to “wax worse and worse,” with “evil men and seducers deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13). Paul tells Timothy not to give up on what he has learned from the scriptures. Paul says that the man of God, which Timothy aspired to be, will be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works,” if he believes the Bible is “given by inspiration of God,” and that he use it to profit “for doctrine [teaching and learning], for reproof [refuting error], correction, [and] instruction [training] in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). Paul’s words were not to be taken casually by Timothy, either, for Paul says “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine [sound teaching], but after their own lust [desires] shall they heap [acquire] to themselves teachers, having itching ears [to teach what they want to hear rather than the truth]; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” God’s church must stay prepared and vigilant by exercising its faith.

Remember when Jesus said that in Noah’s day they “were eating and drinking and marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark.” Certainly these things are not in and of themselves sin, but they describe the social complacency that was prevalent in everyday life. Everyone was going about their daily lives without much interruption from the normal routine, yet something was missing. Missing was the fear of God and belief in the truth about His coming judgment. Even though Noah had told them well in advance of that future day, they remained self-ignorant because they “knew not until the flood came and took them all away.” There is no excuse for ignoring God’s warning, for He is described as patient, longsuffering and desiring that “all. . . be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1Tim. 2:4).

As the apostle Paul exhorts, we are not to be darkness, that the day of our Lord’s appearing should overtake us as a thief in the night. Let us remember and pattern our lives after Noah’s faithful example of endurance. We need to maintain our faith, letting our lights shine, piercing through the darkness that surrounds us in this present evil age, and preparing ourselves and our families for that great day and appearing of our Savior in the glorious age to come. Even though it was said that in the latter days “iniquity [sin] shall abound, [and] the love of many shall wax cold,” we must remember that it was also said “He who endures unto the end, the same shall be saved (Matt. 24:13).”



Giving Thanks in All Things — Even In the Little Things

Thanksgiving 2010 Psalm 92:1



By Janice Hart



Psalm 92

1 IT IS A GOOD THING TO GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD, AND TO SING PRAISES UNTO THY NAME, O MOST HIGH:

2 To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,

3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.

4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.

5 O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.

Thanksgiving is every day. Thanking God is a daily conversation I have, sometimes many times a day! It's not a habit, or a ritual, but an honest, from the heart attempt at letting Him know how much I appreciate all that He has done for me in my life and in my journey on this earth.

I was full of thanksgiving when I was baptized late in life, raising my two beautiful daughters in the Church of God and for the different type of marriage and relationship my husband and I share. A *good* different, but different from the average 9-5, Monday through Friday working couple, raising kids, dogs, taking care of a home they had custom built - all that kind of "normal stuff".

Jim has been a terrific husband, father and provider over our 32 years (this April) together. His job dictated a life style change early on and I was the one who said - "We can do this". His work involved a Top Secret Security Clearance, working shifts, holidays and even time away. When he came home from a 12-hour shift plus a 2-hour drive, we could not say, "How was your day". He couldn't tell us. Dinner at our house was anywhere from 12:30pm - 8PM and you adjusted. But still I was grateful. Nights and weekends were not typical but we were a happy family, all the same. Blessed with two fabulous daughters, Sarah and Alisa, that as they grew up, were no trouble to raise - and they love to remind me of that! While their Dad missed allot of their extra activities, he was with them in spirit and always had praise for them the next time he got to spend time with them. His dry sense of humor is always a delight to them. They were involved in sports, band, clubs, and all the typical things terrific kids do. They earned driver's licenses without me going



Memoe, Poppie & Carter

completely gray - however their Dad was already bald and still tried to blame them!!! I thanked God for their minds, their talents, their determination to do what ever it was they set their minds to. Even through the tears of leaving them both at college, I was so thankful that they were healthy enough, smart enough and had enough student loans to be there!!! And they never let us down, always bringing home terrific grades, even if they did change their minds a few times on majors (well, Alisa did anyway!) Their weekends at home were so special and again, I was so grateful. Where had the time gone, how could they both be in college, away from home, independent and smarter by the semester! And as proud a Mother as I am it was hard to admit they had become young women, strong, smart and planning a future. But again, I just look at them and say "Thank You Lord".

I worked a part time job that grew over the years. Imagine coming home from a party where you hardly knew anyone to a job offer on your answering machine! God was in the whole thing! I started out as a Promotions Director for a 35-store shopping center, the biggest in our town. We had a Merchant's Association that contributed to this cause and over the years I had a blast. Soon the owner of the property wanted a property manager and the two jobs blended into one, full time, fun-filled time. God put me in the hands of a Christian owner, who believed in family first. I was so grateful for a boss who said, "Go on the field trips, the concerts and don't worry about a thing". How awesome was that!? I took the girls to work with me and they assisted and contributed to many of the "family activities" and events that we would hold on the property. I have been with George, the owner, for 25 years and we have made a pact to stick together until he is ready to give it up. I am so grateful, so very thankful for a special person who calls me the boss!

Meanwhile, back at home, the empty nest thing was in full swing. Jim was retiring at 59.5 years, had some health issues and he more than deserved to be free of his very stressful position in National Security. His retirement party was very special, even if we did eat lunch out of a box and I had to have an escort to the Ladies Room to wash the grease from my fingers, I was grateful. He was looking forward to retirement and being able to say, "I'm retired, and I can do what ever I want, when I want." It was a good feeling and I was grateful to hear him say those things - over and over again! I was grateful for the special job that he had and while I was never allowed to understand or to know fully what he did, I still thanked God for it. When our country was forever changed on 9/11/2001 I found myself sitting in a hospital room, waiting for Jim to come out of surgery. Watching TV live in total disbelief as the details of that day unfolded, it was easy to say "Thank You God" he is not involved in this. I prayed for the victims, for their families and for our country. We were forever changed that day as a Nation; we just didn't realize it at the time. Still, I was grateful, oh so thankful to be waiting on a surgeon to bring me news. Jim was fine, but many friends were quite concerned about him and his whereabouts on that fateful day. Our answer machine at home was full of people asking about him, some in tears, terribly worried. It never dawned on me that people would think of him and his safety. I had to thank God for dear friends who cared so much and were ready to take care of anything that we might need. I still have trouble believing that God heard my prayers for Jim, (how selfish it seemed) compared to the status of the rest of our country. But God heard my prayers for Jim and he came out just fine.



God was in the small stuff when my Mother died on Thanksgiving Eve 3 years ago now. She knew she was dieing and while it was 3 days of family never leaving her side, she had a room full of love and respect as she slipped away. She provided us with much humor - imagine at a time like that! And I was thankful for her humor and we laughed together. My brother John and I conducted her entire service, something that I was most thankful that I got to do. No, I had never done that for anyone before, but we were determined that no stranger was going to preach over our Mother like he knew her - when he didn't. We knew her best and we gave her the best we could. To do that one last act of love and kindness for her was a huge blessing and God got me through it.



God blessed me with a second career at age 53. With Jim retired, the girls on their own, I was asked to join the Front Royal Police Department by starting a volunteer program. It was the toughest job I never got paid for! Bringing volunteers into a Police department is a very threatening thing for the officers. It took a good 3 years for them to realize we were here to assist, not take their jobs away. I never prayed so hard as the first day I addressed all the shifts about VIPS (Volunteers in Police Service) and NO ONE had an encouraging word, not even a welcoming word for me. But I was grateful for the opportunity and knew that if I was in the right place, God would make them see the light - just not right away!!! 3 years went by and we had a great program going, 40 volunteers and new ways to assist the officers was always being brought to my attention. I was so very thankful! Then I was offered a paid position, Community Relations Specialist. It's really the Crime Prevention Office but they could not give me the appropriate title, since I had no training. I accepted, went to training and fell in love with Crime Prevention. I was so thankful for classes I didn't half understand, instructors that scared me to death at times and for kids in classes calling me "Grandma". Imagine what it's like to be in school with kids that are just 21 and you are 50 plus and starting over!!! I made the decision to go for the Crime Prevention Specialist degree after I graduated from Crime Prevention School. The State of Virginia gives you 5 years to earn that degree; I did it in 18 months! "Thank you God" was a phrase I uttered in my sleep, passing each class one at a time. It's a fantastic job that doesn't pay what it should and all I can say is "Thank You I have a job". I can't moan and groan, I love what I do, and I feel God put me where He wants me to be. Of course, Jim had to adjust a little. Now suddenly his wife is working shifts instead of him, dinner isn't on the table every night and I have to travel some. It was total role reversal. What I had done for him for 25 years in his career, he now had to face with me! Poor man!

But again, I am so thankful because I am so blessed every day that I go to work. While some days are better than others, knowing that I have the opportunity *every day* to make a difference in our community and have fun doing it - how many people can say that ~ and Thank God for it!!! It's the little things that have gotten me through. But I am blessed to work for a department that appreciates what I do and backs me. Times have not been all fun. I could do without the politics of the job and loosing people that



Fred & Sarah Morgan Family

I care so much for. Recently our Town manager was fired. He is the best thing to happen to this town in 25 years, and he got fired for standing up for us, the people. While our Council has a different idea of "managing", I was heart - sick over loosing a boss I respected, and admired. A Christian man, he and his wife believe that God closes one door and another one will open. They are right and I am blessed and grateful to call them dear friends and enjoy their company outside of work. God needs him for a better plan, and I just can't wait to see what that is. It was hard to be thankful in those first few days of all the recoil, but I still had my friend and he still had my respect and admiration for all his accomplishments for our town.



Tim & Alisa Hart

The economy has played a role in all our lives the last few years. While Jim's favorite phrase is "I can't afford that, I am on a fixed income" ~ he's not wrong. His retirement has decreased due to more deductions, and I have not had a raise in 3 years. But still I say, "Thank You Lord, I still have a job". So many people can't say that and are struggling.

I have been so blessed and am so grateful for so many wonderful people that God has put in my life. You could not convince me other wise. Besides my best friend and many special girl friends that have been in my life for years and years, God blessed me with so many Christian leaders, bosses as well as business associates. Kent Ross is the reason I can teach today, first at CWS and now in my law enforcement career, I am teaching recruits. (That will teach them to make fun of Grandma!) The first Chief that hired me and gave me the opportunity to start a new program that I had to first sell to the Officers and then to the community is still a huge role model and mentor for me to this day. I have worked for 3 Chiefs thus far and all have been supportive and generous in their praise and their allowing me to try new things for the betterment of the community. While I hunger for more and more training I was never so scared as I studied to become a Law Enforcement instructor. I had to pass the most rigorous training, but the support I had and the belief that God would hold me up as I tried to share lessons has made all the difference in every thing that I do.

But the most important Thanksgiving blessing (in addition to our daughters Sarah & Alisa, and our son-in-law Fred) is our Grandson Carter, now 19 months old. Carter is such a delight, fun to play with and seeing the world through his little eyes every time we are together is such a blessing. Carter almost didn't make it here, but God saved him. Sarah and Fred were hit head-on one night on a dark and curvy road, pushed down an embankment and had to be cut out of the car. It was easily the worst night of all our lives, Sarah was only 13 weeks pregnant and it was all we could think about, once we knew she and Fred were O.K. Fred did suffer some permanent eye damage. Carter hung in there and prayers were answered and he is the light of our life today. I like to think that "Memoe" and "Poppy" are important to him as well. We are typical Grandparents, spoiling him with only love, not material things and we enjoy our special times with him when we take him out to eat or baby-sit at every opportunity that presents itself. "Thank you God" is all I can say when I reluctantly return him to his parents, he is so very special. Being a Grandparent is the BEST job in the world and the one I am most grateful for every day.

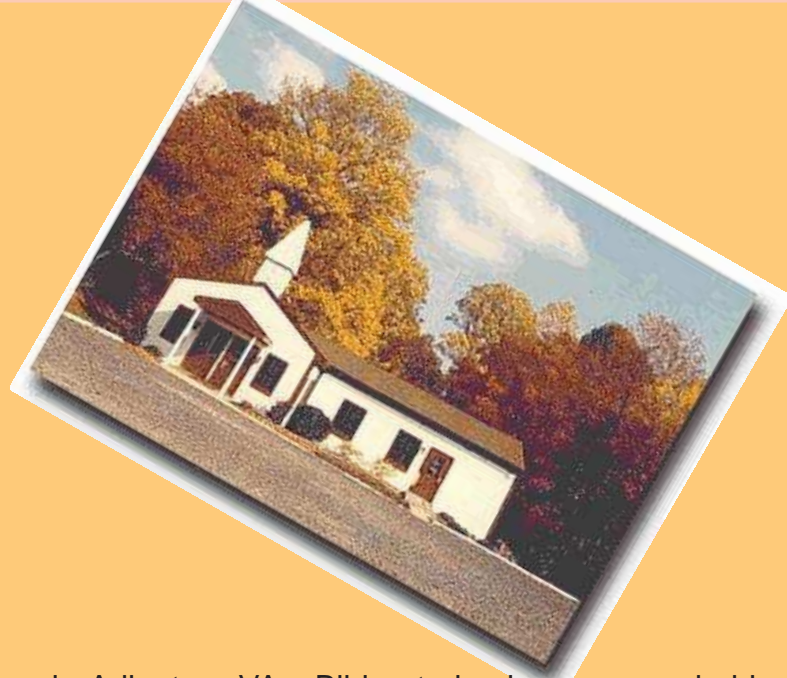
Alisa just bought her first home. Tim is the man in her life and a very special young man. Tim protected this country through 2 tours of Iraq and one of Haiti as a Marine. He has shared some horror stories with us and I many times just cry when I think that we almost never had him in our lives. He is studying now and planning a law enforcement career. I thank God for opening my eyes to Tim but more importantly, my heart. Such a special thank you I have for him.

Thanksgiving at our house will be a bit wild. We will have the kids, plus some of Alisa's "in-laws", plus a granddog or two! (Yes, we have 5!) It will go all too fast, and be all fun and laughs, but it will be a day that is chock full of "thank-you's" from me, smiles and tears.

Psalm 92:1 says, "It is good to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High". God is Great – all the time – even in the little things we need to give thanks.



We Are The Washington, D.C. Church of God Fair Oaks Church of God



The Early Days

This is the early history of the Washington, DC Church of God group through 1956, as remembered by Sister Ella Boyer, edited by WR Helenburg.

In the 1920's, the James Kinchloe and the Charles Compton families met in their homes on Sundays for Bible Study. Sister Virginia Kinchloe was their leader. Several individuals from Washington, DC would travel to Fairfax and Manassas to study with them in their homes. In 1925, Brother Harry Sheets came to Virginia to Pastor the Fort Valley and Maurertown Churches. During the period between 1926 and 1928, he would occasionally travel to Fairfax to the Kinchloe home to lead church services for them and others of the group.

In Circa 1938, J.R. LeCrone, came to Virginia and would travel to Arlington, VA to conduct Sunday night services at the Fire Hall. In the early 1940's, about 1942 or 1943, John Mercer regularly held services for about 2 years. In that same time frame, Sister Thayer arranged to hold a tent meeting for Bible School study. However, the tent never arrived. Sister Thayer remained there during the week end conducting study the best as the conditions would allow.

In about 1941, a Dorcas Society was organized and it became a very active group that met monthly at the homes of the 12 members.

At a later time, Brother Clyde Randall came to the area from Fonthill, Ontario, Canada to assist with a Bible School program. This was held at the Community House on Irving Street, near Lyon Park

in Arlington, VA. Bible study classes were held during the day and preaching services were held each night.

Other Pastors that served in that era included Daniel Judy who preached one summer in 1947 at the Pythian Temple in Washington, DC; Dean Moore of the Baltimore group for 2-3 years; Curtis Simpson of the Baltimore Group that preached for four years ant the old YMCA building near the White House in Washington DC.

Around 1950 Brother Alva Huffer, who had taken the Pastor position at the Browntown Church, reorganized the Washington group and would come to preach and offer communion services several times each year. The services included Sunday School study each week.

Some of the families and individuals that attended those later days included; Ella Boyer, the William Hicks, Mack and Ada Updike, Eldridge and Marie Cooper, Charles and Mary Compton, James and Virginia Kinchloe, Dan and Isabel O'Flaherty, William Thut family, Fay Carroll and family, John Andrews family, Philina Davis, Ruth Blankenhaker, Leroy Frichard, Helen and Orville Thompson, Mary Ellen and Fern Bell, and Nina Prelliam.

The last 50 Years

The current history is a compilation of the memories of Joseph Fletcher, Helen Thompson, Eunice Costello Keyes and others, as reported to Rob Helenburg.

By 1953 the congregation was comprised

of Baltimore and D.C. area members and was meeting in the old YMCA building at 17th and G Streets in Washington, DC. Joseph Fletcher, a newly graduated minister of Oregon Bible College moved to this area with his bride, Shirley, to be the first full time Pastor. Joseph was originally from the Church in Fonthill, Ontario, Canada. From 1956 to 1959, Joe took a sabbatical to further his education. During his absence, the congregation was pastored by Curtis Simpson who had been actively involved with the growing congregation in Baltimore and Pennsylvania. Soon after Pastor Fletcher and his growing family returned to the D.C. area, the congregation looked into building or moving their church.

In 1960 the congregation moved the worship services to Falls Church, Virginia. They rented space in the cafeteria of the old Culmore Elementary School. It was during this time that Joseph Fletcher began teaching in the Fairfax County School System.

In 1968, the church purchased the building at their present location on West Ox Road from the local Presbyterian Church. They had just constructed a new facility nearby on Route 50. For the first time, our church had a permanent home. At about the same time, the local congregation changed its name to the Eternal Hope Church of God, Abrahamic Faith. Three of the Fletcher children attended Oregon Bible College. Cheryl the oldest, is married to Pastor Dale Swartz. Jeffrey Fletcher graduated from OBC and still actively serves as a COG Pastor. Deborah Simon graduated from OBC and actively supports youth ministry.

In 1972, Pastor Fletcher received a promotion to Assistant School Principal and resigned as the full time minister. He and his family remained in the area and continued to support and play an active role in the church to include being our Church Elder. The church then hired Ron Macy, a nephew of Emory Macy; who along with his wife Terry, led the congregation for four years. Ron and Terry developed a youth ministry program to reach out to local minority children to bring them to the church.

In 1976, upon the resignation of Pastor Macy, the church hired Dale Ward as the new Pastor, who along with his wife Marie, led our congregation. Earlier, Dale had served as the

Pastor of the old Maurertown Church of God near Woodstock and Toms Brook, VA. In 1981, Pastor Ward retired and the local church was without a Pastor for about nine months.

In June 1982, Gary Burnham, a newly graduated minister from Oregon Bible College, moved to the area with his wife, Janice (Knapp), and became the new pastor. In 1986, the congregation chose to rename the church as the Fair Oaks Community Church due to confusion that developed regarding other denominations which are active in Virginia and operate under the general Church of God name. To more accurately reflect its location, the congregation changed its name again in 2006 to Oak Hill Community Church of God - Abrahamic Faith.

In February 1989, an unknown arsonist set fire to the church building and succeeded in destroying the facility although the structure was not completely consumed. Subsequently the building was completely rebuilt, refurbished and brought up to the then current building codes and rededicated in 1990. By 1996, the loans were paid off and the building title was once again held free and clear.

In 1995, Pastor Burnham resigned from our local church to accept the position of Comptroller of the Church of God General Conference and Atlanta Bible College, in Morrow, GA.

For about ten years the church continued on without the services of a fulltime Pastor. Pastor Dennis Baldwin of our sister church in Front Royal, Virginia served as our interim Pastor driving from Front Royal on the first Sunday of each month to hold afternoon services and Communion. This after holding morning services at his church. Oak Hill Community Church is deeply grateful for the many years of faithful service of Pastor Dennis and his wife Rachael.

In June of 2005, we hired Thomas J. Fischhaber, Jr., as our new Pastor. Tom decided, in the late summer of 2006, to withdraw from active pastoral ministry to contemplate his future role in the Church of God. Pastor Dennis Baldwin has agreed to once again serve as our spiritual leader and Pastor. In 2010 the church decided to return to the name Fair Oaks Church of God- Abrahamic Faith.

Revised Sep. 19, 2010

OUR THANKSGIVING DAY

DANIEL SIDERIUS

On November 25, 2010, the United States will celebrate its annual Thanksgiving Day holiday. Originally established as a religious observance, the day served as a reminder to pause and give thanks to the Lord for the blessings bestowed throughout the previous year. Though the spirit of this holiday has changed, the spirit of thanksgiving in our hearts should remain the same every day of the year. Our thanksgiving should not be relegated to one day per year. Psalm 107:1 instructs us to “give thanks for the LORD, for He is good, His love endures forever.” What would happen if we all examined our lives for ways in which the Lord has blessed us? Would we find new “Thanksgiving Days” as we discover the blessings God has bestowed upon us?

In our lives, the newest “Thanksgiving Day” is June 12th, the day on which we were married in 2010. This was a day that we both had greatly anticipated and hoped for throughout the years. Although we were already in our thirties on the day of our marriage ceremony, we realize that God used our years of singleness to prepare us and give a better appreciation of the blessing of a Christian spouse. This is not to say that we would have voluntarily chosen to remain single, as has become fashionable in the present culture. Instead, we were reminded in scripture that “He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.” (Proverbs 18:22) More importantly, we realize that our new “Thanksgiving Day” would not have been possible without God working throughout our lives in a myriad of ways. We have much for which to be thankful, including the encouragement of friends and family, the personal and spiritual compatibility of our spouse, and the heritage of Christian families. All of these blessings allowed our paths to cross and become one.

On our “Thanksgiving Day” (i.e. wedding day), we were thankful for the attendance of friends and family as witnesses. Many had offered support, encouragement, and advice throughout the years of singleness, helping to prepare us as individuals for a joint life together. The blessing of their support and encouragement was not that they offered just well-meaning platitudes or empathy; instead, they offered specific advice, actions, and prayers to direct us on a path towards marriage to each other. Even before we had the opportunity to meet, a mutual acquaintance had the courage to mention one of us to the other, even suggesting that we would be quite suitable as husband and wife. Later, another mutual friend, unaware of the previous recommendation, instigated our introduction in the company and safety of close friends. Their influence lasted well beyond that initial introduction; throughout the following year, in which our paths did not cross, those same friends tirelessly urged us to take direct action that would transform our introduction into a friendship and, not long



thereafter, into a courtship. We are thankful for the respectful manner and delicacy in which our friends worked to introduce us and foster the early stages of our courtship.

Encouragement from friends and family was not sufficient by itself to transition our introduction into a friendship and, ultimately, a lifelong commitment to one another. We also needed the necessary ingredient of our similar personalities, life goals, and spiritual demeanor. Without these, marriage could not be considered. We are thankful that God gave us time and experiences as singles that developed us into the people we are today. We are unique individuals, but God created us with interests, vocations, and temperaments that compliment one another. The underlying foundation, though, is our common faith. We have learned that a common personality or life goal is not strong enough to sustain the day-to-day challenges of any marriage relationship; it must be supported by a "third strand" in our cord, God Himself. But just acknowledging a common faith is not enough for our marriage. Each day, we seek to make our worship of God a communal aspect of the routine of our married life, beginning each day with prayer together, helping each other study the scriptures, and mutually worshiping the Lord in our church. Due to the distinct beliefs and church doctrines we hold, we are thankful for our common Church of God heritage. It is more important to us than the details of faith; it shapes our prayer, our worldview, and our home.

Having an active, common faith stems directly from the example that our parents set for us and demonstrated to us every day. Our parents have been married for thirty-two and forty-four years, respectively, and have continually strived to center their own marriages on mutual faith. In addition, their mutual respect for one another, forgiveness in difficult times, and delight in each other has given us concrete examples with which to form a basis for our own actions. We are grateful and thankful for the model under which we were raised and continue to learn from as adults. This model gave us the confidence to honestly vow to each other to

"...promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be your loving and faithful husband/wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health ... and pledge to you my constant love and faithfulness, as long as we both shall live."

Now, in the infancy of our marriage, we are thankful for the continued example of Christian marriage put forward by our parents and for the encouragement and support they provide as we seek to fulfill our vows each day.

As our relationship continues to evolve through the encouragement of friends, our common faith and the model established by our parents, we have learned to be grateful for one another. We both remember the days spent as singles, eagerly anticipating the arrival of a Christian spouse. Now that the moment has arrived, we take delight in simple pleasures of daily living, such as greeting one another after a long day at work, sharing our meals, and just relaxing in the comfort of each other's presence. We have found and continue to find that every day is a new "Thanksgiving Day" in which we can thankfully receive God's grace through each other. Though these remembrances are specific to us and our lives, we hope that you they inspire you to seek out new "Thanksgiving Days" in your lives.



"...promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be your loving and faithful husband/wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health ... and pledge to you my constant love and faithfulness, as long as we both shall live."



AMILLENNIALISM — A THREAT TO AN INTELLIGENT READING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

By Anthony Buzzard

The millennial question is commonly believed to be only a peripheral matter in our understanding of the New Testament. It is frequently shuffled off into the corner as a question unrelated to the Good News of Salvation and of concern only to students of prophecy. This is very far from being the New Testament point of view.

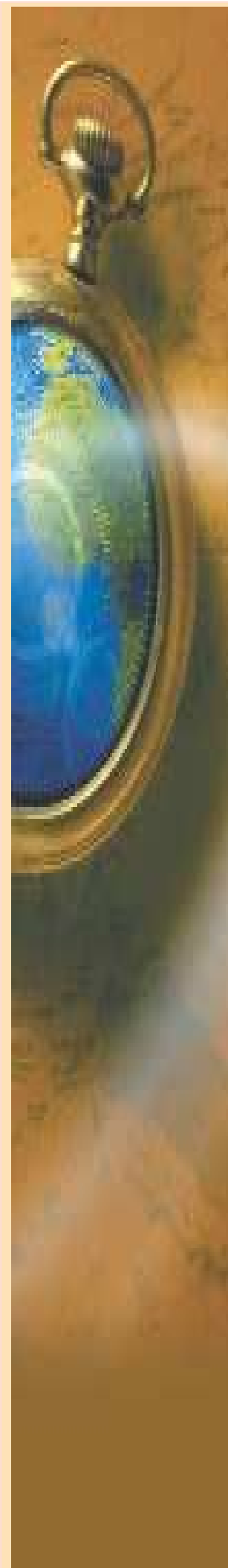
The very terms “millennium” and “millennial” hide the fact that the passage in Rev. 20 describing the thousand-year (i.e., millennial) **reign of Christ and the Saints** contains essential information, by revelation from God through Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:1), about the **Kingdom of God**; and the Kingdom of God is the heart of the Gospel Message of Christianity. In Luke 4:43, Jesus said: **“I must proclaim the Good News [Gospel] about the Kingdom of God to other cities also because that is the purpose for which I was sent.”**¹ He then dispatched the twelve and later the “seventy” to announce the same Message (Luke 9:2; 10:1, 9). To be a Christian is to follow Jesus² and become a herald of the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:60).

In the Book of Acts it was only when potential converts “believed Philip preaching the Good News about the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12)³ that they were baptized into the faith. It is obvious that the Kingdom of God was Paul’s central preoccupation. In Acts 19:8 “he spoke boldly for three months, persuading them concerning the Kingdom of God” — “lecturing and persuading them concerning the Kingdom of God” (NIV, interlinear). Paul also defined the “Gospel of the grace of God” as a “proclamation of the Kingdom” (Acts 20:24, 25)⁴ and a “declaration of the whole counsel of God — “all the contents of the Divine Plan” (Acts 20:27) (*Thayer’s Lexicon* under “Kingdom).”

In order to leave us in no possible doubt about the content of the Apostolic preaching of the Gospel, Luke records that Paul further “witnessed solemnly to the Kingdom of God, persuading them also concerning Jesus from the Law of Moses and the prophets from dawn till dusk” (Acts 28:23). The effect of Paul’s preaching of the Gospel was that “some believed and some were not persuaded”⁵ (Acts 28:25). Paul then warned his audience about the danger of spiritual blindness and stubbornness (Acts 28:25-27), and announced his intention to take “this salvation of God” to the Gentiles (v. 28).⁶ The Message of salvation is then defined again by Luke, as his final word to posterity, as “the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 28:31).⁷

While in contemporary presentations of the Gospel the word “Kingdom” usually does not appear at all, it is plain from Scripture that the Gospel preached by Jesus and the Apostles concerned the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12; 28:23; 31, etc.) It is equally clear that the millennial passage in Rev. 20 is also concerned with the Kingdom of God. It is a description of a time when certain persons “came to life and began to reign with the Messiah.... They shall be priests of God and of the Messiah and they shall reign with Him for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4-6).

In the same Book of Revelation we have already learned **that the faithful “shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:10)**. Rev. 11:15-18 tell us that “the kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our God and of His Messiah” [at the last trumpet to be



sounded in the future, v. 15]. We have learned also from Revelation that the faithful will rule over the nations as a reward for their persistent Christian service in the present age (Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21).

The Joint Reign of Jesus and the Church

The student of Scripture must solve a rather simple problem. When is this rule of Christ and the Saints, described in Rev. 20, to take place? In view of the present confusion in church circles, this question is a most crucial one. The answer to it will enable the discerning Christian to avoid dangerous pitfalls.

The millennial text reads as follows:

“And I saw thrones and they sat upon them and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those⁸ who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand, and **they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years**. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed” (Rev. 20:4). “They **shall reign** with Messiah for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6).

Two mutually exclusive views of this passage have been held.

“Amillennialism” (originating in the theology of Augustine in the 5th century AD and supported later by the Reformers, Luther and Calvin) denies that the passage in Rev. 20 refers to a **future** reign of Christ and his Saints. “Premillennialism” (which was the orthodox view of the earlier Christians of the second century and of many also in later centuries) maintains that the Reign described in our passage **will begin only at the Second Coming of Christ**. The technical jargon must not be allowed to hide the fact that this is a **dispute about the Kingdom of God**, and its place in the Divine Plan. The difference of opinion must, therefore, be clearly settled in order that *the Gospel of the Kingdom of God* can be properly understood and accepted (*in addition, of course, to belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus*).

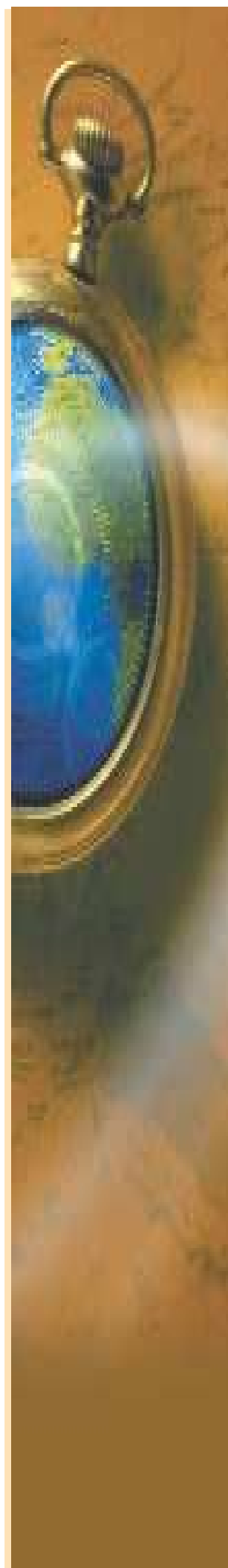
To resolve our problem we shall have to look carefully at the text of Rev. 20, its own context in Revelation, and also at the other biblical passages bearing on the joint reign of Christ and the Saints. Where does this reign fit into the biblical scheme?

The Kingdom of God has its roots in the Old Testament, and the phrase was well understood by Jesus’ contemporaries. In Daniel 7:13, 14, we read that: “The Son of Man [the supreme Human Being, who Jesus claimed to be] came to the Ancient of Days [the Father]... and there was given to Him dominion and glory and a **Kingdom** such that all people, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and His Kingdom one which shall not be destroyed.” Verse 18 says that “the Saints of the Most High shall take the **Kingdom** and possess it for ever.”

The Kingdom of God is evidently a joint reign of the Son of Man and the Saints.

Dan. 2:44 states that this Kingdom supersedes the kingdoms of the present age by destroying and replacing them: “In the days of these kings [i.e., rulers, represented by the toes of the great image] the God of Heaven shall set up a **Kingdom** which shall never be destroyed, and the **Kingdom** shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

Dan. 7:27 locates the Kingdom “under the whole heaven,” i.e., *on the earth*, and states that it is to be the possession of the Saints. (Cp. Luke 12:32, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the **Kingdom**.”) “And the **Kingdom** and the dominion and the greatness of the Kingdom **under the whole heaven** shall be



given to the people of the Saints of the Most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey them” (Dan. 7:27, RSV).

These simple facts concerning the world-government to be presided over by the Son of Man and the Saints form the indispensable background to the New Testament Gospel of the Kingdom. It should not be difficult to understand that the nations and dominions of our present world are very far from being in subjection to Christ and the Church! This fact alone is proof that the Kingdom is **dependent on the Return of Jesus to establish it**. “Thy Kingdom come!” is a petition for Jesus to come back to the earth and to set up His Kingdom. The petition does not read, as often thought, “Thy Kingdom spread!”

The Joint Reign of Christ and the Church — Present or Future?

Our thesis must be carefully checked against the New Testament evidence. Where is the joint rule of Christ and the faithful placed? Matthew has recorded words of Jesus which can scarcely be misunderstood: “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, **then He will sit** on the throne of His glory...” (Mat. 25:31). “In the New Age (KJV, ‘Regeneration’), **when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory**, you also **will sit** on thrones administering the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mat. 19:28).

“The Kingdom is a gift to the disciples: “I appoint you to a Kingdom as my Father appointed me to a Kingdom, so that you may eat and drink in my Kingdom and sit on thrones governing the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:28-30).

In the parable of the Nobleman (Christ), the Kingdom is likewise placed at the Return of Christ, and so also is the joint rulership of Christ’s servants: “**When he returned [at the Second Coming]**, having received the **Kingdom** (Luke 19:15)..., he said, ‘Bring hither my enemies who do not wish me to reign over them and slay them before me....’ [To the disciples] he said, ‘Have authority over ten cities’” (Luke 19:17).

Jesus obviously did not think the Kingdom had come: “I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine until the **Kingdom comes**” (Luke 22:18). “I shall never again eat [the bread of the Lord’s Supper] until it is fulfilled in the **Kingdom of God**” (Luke 22:16).

Jesus told the disciples to expect the Kingdom to arrive when he returned. Until then He (and they) would be “waiting until His enemies are put under His feet” (Heb. 10:13). Luke tells us decisively that the Kingdom will coincide with the spectacular Return of the Messiah Jesus: “When you see all these [calamities preceding the second Coming] happening, know that the **Kingdom of God** is near” (“about to come,” Good News Bible) (Luke 21:31).

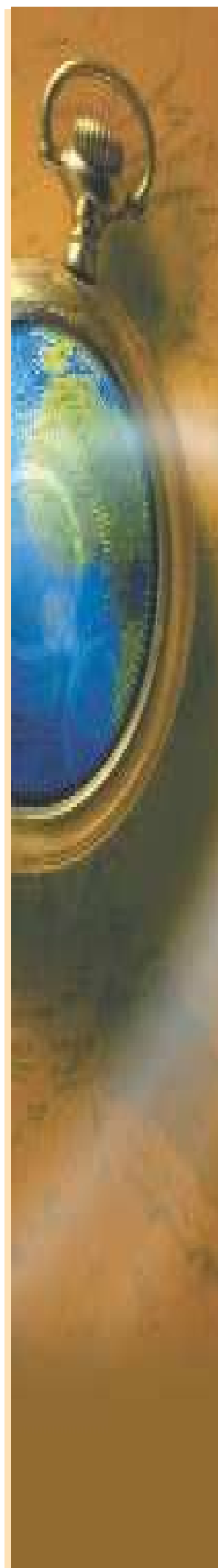
The Error of Placing this Kingdom in the Present

Paul corrected the false notion, held by some of the Corinthians, that the Saints are **already** reigning: “Would to God that you were reigning, so that we might be reigning with you!” (I Cor. 4:8).

He was indignant that the Corinthians had forgotten one of the first principles of the faith — the believers’ prospect of reigning with Christ **in the future**: “Don’t you know that the Saints shall judge [‘manage’, Moffat] the world?” By contrast, “the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God” (I Cor. 6:2, 9). The one statement interprets the other: Inheriting the Kingdom is defined as “managing the world.”

A well-known Christian hymn in the Apostolic Church ran as follows: “If we suffer with Him [now], we **shall rule** with Him [then]” (II Tim. 2:12).

The angelic chorus summed up the entire plan of salvation with a song of praise to Jesus celebrating the fact that the Church of all nations “shall reign as kings on the earth” (Rev. 5:10).



In the same Book of Revelation, Jesus specifically promises the believer a place in the future Kingdom:

“I will give him authority over the nations...to rule them” (Rev. 2:26, citing Psalm 2). “I **will grant** him [the believer] to sit with me in my throne, as I sat with my Father in His throne.” The two thrones must be carefully distinguished. Christ is not now sitting on His own throne. He will do so when He begins to reign on the earth at His Second Coming, as predicted by Psalm 2. The promises of rulership with Jesus (cited above) are for those who “hold fast *until He comes*” (Rev. 2:25, 26):

“Hold fast *until I come*. To those who prove victorious and keep working for me until the end, I **will give** authority over the pagans...” (Rev. 2:25, 26).

This text proves that rulership is not promised for the present, but for the time subsequent to the future coming of Jesus; and as a reward for faithful service in the present life.

It is at the last trumpet that “The kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah and He shall reign for ever” (Rev. 11:15).

At this *future* moment the heavenly elders say: “We give thanks, O Lord God, the Ruler of all, who are and were, because You have exerted Your power, Your great power, and have *become* King.... The time for the dead to be judged [has come]” (Rev. 11:15-18).

When is that time? At the last trumpet. The last trumpet signals the Resurrection of the faithful dead (I Cor. 15:23, 52).

Exactly the same scheme appears in Rev. 19, where a **future beginning** of the reign of the Messiah is described: “Hallelujah! Because our God the Lord Omnipotent has *begun* His reign.... For the marriage day of the Lamb has come” (Rev. 19:7).

Jesus is the “man child destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron” (Rev. 12:5). “He **will shepherd** them with a staff of iron” (Rev. 19:5).

Until this great moment arrives, Jesus is to remain in heaven: “Heaven must retain Him until the time comes for the Restoration of all things about which all the prophets spoke” (Acts 3:21). Jesus is therefore “**waiting until** His enemies are made a footstool for His feet (Heb. 10:13).

With all this plain evidence before us we come finally to the disputed millennial passage in Rev. 20. Here we are told that the Saints “came to life and began to reign⁹ with Christ for a thousand years.... This is the first Resurrection” (Rev. 20:4, 5).

We have cited some twenty passages from the Old and New Testaments which describe the joint-reign of Christ and the Saints. In every case the reign is *placed after the Second Coming. It begins with the Return of Christ. In Rev. 20 we arrive at the long-awaited fulfillment of the expected Reign.*

To set this passage at variance with the twenty other passages by claiming that it is a Reign *already in progress before the Second Coming* is to break the first principle of sound interpretation. Our passage describes, as do its parallels throughout the Bible, a Reign or Kingdom following the resurrection of martyred (beheaded) Christians, and following the arrival of Jesus in power and glory (Rev. 19:15-20). To speak in these texts of a present rule of God “in the heart” or the Church is to refuse simple information about the future Kingdom of God. It is on this fundamental confusion that the present “dominion” and “reconstructionist” movements are based. These systems have not understood that the rule of the saints will not and cannot begin until Jesus reappears at His second coming.

Amillennialism — a Dislocation of the Biblical Scheme

There are a number of other clear reasons why the millennial Reign of Christ and His Saints in Rev. 20 must lie in the future:

1. The Reign of Christ and the Saints in Rev. 20 *follows* the events of the Return of Christ given in Rev. 19. In Rev. 19:11 the words “and I saw” introduce a sequence of events, linked at verse 17 (“and I saw”) and verse 19 (“and I saw”) with the complete overthrow of the Beast and the False Prophet (v. 20) and the destruction of the remainder of those who oppose Christ (v.21). In Rev. 20:1 “and I saw” continues the sequence and deals with the **complete removal** from the world-scene of the ultimate enemy and arch-criminal Satan himself. Following that event comes the next stage of the drama: “And I saw thrones and they sat upon them...” (Rev. 20:4), the joint rule of the saints with Jesus in the Kingdom of God..

2. The Reign of the Saints with Christ in Rev. 20 **depends on a** Resurrection (Rev. 20:5) and cannot begin before that resurrection. The noun “resurrection” (*anastasis*) occurs some forty times in the New Testament. In every case (apart from a special use in Luke 2:24) it refers to a real resurrection of literally dead people to life, **not a “resurrection” from the life of sin to life as a Christian (as amillennialism has to argue)**. It would be both unnatural and inconsistent to think of anything but the real resurrection of the dead in Rev. 20:4.

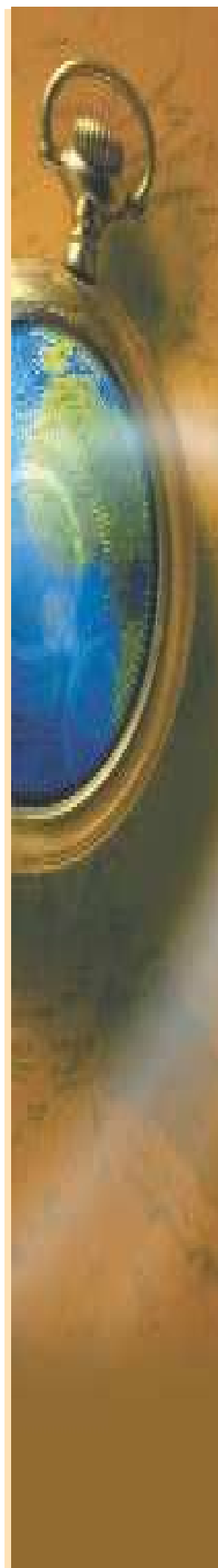
3. **John obviously described a real resurrection and not a figurative one by saying that the occupants of the thrones “came to life” after being beheaded: “I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded...and they came to life....** This is the First Resurrection.” People are not beheaded at conversion, but they may die as martyrs. The “coming to life” of those “who had been beheaded” cannot by any stretch of the imagination describe conversion! Yet amillennialism has to deal with these words in this extraordinary way in order to avoid an actual resurrection.

4. In Rev. 20:3 Satan is bound “so that he can **no longer deceive the nations.**” Earlier in the same book, in Rev. 12:9, John describes Satan as “the one **deceiving the whole world.**” Here in Rev. 20:3 he is bound and prevented from “deceiving the nations any longer.” It is beyond question that Satan cannot *at the same time* be “deceiving the whole world” and “deceiving the nations no longer.” Yet the whole “amillennial” school is committed to that contradiction. Amillennialism is based on a confusion of the present with the future.

Amillennialism teaches that the period of time in which Satan “**no longer** deceives the nations” (note: “the nations,” not the Church) is the same as the period in which he is now “deceiving the whole” world. It would be hard to think of a more unsatisfactory, not to say dangerous, method of reading the Bible! Amillennialists, we fear, are driven to these extremes by their dislike of the idea of a Messianic Kingdom of God, ruled by Christ and the Saints. In avoiding the future Kingdom of Rev. 20, they are forced to abandon both sound interpretation and common sense.

5. In Rev. 12:12, 13 the Devil is thrown down from heaven into the earth. This, as all agree, is at a time **prior to** the Second Coming. However, in Rev. 20:1-2, Satan is banished entirely from the earth and sent to the abyss. This banishment into the abyss, which coincides with the beginning of the millennial Reign, must lie in the future. Satan cannot be both confined **to** the earth and banished **from** the earth into the abyss *at the same time*.

6. Satan is represented as *extremely active* and powerful in the present evil age (Gal. 1:4). John describes Satan as now exercising power over the whole world: “The whole world lies in the power of the Evil One” (I John 5:19). II Cor. 4:4 sees Satan as “the god of this age.” To grasp the New Testament view of the present activity of Satan



the following passages should be examined: Luke 22:3; Acts 5:3; II Cor. 4:3-4; 11:14; Eph. 2:2; I Thess. 2:18; II Tim 2:26; I Pet. 5:18: “Your enemy, the Devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

Yet in Rev. 20:3 we have a description of the **total cessation** of the influence of Satan over the nations. He is removed from the scene, banished and sealed in the abyss. At the time described by Rev. 20 he is unable to deceive the nations any longer. **Will anyone seriously propose that this has already taken place?** And that Satan’s present deceptive activity over the whole world (Rev. 12:9) is compatible with a time when he is bound and unable any longer to deceive the nations? If not, then the millennial Reign which follows as a consequence of the removal of Satan, cannot possibly have occurred already.

7. It is evident from Rev. 20:10 that Satan is finally cast into **the lake of fire after the thousand years [Millennium] (plus a “little season”). Thus a thousand years separates his binding and sealing in the abyss (20:3) from his casting into the lake of fire. It is equally clear that the Beast and False prophet are already in the lake of fire when Satan joins them a thousand years later** (Rev. 20:10). In John’s vision a thousand years separates the casting of the Beast into the lake of fire and Satan’s arrival there.

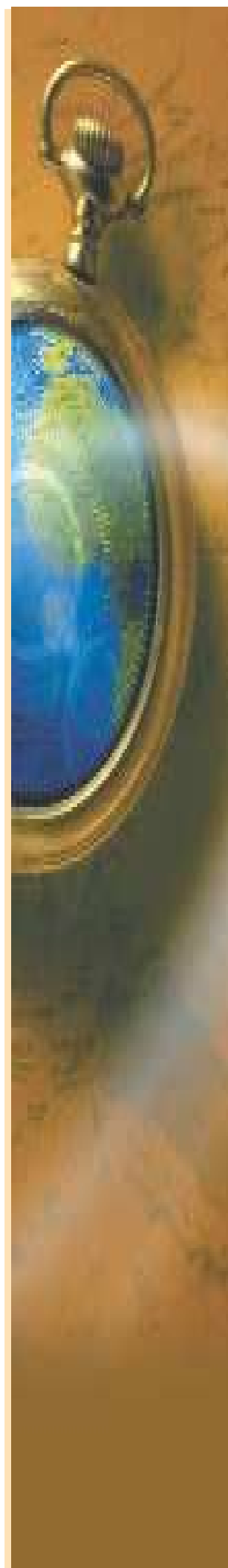
If, as the amillennial school holds, the thousand years began at the crucifixion, or the conversion of the individual believer (opinions vary), what is the meaning of the casting of the Beast and False prophet into the lake of fire at that time? What John obviously describes is the ruin of the Beast and False Prophet *at the Second Coming*, Satan’s banishment to the abyss *at the same time*, and his casting into the lake of fire, to join the Beast and false Prophet, a thousand years later. The Thousand Year Reign thus follows the Second Coming (Premillennialism).

8. Amillennialists are keen to say that the present freedom of Satan (assuming the premillennial scheme that he has **not yet been bound**) contradicts the effects of the crucifixion. They admit, however, that Satan must be let free for a little season (Rev. 20:3). This period of freedom would equally contradict the effects of the cross. The Biblical facts are that Satan has already been defeated, *but his sentence is put into effect when his authority as god of this age (II Cor. 11:4) is finally removed by banishment, first into the abyss (Rev. 20:3) and subsequently by being cast into the lake of fire — a two stage punishment (Rev. 20:3, 10).*

9. Satan cannot possibly already be “deceiving the nations no longer” (Rev. 20:3) (as amillennialism has to say). In Rev. 19:15 Christ at His appearing strikes the nations precisely because they have been so disastrously deceived by Satan into opposing the Messiah at His Coming.

10. Nearly all agree that the “rest of the dead” (those not included in the First Resurrection) came to life *literally* at the close of the Thousand Years (Rev. 20:5, 12). Yet amillennialists deny that the “coming to life” of those in the First Resurrection is a literal resurrection. The same Greek word describes the resurrection of both groups, and the same words “came to life” occur in two consecutive sentences. Henry Alford’s celebrated protest against the amillennial handling of these verses merits repetition:

“I cannot consent to distort the words [of Rev. 20] from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy.... Those who lived next to the Apostles, and the whole Church for three hundred years, understood them **in the plain literal sense**. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual [amillennial] interpretation now in fashion. **If, in a passage where two resurrections are mentioned, where certain “souls” lived at the first, and the rest of the dead “lived” only at the end of a specified period after the first — if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean ‘spiritual’ rising**



with Christ, while the second means literal rising from the grave — then *there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything* (*Greek New Testament, Vol. IV, pt. 2, p. 726, emphasis added*).

The failure to see in Rev. 20: 1-6 a future reign of Christ with His Saints involves an extraordinary feat, by which common sense and the plain meaning of words and context are thrown aside in order to sustain a theory which did not appear in the Church until 300 years after the Apostles.

Belief in the Future Kingdom — the Heart of the Gospel of the Kingdom

We saw at the beginning of our study that the Kingdom or Reign of God is the central message of Christianity. The facts which must be accepted in order to believe the Gospel include not only the death of Christ to atone for our sins, and His Resurrection, but *also* the information about the Kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed and demonstrated in advance of its world-wide inauguration at His Second Coming.

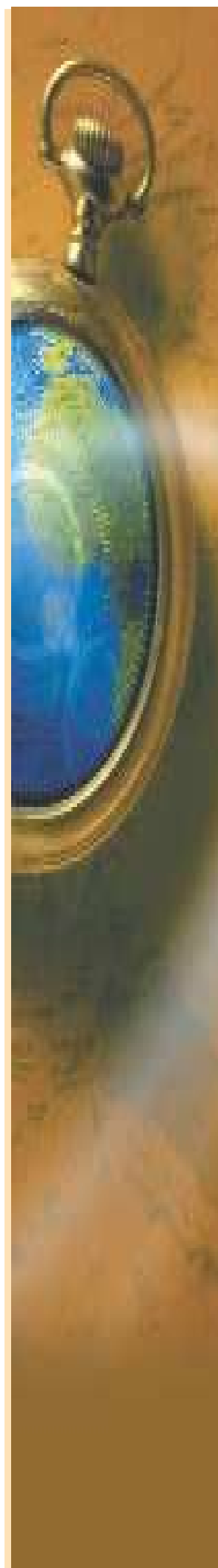
The present time is the time of preparation for the Kingdom which is to be the world-rule of Messiah and His Saints in the Coming Age. The Kingdom is present in one sense wherever the Message is being proclaimed and the power of God is active. It is not, however, present as the world wide Messianic Kingdom predicted by the prophets, until Jesus returns to rule on earth.

The believer is invited by the Gospel to prepare, by a life of submission to the Lord, for servant-rulership with Christ in a restored earth in which a new civilization will be built. This hope gives Christianity its essential dynamic. The Messianic program will include the abolition of international warfare (Isa. 2:1-5). True worship of the One God through Jesus will be taught world-wide. The earth will be “filled with the knowledge of God” (Isa. 11:9). A system of perfect justice will operate for all mankind — “When your judgments are in the earth the inhabitants will learn justice” (Isa. 26:9).

The fact that this hope is little understood is due to the alien, Gnostic “hope” of departing to heaven at death. The biblical hope is related to the future of our *earth*. The Kingdom of God for which we pray, “Thy Kingdom come!” is a restoration of the Divine Government in a perfected form. Jesus promised the earth as the inheritance of the faithful (Matt. 5:5).

That these are the facts of the biblical revelation is accepted by many scholars and commentators. They do not, however, treat them as more than a “Jewish” dream. They are not persuaded that the dream will be realized. Yet the biblical Gospel is pledged to a promise of future peace on earth. Faith in that future Kingdom planned by God is demanded by Jesus’ first command: **Repent and believe in the Gospel of the Kingdom** (Mark 1:14, 15)

Commentators who treat the Bible as an inspired record avoid belief in the Gospel of the Kingdom by a different route. Their natural antipathy to the Hebrew thought-world of the Bible has led to a development of a system of “interpretation” by which the plain meaning of words — in Rev. 20:1-6 — can be side-stepped. In this way the entire point of Hebrew prophecy, which looks forward to **the Restoration of Israel** and universal peace on earth under the Reign of the coming Messiah and the Church is negated. The argument presented is that all Old Testament prophecy reached its fulfillment at the first coming of Christ. The events predicted for the time following His *Second* Coming then cease to play any part in the amillennialist belief-system. The reality of the Christian future, especially the millennial Reign, is simply collapsed and Hope has little definable meaning.



Restoring the Hope of the Kingdom

In Paul's mind, the Christian Hope is the stimulus to faith and love. In Col. 1:5 he writes of the faith and love which the believers had "on account of the Hope laid up for them." Elsewhere Paul spoke of the "blessed hope of the appearing" of Jesus, the Messiah (Titus 2:13) and of the Kingdom which was to follow that event (II Tim. 4:1). It was unanimously agreed among early believers that Jesus was heir to the throne of His father David (Luke 1:32, 33) and that He was thus destined to "receive the throne of His ancestor David and reign for ever over the house of Jacob." In no single passage is the "House of Jacob" a synonym for the Church; and in any case, Christ is everywhere in Scripture going in the future to rule *with* the Church, not over it (II Tim 2:12; Rev. 2:26; 3:21; Rev. 20:4). The question about the time for **the Restoration of the Kingdom to Israel**, posed by the disciples in Acts 1:6, is fundamentally significant for our understanding of God's plan.

The disciples were on the threshold of organizing the Church on the Day of Pentecost and had just received forty days of personal instruction about the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). They expected, as part of the Messianic future, a real Restoration of the theocracy to Israel. This was because the whole vision of the prophets had foreseen just such a Restoration. ***Jesus never for one moment questioned the validity of the Message of the prophets. No progress can be made in understanding the New Testament documents until we banish the notion that the disciples, in asking about the Kingdom in Acts 1:6, were asking in ignorance of the divine program. The prejudice against the Kingdom is ours. The ignorance of the Message of the prophets is ours. The disciples' question is not ill-informed or "Jewish." It is strictly Christian and displays their excellence of understanding as students of Jesus Himself.***

What was in doubt was the time-element in the fulfillment of the Restoration, not the event itself. This is made quite clear by Jesus' reply (Acts 1:7). To accuse the disciples of blindness at this point is to issue a rebuke which attests only to our own misunderstanding of the Kingdom of God.


In proclaiming the Kingdom of God, the Church offers not only salvation and the promise of immortality to the individual, but the Hope of a world at peace under the coming government of the Messiah, who has proved Himself fit to rule where Adam and mankind has failed. The earth and its inhabitants must learn the way to justice, and this cannot happen while Satan remains in office as "the prince of the power of the atmosphere" — "the ruler who governs the air" (*Jerusalem Bible*, Eph. 2:2) and the "god of this age" (II Cor. 4:4).

The proclamation of the Gospel demands a decision about the Kingdom of God and its King, before the arrival of the "great and terrible day of the Lord." For those who respond to the challenge of the Kingdom, there is the Hope of Life in the New World. Meanwhile, "through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom" (Acts 14:22).

The Millennial Kingdom so concisely described in Rev. 20:1-6 is the first stage of the Divine Rule to be executed by the Messiah. This period of world-history *follows* the Second Coming and is preceded by the first Resurrection, which permits the faithful who have died to take part in the Kingdom. Why is it so difficult for some to embrace belief in this coming Millennium?

The problem is the Platonized theology of some church fathers, especially Augustine. Platonic thinking was directly opposed to the Hebrew thought-world of the Bible. Neo-Platonism invaded the church soon after the death of the Apostles and affected every major biblical doctrine adversely.

"Since the age of Augustine, an effort has been made to allegorize the statements of Revelation and apply them to the history of the Church.... [According to



Augustine] the thousand years is **not to be construed literally**, but represents the whole history of the Church from the Incarnation to the final conflict. The reign of the saints is a prophecy of the **domination of the world by the Church**. [Here we see the evil root of all modern reconstructionist and dominion theologies] The first resurrection is metaphorical, and simply refers to the spiritual resurrection of the believer in Christ. **But exegesis of this kind is dishonest trifling....To put such an interpretation on the phrase 'first resurrection' is simply playing with terms"** (Peake's Commentary on the Bible, p. 941, emphasis added).

Augustine's denial of the coming Millennial reign of Christ and the Saints on earth was adopted as official doctrine by the mainstream church for twelve centuries. It dominated theological understanding until the 17th century. Augustine's amillennialism still grips the minds of many and distorts not only the Book of Revelation but the Gospel of the Kingdom. It also draws a veil over the hopes of all the prophets. In view of these facts, the title of this study will, it is hoped, be considered fair criticism and a challenge to return to the biblical Hope.

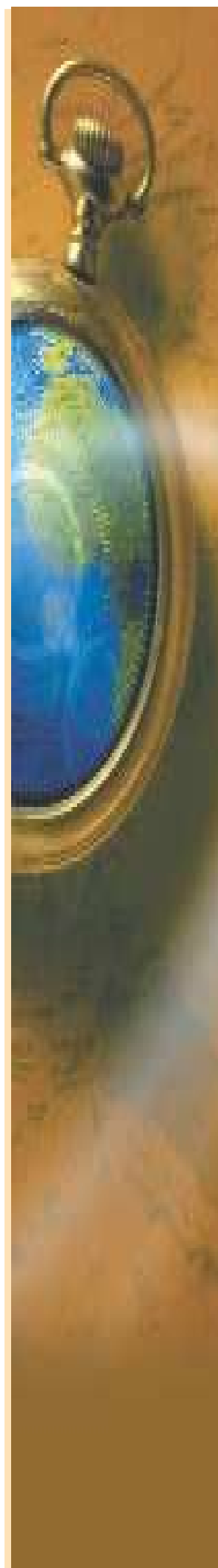
Most seriously of all the failure to understand that Christians are not going to rule the world with Christ **until the King comes back visibly** is leading to a mounting chaos in Christendom. False views of the Kingdom, and thus of the Gospel itself, cause believers to fall for the lie of the Devil which he proposed to Jesus in the temptation. Satan offered the Kingdom to Jesus on his (the Devil's) terms. Jesus resisted this offer. At present many organizations are using the name of Christ to offer their followers dominion over the world NOW. That is exactly what the Devil offered Jesus. The Devil is the "god of this age" and he offers his present Kingdom to any who are deceived enough to accept it.

Jesus promises administrative positions in His Kingdom. But that Kingdom will not come into office **until the return of Jesus**. "When the Son of Man comes in his glory...then he will sit on the throne of his glory" (Matt. 25:31). "You who have followed me, in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on His throne of glory — you will also sit on thrones to administer the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28).

Christians should seek no power of authority over the nations before Jesus comes back. That is the Message of Premillennialism and it is the basis of the Gospel about the Kingdom of God. That Gospel Satan does his best to prevent taking root in your heart (Matt. 13:19; Luke 8:12). Christians should cling with all their might to the Good News that Jesus is coming back to establish His Kingdom on this planet (Matt. 5:5; 6:10; Rev. 5:9, 10).

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones shared our surprise that the biblical Christian hope is in general neither preached nor believed by those claiming adherence to the Christian faith. This affects the Gospel at its heart:

"We shall dwell in glorified bodies on the glorified earth. This is one of the great Christian doctrines that has been *almost entirely forgotten and ignored*. Unfortunately the Christian Church — I speak generally — *does not believe this*, and therefore does not teach it. It has lost its hope, and this explains why it spends most of its time in trying to improve life in this world, in preaching politics... But something remarkable is going to be true of us according to the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 6:1-3: "Dare any of you having a matter against another, go to law against the unjust and not before the Saints? Do you not know that the Saints shall rule the world". *This is Christianity. This is the truth by which the New Testament Church lived*. It was because of this that they were not afraid of their persecutors... This was the secret of their endurance, their patience and their triumphing over everything that was set against them" (Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Commentary on Romans*, p. 72 75, 76, emphasis mine).



In the face of all the evidence, the reader is invited to give serious attention to the Gospel summons of Jesus, the Messiah in Mark 1:14, 15: “Repent and believe the Good News *about the Kingdom.*”

Through the death of Christ the believer may receive forgiveness for his sins. The Christian life is one of preparation for the coming Kingdom of God to be established at the Return of Jesus. The goal of the Christian life is expressed by John in Revelation 3:21, and 2:26. Any attempt to take up power over the nations before the coming of Jesus causes a believer to run with the anti-Christ whose aim is to counterfeit the Kingdom of the true Jesus.

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(Footnotes)

¹Bible-readers may find it useful to reflect on their own ministry as believers. Can they say with Jesus that God sent them to proclaim *the Gospel about the Kingdom of God?*

²Interestingly, the Bible does not speak of just “accepting Jesus in your heart.” Jesus urged people not to “accept” him, but to “follow him” and to do this by believing and obeying his Gospel/Word.

³This verse is a kind of early creed showing the essential elements of the Gospel which had to be grasped before the candidate was ready for baptism. The Kingdom of God was the first item on the agenda since Jesus had made it so in his own preaching of the Gospel. The Gospel was first preached by Jesus (Heb. 2:3).

⁴It is important to note the clear definition of the Gospel of the grace of God given in Acts 20:25. It was the heralding of the Kingdom of God. It is a disastrous mistake to try to separate the gospel of grace from the Kingdom of God. Acts 20:24 is defined by Acts 20:25.

⁵It is important to note that believing means being persuaded. There is an appeal to the rational process in the Bible. The element of understanding is essential lest the Gospel be reduced to a vague, emotional appeal lacking the content of the Kingdom of God which it always had in Jesus’ and Paul’s presentation of the faith.

⁶Note carefully that there is absolutely no change of Gospel when Paul went to the Gentiles. He takes the same salvation Message, the one Gospel of the Kingdom and the Name of Jesus, to the nations.

⁷Luke finishes with the same insistence on the Kingdom of God, thus uniting Paul’s Gospel preaching with that of Jesus (Luke 4:43, etc.). Luke also uses a full title for Jesus, “the Lord Jesus Christ.” He is the Lord Christ (see Luke 2:11) and the title “Lord” comes from the famous Messianic oracle in Ps. 110:1 where the Messiah is distinct and separate from Yahweh. The Messiah is *Adoni* (*not Adonai*) David’s Son and Lord. *Adoni* appears some 195 times in the Hebrew Bible and designates a human superior but not Yahweh who is *Adonai*

⁸This has nothing to do with popular ideas about the “immortal soul” which is not a biblical idea at all. The “souls of those” is simply “those who....” In Rom. 2:9, 10 “every soul” is the simple equivalent of “everyone.” “The souls of those who had been beheaded” is equivalent to “those who had been beheaded or executed.”

⁹The Greek aorist tense here is what grammarians call ingressive or inceptive, denoting the beginning of an action.

God at Work from Blanchard, Michigan

Last night after the Wednesday night Bible Study, we had a phone call come into the church. It was a real blessing and a huge encouragement! This is what it is all about, and part of the reason behind thinking of an internet "radio" format, for the Abrahamic Faith, to train our children!

We have a family in Danville, OH that joins our services every Sunday morning and Wednesday evening on CoGcast. Through this vital ministry (CoGcast) of the Church of God, we have been helping to build this families faith and over the last year +/- has shared the services with her husband and step children. I shared a couple of weeks ago (on CoGpastors) that her step daughter, Kelsey who is 8 until next month, has come to faith and is looking forward to being baptized as soon as possible, took notes of the Bible Study last night, just the thought of a youngster paying attention is a blessing, but taking notes also, that just set my wood on fire! I have been bouncing off the walls excited to hear this!

Kelsey's notes from church tonight....WOW

God is always with us.

If God takes care of the flowers He will take care of you.

So do not worry and get stressed out because God is always with you.

God loves you, so you should love God.

God will always be there with you.

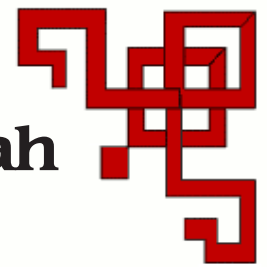
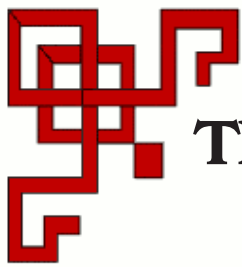
God does things for a reason.

God takes care of all the living things around us.

My heart is filled with such joy from just these few sentences. Sometimes it is better to look at life thru the eyes of a child....they normally are a lot smarter than us!!!

I hope this encourages you has much as it did me. Think about this, 10-15 years ago we could not have even imagined such an endeavor and this family would have struggled with their faith or even worse yet, given up this truth we have learned and attended a non Abrahamic Church.

Mark DeYoung



The Day of the Lord in Zechariah

By Jan Stilson

Introduction to Zechariah

The prophecy of Zechariah is classed by twenty-first century scholars as apocalyptic literature. Broadly defined, this genre of literature includes the characteristics of narrative with a theme of prophecy, often accompanied by an angel messenger. The angel may take the prophet on a tour, or explain future events to him. (Walton et al, 798). The literature relies on the use of symbols, numbers and mythology. It draws from the Bible and from extra biblical literature. The symbols often cannot be interpreted literally. The Bible Background Commentary says that the apocalyptic is not the message. (Loc Cit).

Most post-modern scholars set the time of Zechariah chapters 9-14 at around 480 B.C. These chapters will be the focus of this paper. The book itself is set in the era of 520 B.C.

Some scholars have argued that Zechariah is heavily edited because the writing style is vastly different throughout the book showing signs of editing. (Gabelein, 596.)

It is thought by others that Zechariah wrote the entire book, but that the last few chapters were written later in his life since the editorial style is slightly different from the first part of the book. (Loc Cit.)

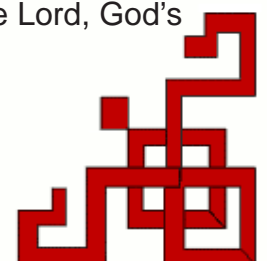
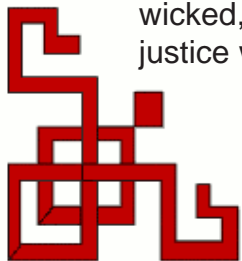
In 480 B.C. or C.E. the exiles had returned from Babylon and the walls of Jerusalem were being rebuilt. Contemporaries of Zechariah included Ezra, Nehemiah, the builders, and Haggai, the other prophet. Zerubabel was the governor. (Ibid. 596).

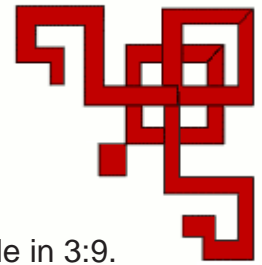
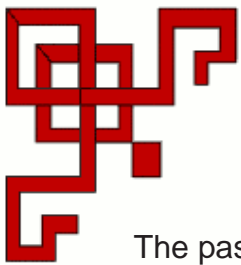
The authorship of the book of Zechariah is thought to be Zechariah. He was grandson of Iddo, the priest. He apparently inherited his grandfather's priestly office. (Walton, 595). This gave him the unusual position of being both a prophet and a priest. These two classes of servants often were at odds with each other, and it was not common for one to hold both offices. Here we may have a type of Christ who will be prophet, priest and King.

The general message of Zechariah to a nation in tension is one of hope. (Russell 93). The Lord will fight for his people and if they will call on him, he will restore them. He will fight for Jerusalem and protect his followers living there. Some of the descriptions in the book are dark and fierce. Not only is strong military terminology symbolized in the vision of the four horses patrolling the earth, but also in the cataclysmic changes to the terrain that allow God's people to escape through an east-west valley that formed in the earthquake that split the Mount of Olives. In this same catastrophe, the land south of Jerusalem is leveled and made plain.

The audience of the message of Zechariah is the people of God. Boda says this is a community in tension. They will not follow the leadership from the house of David and therefore are turned away from the Lord. (Boda, 43). The people have turned aside to follow after the teachings of the false prophets. Zechariah calls them to turn to God and to receive hope and blessing.

The Day of the Lord is a major theme of the last four chapters. This day represents the judgment brought upon the Jews and Gentiles at the time of the return to the exile. (Russell, 95). On another apocalyptic level, it also forecasts conditions and events in the future when Yahweh return and fight the wicked, and execute his judgment of punishment upon them. On the Day of the Lord, God's justice will be complete. (Ibid, 380).





Original Meaning

The passages in Zechariah which refer to the day of the Lord begin with an oracle in 3:9. "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." Verse 3:10 indicates that the duration of the Lord's day will go beyond one day. In fact, the Lord's day will endure long enough that men can own homes, and grow fig trees. "In that day everyone will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine....and fig tree."

There are many references in Zechariah that refer to "that day", but they don't appear again after chapter 3 until 9:12 "This very day" is the same day at 3:9. In this very day the Lord begins to execute his plan laid out in 9:13-17. The Lord will fight for Zion using Judah and Ephraim as his bow.

The description of redeemed Jerusalem continues in chapter twelve. "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to the peoples around." Here follows a series of actions "in that day" that describe conditions in the day of the Lord.

Verse 3: "Jerusalem a heavy stone."

V.4 "every horse with bewilderment"

V.6 "Judah a firepot,"

V.8 "Lord defend inhabitants of Jerusalem" and "house of David will be like God."

V.9 "destroy all the nations."

V.10 "Pour out on House of David and inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication."

V11. "Great mourning."

Chapter 13:1 "a fountain opened."

V.2 "cut off names of idols, remove prophets and unclean spirit."

V.4 "prophets be shamed."

Chapter 14:1 "A day is coming for the Lord"

V.2 "all nations gathered against Jerusalem"

V.3 "the Lord will fight those nations."

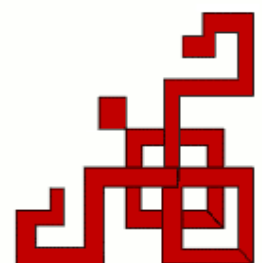
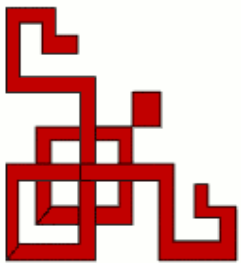
V.4 "His feet will stand on the Mt of Olives"

V.7 "Unique day—no luminaries"

Zechariah 12 is rich in the imagery which describes the day of the Lord as "in that day," The "heavy stone" in verse 3 is connected to the bowl in verse 2. If the bowl in verse 2 is the threshold as the Hebrew suggests, then the heavy stone or immovable rock is the threshold slab which would be dislodged during heavy military action and destroyed. This would indicate the gates of the city were torn down. It would signify total destruction of a city—a staggering occurrence. (Walton, 807).

In verse 4 every horse is struck with bewilderment. This significantly affects the horses of the enemies which are blinded. Panic sets in. (Gabalein 684). In their panic, the tribe or clan of Judah is a firepot. In verse 6 firepot means a brazier (Holladay). God's leaders are like a fire destroying wood and grain. (Gaebelein 682).

In this terrible scene God will defend the feeble population of Jerusalem. During the exile it was not protected or populated. Now it was full of refugees who are unable to defend themselves. In verse 8 God makes them to be like David—great warriors—God will go before them. (Loc Cit).





In verse 10, God's Spirit will pour out upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem so they will recognize that in piercing the Son they have rejected the Father. As Israel begged for a King, they also rejected the Father. (1 Sam. 8:4,7). Verse 10 is messianic (Gaebelein 683) but it also speaks on another level of Yahweh. The people of God often turned aside from Him and played the harlot. This is the principle message of Hosea. In spite of their unfaithfulness, God still considered himself the husband of the harlot.

Chapter 12 verse 11 conveys great mourning. The Expositor's Commentary says there will be national contrition led by civil and religious leaders. There will be public mourning in the plain of Meggido, (Gaebelein, 684) the site of the last great battle. Scholars are unsure where Hadan-Rommon is.

Chapter 13 opens with healing water. A fountain, or living water will cleanse of sin and impurity. (Ibid, 685). Part of the cleansing process is to clean up the historical record. Verse 2 indicates the names of the idols will be cut off. This reminds me of evidence found by archeologists working in Egypt. They have discovered that certain Pharaohs have nearly disappeared from history because their faces and their names were chiseled off the obelisks and monuments in Egypt. In Zechariah's day the land was cleansed of the idols and they were remembered no longer.

Verse 4 discusses the false prophets who were ashamed to be known as prophets. If their idols had been discredited, no wonder they would not want to put on a hairy robe, the identifying garment of a prophet, much as John the Baptist might have looked. They would not want to be known as prophets of the fallen idols.

These prophets practice self-flagellation which made wounds upon their body. Verse 6 asks the question, "What are these wounds between your arms?" These wounds were received in the house of their friends, the Hebrew indicating that "friends" means "lover of man." (Holladay). Some have thought this verse is messianic, referring to Christ being wounded by his fellow Jews. (Gaebelein 686). Lovers of man indicate worship of idols. (Baldwin, 197).


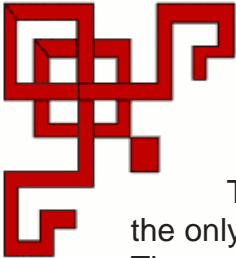
It is not over until one third of the people have been spared from the holocaust. This one third will further be disciplined and refined in the fire like gold. Finally, in verse 9, they will call upon the Lord, which is the purpose of the Day of the Lord. He will answer them.

Chapter 14:1 opens with "A day is coming." Baldwin says this means, "A day is coming for the Lord." (Baldwin 200). That day is the time of Jacob's distress, (Jeremiah 30:7). There is no other day like it, but Israel will be brought through it, "saved from it." The Lord will fight the nations gathered at Jerusalem. Baldwin says the Lord intervenes on behalf of his people (Loc Cit). He further says that this passage is apocalyptic. The Mt. of Olives is mentioned here by name for the first time in the Bible. Jesus may have had this in mind when he said "remove this mountain in Mark 11:23.

Whose feet shall touch down on the Mt. of Olives? We think Christ shall return there, (Acts 1:11,12) but it is not impossible that God should also return to that very point with the New Jerusalem. Does this position the dramatic cleaving of the Mt. of Olives at the time of Christ's coming, or after the millennium when God descends and begins the great white throne judgment?

In verses 7-10 is described the nature of the change that will occur in a cataclysmic fashion when Yahweh comes to earth. There will be two seasons, not four. There will be a new kind of day with no darkness. There will be new terrain in the Holy Land. (Gaebelein 692) The Dead Sea will be a living sea as the new river flows east into it. (Loc Cit.) The river will also flow west indicating that Jerusalem will be elevated to the point that it is the new continental divide. It would seem that the new heavens and new earth will become a reality with the coming of Yahweh.





The story does not end here. God will be King over all the land and, He will be the only one, and his name the only one. No more idols; no more trinity.

Those who resist in verse 12, including men and beasts, will be subjected to plague in which their eyes and tongues rot while they are standing on their feet. Perhaps this is the blindness which struck the horses earlier in the book. It reminds me of radiation sickness. Panic sets in as men begin to fight each other. Because the animals are struck the men have no means of escape.

Finally, in verse 16, justice will rule through the reign of God and, men will come up to worship at Jerusalem annually. If they don't they will get the plague. This threat sounds like the millennial reign in which mortal nations will live. It seems to indicate they have bowed the knee to Christ and God, but not the heart. It sounds like they still have free will, but if they exercise their will to not worship in Jerusalem, they will become ill. If this were speaking of the eternal age, it doesn't seem like men will have to be forced to worship in that age.

God's name will be written upon the headbands of the priests, and on the bells of the horses' harnesses. This is significant of sacred status. (Walton 809). The cook pots throughout the land will be clean and will be sacred. There will be no need for "craftsmen", i.e. merchants or tradesmen in the temple. The cookware of the people will be holy enough to use for temple sacrifices. The Land, the people, the rituals and utensils are purified in the Day of the Lord.

Bridging the Context


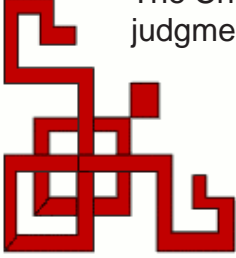
The prophecy of Zechariah was influential for three eras. First, the people who returned from exile were dependent upon a word from the Lord to help them discern between God's prophets and the false prophets. They needed direction as they settled in Jerusalem, rebuilt it and defended it. Secondly, this prophecy was important to the people of the first century. Jesus referred to Zechariah on several occasions so that the teachings were not only reviewed, but made more important and impactful because Jesus spoke them.

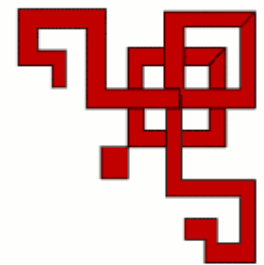
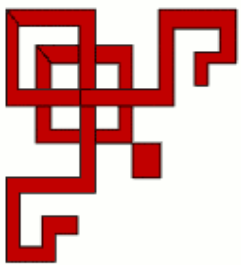
Third, they are important to our generation because of the prophetic teaching regarding the day of the Lord in which the coming of Jesus is a major factor. The day of the Lord is the beginning of God's judgment in which he has empowered Jesus to begin the act on his behalf. Today's Church of God must be a beacon to the world.

The future day of the Lord represents a sudden change in the earth and perhaps the entire universe. These changes include a splitting of earth at the Mt. of Olives; two new rivers pouring forth the one to the east and one to the west; and, change in the sun, moon and stars which will "thicken" or congeal, and night will be no more. Rev. 21:23 says "and the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb."

These changes will take time. Mankind will nearly perish during the terrible times, as will beasts and vegetation. Joel 2:21 says, "Do not fear, O, Land. Rejoice and be glad for God has done great things." Joel indicates the beasts and the land will be fruitful and secure and the new order will settle into two seasons, summer and winter, early and latter rains, which is conducive to agriculture. (Joel 2:23). Through it all God is with his people and those who call upon his name will be saved. (Joel 2:32).

The Church of God has historically taught and continues to emphasize that the day of the Lord is judgment, which brings punishment to the wicked and reward to the righteous. It will continue





during the millennium ending with the loosing of Satan from the pit at the end of the thousand years of peace. Sydney Magaw drew up a chart and printed it as a tract around 1938 which illustrates that the day of the Lord will last a thousand years. We are living now in man's day that will soon give way to God's day. Our challenge is to be ready and to rejoice in its coming.

The Word for Today

The book of Zechariah is as much a history book as it is prophecy. Boda makes the point that history belongs back at the family table as does theology. (Boda,22.) I would add that prophecy belongs there as well as missions. There needs to be a correlation in the post modern church which teaches us the backgrounds to the Bible stories we grew up with, teaches us the theological implications of those stories, and sends us forth into the world with that important message for the future. Therein lies the spiritual meaning for the post-modern cynical generation.

Worrying about reaching those errant generations as the older generation dies away, will not bring the people into the body of Christ. Emphasizing a message of truth and hope for the future, such as is found for Israel in Zechariah, and for us through Christ, is what spiritually needy people need to hear and to possess. They need to feel that God will defend them, will save them, will bring justice, and will usher in the Kingdom for his Son, and for his people. God, himself will possess earth as His home.

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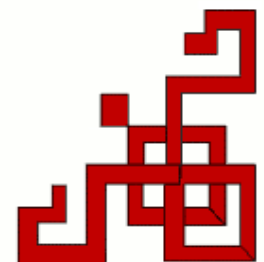
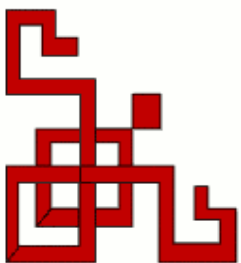
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Rosa Linda Ramsey

Rosa Linda Ramsey, age 59, of Fort Valley passed away Monday, October 25, 2010 at Winchester Medical Center.

A funeral service will be conducted 11:00 A.M. Friday at Fort Valley Church Of God In Christ Jesus, 8540 Fort Valley Rd., Fort Valley with Pastor Chris Seiders and Pastor Dale Ramsey officiating. Burial will be in the Boyer Cemetery, Fort Valley.

Mrs. Ramsey was born October 26, 1950 in Shenandoah County, a daughter of Elga Marie Wynkoop Stoneburner of Strasburg and the late Bernard Winston Wymer. She was a retired teacher with the Shenandoah County School System having taught for 33 years, a member of Fort Valley Church Of God, the Shenandoah County Retired Teachers, P. Buckley Moss Society and a volunteer at the Fort Valley Community Library.

Surviving with her mother are her husband, Gary D. Ramsey; her daughter, Elizabeth Ramsey Dove and husband, Adam of Broadway; two sons, Brad Ramsey of Staunton and Mark Ramsey and wife, Becky of Leesburg; two granddaughters, Virginia Kate Ramsey and Lillian C. Dove; two sisters, Tammy Stinson of Woodstock and Vanessa Taylor of Winchester; her mother-in-law, Ellen M. Ramsey of Fort Valley; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Pallbearers will be Gene Hamman, Steve Adams, Brad Ramsey, Mark Ramsey, Luke Ramsey and Adam Dove.

The family will receive friends at Stover Funeral Home, 177 No. Holliday St., Strasburg on Thursday from 7 to 9 P.M.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Compassion Cupboard, Inc., P.O. Box 611, Strasburg, VA 22657 or Fort Valley Community Library, 6190 Woodstock Tower Rd., Fort Valley, VA 22652.

Mary "Peggy" Winner

Mary "Peggy" Winner, 81, of Ripley, IL passed away at 6:57 p.m., Friday, October 22, 2010 at her residence. She was born on June 25, 1929 in Rock Island, IL a daughter of the late Floyd Thomas & F l o r e n c e M a r g u e r i t e Gustafson Travis. She married Waldon Test



Winner, Sr. on September 21, 1946 in Griggsville, IL. He preceded her in death on March 11, 1991. Surviving are two sons; Pastor Waldon T. Winner, Jr. & wife Peggy of Williamston, SC, W. Travis Winner of Pelzer, SC, two daughters; Peggy Jo Dyer & husband David of Ripley, IL, Penny Ann Chevillot & husband Daniel of Williamston, SC, (12) grandchildren, (20) great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by one brother; Floyd Travis, two sisters; Pearl Eva Ahlgren, Helen Marie Travis. Peggy was a member of the Ripley Church of God. She was a Sunday school teacher for over 60 years. She served as the Ripley Village Clerk for over 25 years. She was a life-long homemaker & worked as office manager for Shaw Chiropractic Clinic in Mt. Sterling for 15 years & was a data entry clerk for the IL Secretary of State for over seven years before retiring. Funeral services will be held at 11:00 a. m. on Tuesday, October 26, 2010 at the Ripley Church of God with Pastors Waldon Winner, Jr. and G.Gordon Landry officiating. Interment will follow at Ripley Cemetery in Ripley, IL. Visitation will be held on Monday from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Worthington Funeral Home in Rushville, IL. Memorials may be given to the Ripley Church of God or the Ripley Cemetery Association.

Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb

By Arlen F. Rankin

Throughout the Old Testament Jehovah was called the Redeemer of His people. For instance, Psa. 19:14 addresses Him, "O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" and Job declares of the living God, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth...in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25-27; cf. Rev. 21:1-4; Matt. 5:8). When the name "Lord" (in all capital letters) is found in the King James Version, it is "Jehovah" in the original Hebrew. The prophets likewise proclaim the same truth. "Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is His name..." (Jer. 50:34). "Thus saith the Lord, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 43:14; cf. 47:4; 48:17; 41:14). Again Isaiah writes, recording the words of his God, "all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob" (49:26, 7; 60:16; 54:5, 8; 63:16).

Though the heavenly Father is the Redeemer, He saves through the agency of His appointed and anointed Son. Therefore, Paul says, "all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ...to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5:18, 19). John concurs, saying, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins...and we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:10, 14; John 3:15-17; 17:3).

We "are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Pet. 1:18-21; cf. Rev. 13:8; Rom. 4:22-25).

Paul adds that we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:24-26, cf. vv. 19-23; 5:6-11; Matt. 26:28).

The new song of prophetic vision is addressed to the "Lamb" before whom they bowed in adoration, "...thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:6-9). May we be among that number who sing this song of victory when Jesus returns to give life to his people, the redeemed and adopted children of God by faith (Gal. 3:13, 14, 26-29; 4:4-7).

Believers are the chosen of God with His predetermination that we might have "the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" which in the ages to come shall be manifest in exceeding richness. See Eph. 1:3-7; 2:4-8; Col. 1:14; Rom. 8:28-30).