

Grace and Glory

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He shall feed his flock
like a shepherd:
he shall gather the
lambs with his arm,
and carry them
in his bosom.

ISAIAH 40:11.

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THE MEANING SIMPLIFIED



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Editor: Gene Hawkins



“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. II Tim. 3:1

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 1Th 4:16

The above citations describe two major extremes surrounding the days wherein Jesus will return. The first announces that a climate of “perilous times,” will prevail throughout the whole world signaling the bodily return of Jesus, as King of kings and Lord of lords. The word “perilous” carries the meaning of “reducing the strength; difficult, i.e. dangerous, or (by implication) furious:-fierce, perilous.” Jesus also announced this same condition declaring, “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matt. 24:37 There were a great number of ungodly characteristics which defined the “days of Noe,” but one of them is found in Gen. 6:11.

“The earth also was corrupt (to decay, i.e. ruin, batter, cast off, corrupt, destroy) before God, and the earth was filled with **violence.**” (wrong; unjust gain:--cruel, damage, false, injustice, oppression, unrighteous, violence) All of these terms are an apt description of our present day, declaring very plainly that “the days of Noe,” are here!

The recent beheadings by the Islamic group ISIS has put an exclamation point on that fact, and there are a number who have pointed it out. Newsmax ran this headline: **“Franklin Graham: World Turmoil Could Signal ‘End of the age’”** The article continues, quoting Mr. Graham as saying “The slaughter, persecution, and denigration of Christians in the Middle East and around the globe has a chilling resemblance to Gospel warnings of “signs of the end of the age.” Bro. Graham, who is now the CEO and president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Assn. also cited other troubles around the world such as “killing of Christians by Muslims from Indonesia to Bangladesh to Pakistan,...China tearing down church buildings,..... Christians tortured, beheaded, and crucified in Iraq, with villages burned and churches destroyed, and much the same in Syria.” He

then quoted from Matt. 24 declaring that “there would be wars and rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, and pestilence....Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.”

It is amazing how some critics, even as in Jesus’ time “strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel,” as they enlarge on minor details and miss the overall intent of scripture. This same news article records Robert Mulholland, retired professor of New Testament of Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, as being “skeptical, saying events in Syria are not connected to prophecies of the ‘end times.’ In this case, Isaiah was predicting the demise of Damascus at the hands of Assyria in the eighth century B.C. If one wanted to try to make the case for Isaiah 17 predicting the end times, then Iran [the present day successor to Assyria] would be responsible for Damascus demise and not its primary ally.” This man apparently overlooked the overall picture presented by Mr. Graham, enlarging only on his one reference to Syria, as though Isaiah 17 were the only time Syria is used in scripture.

Pope Frances has also been quoted as saying: “World’s Many Conflicts Amount to W.W. III.” He then explained that “the spate of conflicts around the globe today were effectively a ‘piecemeal’ Third World War, condemning the arms trade and ‘plotters of terrorism’ sowing death and destruction.” 4

Former U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger has also weighed in on the current crisis with ISIS declaring that “Iran is a larger problem for the United States than the threat of the Islamic State’s jihadist aggression. I think a conflict with ISIS --- important as it is --- is more manageable than a confrontation with Iran, explaining that Iran is a powerful nation with incentive to reconstruct its historical ancient Persian “Empire while ISIS is a group of adventurers with a very aggressive ideology. There has come into being a kind of a Shia belt from Tehran through Baghdad to Beirut. This gives Iran the opportunity to reconstruct the ancient Persian Empire --- this itme under the Shia label --- in the rebuilding of the Middle East that will inevitably have to take place when the international borders are drawn. The borders of the settlement of the 1919-’20 are essentially collapsing.”

The Secretary went on to denounce the beheading of an American journalist as “an insult to the United States, which requires that we demonstrate that this is not an act that is free.” He further declared that “if the United States can enlist other countries in its fight against ISIS, or get other more local groups to do the ground fighting, we might actually destroy them.”

All of these reports simply confirm that the days of violence which characterized those days preceding the flood, are upon us, and we are assured, by scripture, that they will wax worse and worse. “Rumours of war,” will give way to full scale conflict around this world and no amount of diplomacy will stop it.

The present dilemma with ISIS demonstrates how difficult it is to gather a coalition to resist them. There is even great chaos and confusion surrounding their name. Political correctness seems to be one great problem for the last “S” in ISIS stands for Syria. Thus the name must be changed to ISIL, the “L” signifying “the Levant,” in reference to countries bordering on the East Mediterranean Sea, from Turkey to Egypt. It seems that none can be allowed to make the connection of this ungodly terrorist organization with Syria, even though they were largely developed in that land.

5 Many nations have openly condemned the ungodly and barbarous tactics of ISIS, but are reluctant to join forces in trying to stop their march into Iraq. We also know that nations such as Russia and China have their own agendas, and are not really interested in world peace. Their objective is rather to dominate, and God’s Word declares plainly that seven kings will form a coalition in the end-time. The desire in the heart of each of those national leaders, however, is not to help one another, but rather to become world ruler, and one of them will achieve that end. Until then, violence around this little earth ball will continue to escalate.

We are confident that Mr. Kissinger is right on target in regard to his assessment of Iran. We have stated for some time that this ungodly nation will undoubtedly develop a nuclear weapon and is a very likely candidate to trigger the nuclear conflagration described in Rev. 8:8. “And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;” We would point out that this scene will not happen until the Church is already in heaven, but the events, and preparations leading up to it, are already in motion.

However, we would have to disagree with the former Secretary’s comment about the destruction of ISIS. Revelation 17:12 plainly asserts that “.....the ten horns which thou sawest

are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.” It has been declared in previous issues that these ten kings bear startling characteristics to the many terrorist groups presently in existence around the world such as Hezbollah, Hamas, Al-Qaeda, and now ISIS, for they “have received no kingdom as yet.” These are groups who desperately want to be recognized as a political state or “kingdom” and are making every effort to do so. They are also said to “make war with The Lamb,...” and “....shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.” Rev. 17:14,16 These facts make it a “religious war,” “JIHAD.” We were shocked when Pres. Obama announced on national television that ISIS was not Islamic or religious. The first “I” in ISIS stands for Islam. (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.) Religion has always been the issue in the Middle East. Most scholars agree that the ten judgments against Egypt were a direct attack against the “gods of Egypt.” The gods of the Philistines, and Baal all made their case against The God Of Israel. God answered the Syrians this way in I Kings 20:28. “And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.”

6

God further instructed Israel against the gods of the Amorites (Josh. 24:15) even before they crossed the Jordan and went into Canaan. “....When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land,....” Num. 33:51

This indictment concerning these multiple gods is written against Israel well after they had claimed possession of this new land. “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him.” Judges 10:6

Nothing has changed in this land. The battle is still false

gods against The True, even The Lamb, Christ Jesus. It is also rather ironic that God would use false religion to destroy the false church, and these numerous reports around the world tell us that such “jihad,” or holy war, has already begun. That false church is Catholicism, as has been reported repeatedly in these pages. The present day reports of abuse against Christians, means primarily abuse against Catholics. We are greatly saddened that the term Christian, in most news media outlets around the world, means Catholic, but that is actually a contradiction in terms. Catholicism has long taught that salvation **comes only** through the Catholic Church, and Pope Frances re-affirmed that, as reported in a previous issue, stating that it is dangerous to have a personal relationship with Christ outside of the Church. If that be the case, then Christ is not the Savior! That distinction would belong to The Catholic Church, thus robbing Jesus of glory that belongs only to Him. Thus she is known as “the false church,” as opposed to the True, Born-Again, Body Of CHRIST, and according to this text in Revelation 17, God will use religion to destroy religion.

7

It makes perfect sense for these terror groups to attack those whom they “perceive” as the people of The Lamb. Satan and his “false religious gods” have long persecuted God’s People because he is, in fact, against God. Many battles against Israel, in the O.T., were in reality a direct attack against “The God of Israel.” Is it any wonder, then, that these terrorist groups would choose to wage “Jihad” or holy war against Catholicism? After all, She is the primary representative of Christianity, even in the eyes of the mainstream media and the world.

All the aforementioned news items concentrate on the horrendous violence which prevails around the entire world specifically fulfilling the prophecy that “in the last days perilous times shall come.” There is no doubt that those days are here, but there is surely a wide variation in how to handle such crises. Much of Christendom continues to preach II Chron. 7:14. “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” Men call for “national days of prayer,” and politicians are persuaded that if men would only step up to the plate and vote certain regimes “out of office, we can turn this country around.” Scripture declares that neither of these “scenarios” will ever work.

The day of prayer and fasting with the hope of restoration is gone. Regardless of what efforts politicians or preachers choose to use, God's Word is very plain that nothing even resembling a revival, is prophesied. Instead we read plainly, "Let no man deceive you **by any means:** for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;" II Thess. 2:3 "That day" is a reference to the grand finale when Christ comes to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords, to set up His Own Kingdom when He will reign as God for 1,000 years. Some seem to think that there will be some kind of spiritual revival before that time, but this verse is very plain that a "falling away," (defection from truth (properly, the state) ("apostasy")):--falling away, forsake.) will only culminate in the revelation of the antichrist, meaning sin will become even more rampant until that man of sin is revealed. The sinful, carnal, climate of our day will, in no wise, improve!

Undoubtedly men will continue to make every effort to stem the tide, as well they must, but there will be no long term solutions to the voluminous problems which face this world. 8 Jesus did, however, instruct us in light of these exact same days. "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28 "These things," are a reference to the vast catalog of events recorded in Matt. 24 and in the verses previous to it in this chapter. There are the items which appear in news media daily, such as "wars and commotions,....kingdom against kingdom: (one terrorist group against another?)...great earthquakes... famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you,for my name's sake.....And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh..... there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people..... and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear,And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke 21:9-27 This final promise will be fulfilled when Jesus is openly revealed to all the world, and

“every eye shall see him.” Rev. 1:7 The entire tribulation period will take place before that but Jesus’ exhortation in verse 28 is not to try and “correct” these “things,” but to “**look up** when these things **begin** to come to pass.” Men must not look to their own efforts, but to Him and it is because “your redemption draweth nigh.” Note also that we are to do this when these things “begin to come to pass,” meaning at this present hour. They have already begun, but this message of redemption out of such a condition is not the message we hear in today’s world, which brings us to the second citation at the beginning of this article. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: I Thess. 4:16

This appearance of Jesus will take place about 7 years before “every eye shall see Him,” so the same exhortation to “look up,” must prevail in our experience **at this present time**. Paul tells us emphatically in the next chapter of this book: “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” I Thess. 5:2 Coming as a “thief” and coming when “every eye shall see Him,” clearly testify to the fact that Jesus will make more than one appearance when He returns to this earth. The message for us, at this present hour, is to be “looking up,” for our translation to glory at this first appearance as “.... the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” I Thess. 4:16,17

We have noted that there are those who truly believe they can reverse the trend of wickedness which has already begun. There are also those who are persuaded that they can bring an entire nation to repentance. Still others are convinced that they must take the gospel to the entire world and then be able to present it on a silver platter to Jesus. Then we see those who declare with Solomon, that “there is nothing new under the sun,” and all these “signs,” mean absolutely nothing insofar as the immediate future is concerned. There are also those in complete denial as to what these harbingers of Jesus’ coming mean, while others see the possibilities for great “shortages” of food and other commodities and are making every effort to “stockpile” and make provision for their own preservation.

Every person in this world will eventually be held to account for his own actions. We are disappointed that we do not hear more from “mainstream,” Christendom about the eminent return of Jesus and how we should conduct ourselves in view of that momentous time. Jesus had the same message for all seven Churches in Rev. 2 & 3; “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;” Rev. 2:7 The problem for most of The Church is that they do not WANT to hear His message. Such a message revealed by Paul, the apostle to The Church, is very plain: “....let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” I Thess. 5:6 Peter likewise cries out “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God,....” II Pet. 3:11-12 This kingdom apostle issued such an admonition, especially to the Jews for a time yet future to our day, but the meaning is exactly the same. Our lives are to be changed to reflect “all godliness and holy conversation.” We too must be literally motivated by the prospect of Jesus’ return as we also “haste” to that great day of redemption. Now is not the time to become complacent and simply “hope for the best.” It is rather, imperative, that we heed Jude’s specific warnings and exhortations, on how to conduct ourselves, even in regard to those around us, in light of these final days of this Church Age. “But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Jude 17-25

**LOOK UP AND REJOICE, FOR SURELY OUR
REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH!**

SPIRITUAL ALZHEIMER'S

Dr. Vicky Moots

This message is about Spiritual Alzheimer's. It is rated "X" that is, for adults only, or mature audiences. Can anybody here relate to that? This is not for children or babes, because Alzheimer's is a disease that happens as we get older, mostly characterized by forgetting. There is a spiritual form of Alzheimer's, which we are supposed to develop as we get more mature and grow in Christ. As we go from, children and young adults, to becoming full-grown, mature adults, we forget. That is part of becoming mature Christians; we develop Spiritual Alzheimer's. Everybody has heard about Alzheimer's Disease, right? I guess there was a doctor named Alzheimer that named it, and it is mostly characterized by forgetting, but it includes some other things, that we will talk about, which also happen to us spiritually, or should happen to us spiritually, as we mature.

11

God, Himself, gives us an example in Hebrews 10:17. "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin," and I will say there is no more remembrance of sin. God does not just overlook sin; when the price has been paid. Rather, when the penalty is paid in full, then it can be forgotten; it is erased. It is much like coming to my office. If you have a bill which you have paid in full, then you should not receive another bill that says you owe something. If you did, I would get a call from you saying: "That's been paid!" We should have that same attitude with our sin when Satan tries to tell us that our sins have not been covered, forgiven and forgotten. We should tell him, "Well, I'm sorry but I have my proof here, I have my cancelled check; I have the proof in the account book that the debt has been paid, and the sins are remembered no more." God says here, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;" and the word, "their," refers to us, that is, all who have been born again. God has forgotten their sins. He purposely chose to forgive and to forget, and we are supposed to do the same. We too must forgive and forget.

Ephesians 4:31,32 record it thus. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice, and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another **even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven**

you.” And I will also add remember He has forgotten; He has forgiven and He has forgotten. We are to do the same; He is our example. We need to let our forgetter start working. As we mature in the natural, it happens without trying. If we mature spiritually, it should also happen automatically. It should be our nature to forget those things. We should not have to try to forget the things that people did to us in the past. We should not have any more bitterness or anger towards a brother or a sister, or anyone. If we realize that God has forgiven them, we also forgive them.

I will tell you as, a physician, and naturally speaking, that children always remember the bad things that you do to them. If you give them a shot, they will remember you next time. That is children. The nice part about my elderly patients, with Alzheimer’s, is that it doesn’t matter what you do to them. You can walk out of the room and come back and say, “Hi, how are you?” And they’ll say, “Fine.” They forget, and as we spiritually mature in Christ and become no more “children tossed to and fro,…” we become full-grown Saints of God. We can forget too. We can forget the bad things. We *will* forget the bad things, not can. It is a part of growing up in Christ; growing old, maturing in Him, and forgetting.

I am sure you are ready for this next Scripture, and that you have already thought about Philippians 3:13,14, where Paul asserts: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, *forgetting*;…” ***forgetting***. If you do nothing else, this one thing I do - forgetting. It is o.k. to forget. “Forgetting those things which are *behind*, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.” There are certain things in the past which we remember, and other things we forget, which is also true with Alzheimer’s. But it seems like the bad things are forgotten. You will hear older people tell stories about their childhood, and they remember the “good old days,” but there are plenty of things that they forget, like what they had for breakfast. They can remember some of the good things from the past, but we are to forget all those things which are in the past that relate to us. There are things that we have done which we might glory in; things that others have done to us that we might get upset about or hold a grudge against someone, or be angry. We need to let all those things go. We need to forget the things which are behind, even the blessings; not in the sense that you forget what God has done

for you, but you cannot live on your past blessings. You cannot just say, “Oh, I remember the time when God gloriously filled me with the Holy Spirit, or I remember a time in the past when God healed me.” You are to forget those things and live in the present, now. What about today? Is God still blessing you today? Yes, because He’s the same yesterday, today and forever. So we forget those things which are behind and press forward to those things which are before us.

Sometimes we need a little help remembering. So what do you do? Write it down. Hebrews 10:16 makes the point. “This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord. I will put My laws into their hearts and into their minds will I write them.” So God gets out His little pen and He writes these things down so that we do not have to remember them with our brains.

I discovered something recently about Alzheimer’s as we went to the nursing home where we hold a Church service once a month. I bring a short simple message on a verse or two, and then we sing the old songs. The last time we went, they brought this little lady up from the Alzheimer’s unit, and she was just sitting there. It didn’t seem as though she could read the song book or anything. It did not appear that she was getting anything out of it. And then as we ended this particular old song, (I can’t even remember which one it was - see there, I’m forgetting) she sang the chorus all by herself. She had that song in her heart. You couldn’t carry on a conversation with her, but that song was in her heart. She remembered the things that God did for her because God wrote them on her heart, and she could not forget that. Her physical memory was gone, but her spiritual memory was still there. It was written down permanently in her heart.

Proverbs 3 also speaks on this subject of forgetting. “My son, forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments.....Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck, write them upon the tables of thine heart.” V. 1,3 Solomon is speaking here about the law, not Moses’ law, but rather, the Word of God of which we just read in Hebrews, that He was going to write it on the tables of our heart and in our mind. Proverbs 71,3 also confirm, “My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee....Bind them upon thy fingers....” Have you ever heard about tying a string around your

fingers to help you remember? Maybe this is where it came from. “Bind them upon thy fingers; write them upon the tables of thine heart.” The Word of God must go beyond being a mind thing, that is, a mental task of trying to memorize God’s Word. It must needs be written on the fleshly table of your heart, and the Holy Spirit does that. He engraves that into your heart, the same way that we are engraved in His hand, so that He will not forget us. Establish it by studying the Word of God, and then it becomes part of you forever. When the trials get too hot, the Word of God, out of the abundance of your heart, will emerge, and it will bless you. Instead of feeling discouraged and down-hearted, you will be blessed by His Word.

Another thing that happens with Alzheimer’s, is “speaking to yourself.” I always say it’s the only way to ensure a truly intelligent conversation is to speak to yourself, but it is scriptural. One is really spiritual if you are “speaking to yourself.” “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,....Giving thanks always for all things unto GodEph. 5:19-20 David spoke to himself many times as noted in the Psalms. He says, “Soul, why are you disquieted within me?” “Bless the Lord O my soul.” He is talking to himself, telling himself to bless the Lord, to forget not His benefits. We can do the same and we can be blessed when we remind ourselves that we need to rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice! We too can speak to ourselves “in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” That’s what the aforementioned lady did, as indeed, she was singing and making melody in her heart. Those words were there forever. You don’t even have to be able to carry a tune; you can sing and make melody in your heart even if you can’t with your voice. “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” So speak to yourself; that is scriptural.

Alzheimer’s, is also progressive, to the point that these people do not know where they are going or what they are doing. They cannot be in the driver’s seat anymore. You cannot allow them to drive. If they drive somewhere, they may not find their way home. If they walk out the door, they may not be able to get back home, and so they get lost. They need someone to lead them. Well, so do we, from the very beginning though. David said that. “The Lord is my shepherd.” We need a shepherd to lead

us. But as children, when we are first born again, we want to do it our way, even as children in the natural. Everyone who has had children knows that a two-year-old will say, “No, me do it.” Even before you show them how to do it they will say, “No, me do it.” They want to do it themselves, but we need someone to lead us.

Psalm 27:11 also instructs, “Teach my thy way, O Lord.” Show me Your way. It doesn’t work our way, though we may try it again and again and again. We need someone to show us the right way. We need to yield to His Holy Spirit to lead us. “Teach my thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path.” Give me clear direction. “Lead me in a plain path because of mine enemies.” We will not be lead astray if we look to the Lord for direction. This does not apply just when we go on a trip, or when you have a special need, such as changing jobs. We must be led of the Lord every day.

Alzheimer’s patients need guidance and supervision twenty-four hours a day, and so do we with Spiritual Alzheimer’s. We become spiritually mature when we learn that everything we do is really dependent on the Lord, rather than ourselves. “Not I, but Christ that liveth in me.” So, lead me in the plain path. Psalm 31, likewise teaches that we cannot be in the driver’s seat anymore. “For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore, for thy name’s sake lead me and guide me.” V. 3 We have to let Him be the driver - give Him the keys. Have you ever heard that expression, seen on a number of bumper stickers, “God is my copilot? I do not want God to be my copilot; I want Him to be my pilot. I would hand Him the keys, instead of being in the driver’s seat myself.

We lose our mind and ability to do things for ourselves, and so we have to take His mind. We give Him power of attorney. This is another thing that Alzheimer’s patients have to do – and which they choose to do, before they actually lose their ability to make choices. They give somebody, in whom they truly trust power of attorney, in order to make decisions for them when they are no longer able to make the best decisions for themselves. Is that not what we are supposed to do every day? Give Him the power of attorney, and say “Lord, not my will but Yours be done.” Even Jesus did that. This is what it means to have the Mind of Christ - “not my will but Yours be done.” This same thought is found in Philippians 2:5. “Let this mind be in you which was also

in Christ Jesus,....” The rest of this portion speaks of how Jesus was equal with God, but He did not want to have any reputation as being God. He became a man and took our place, and He humbled Himself to the death of the cross. He was willing to give up His reputation and His glory to become like us, so that He could draw us to Him. He became obedient unto death so that He could say in the garden, “Not my will, but thine be done.” Paul then counsels us to “let this mind be in you,” that is, in Christ --- that this mind be in you. Choose to do the Father’s will, not our own. We give Him that power to choose for us.

Romans 12:2 puts it another way. “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed” or changed (metamorphosed) “by the renewing of your mind.” You need a new mind; lose the old one. Renew your mind; let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. So we need to lose our mind and turn it all over to the Lord; somebody that, as in the natural, we can put our full trust in. Paul speaks this way in II Timothy 1:12. “For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed. For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” That is trusting your power of attorney. Everything, that is important to you, is committed unto Him. Your life, your future, your past, your present. Give it all to Him, and He will lead you in the way that He wants you to go. He is able to keep that, so you don’t have to worry about “where will I spend eternity?” Did I lose my salvation? This takes away legality when you give it all over to Him, and He’s the One in charge. He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him. And so we give Him the power of attorney, get out of the driver’s seat, leaving all decisions to Him.

One last thing, though I am sure there are more, but this will be the end of this message. If you go into a nursing home you may be approached by a little old lady who says, “Have you seen my mother? She said she would be here. I’ve been waiting for her.” It seems as though they reach a point where they are always waiting for someone to come back for them. They feel they are at home there, but “my mother said that she’d come back, and she’s not here yet.” They are constantly waiting for someone to come back. Are we doing that? We know that Jesus is coming. Why do we know that He’s coming? Because He said He would, and if He said He was coming, then He is coming. Why are we not

constantly watching and living as though He were coming today?

In conclusion, we have forgotten the past, we have forgotten the bad things, the good things and all we have to look forward to is the One Who's coming back for us. We do not worry about our problems, because we have put them in His control. We have cast all of our cares upon Him. We have nothing to worry about. Only one thing should occupy our minds: "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13

(Ed. note: This message was delivered at the 2014 Labor Day Convention and has been edited for print.)



Love Made Manifest

'Tis this reveals our Savior's love,
And manifests its worth:
He left His glory-home above,
To die for all the earth.

And this the Father's love made plain:
That He would freely *give*
His Son to be so cruelly slain,
That we might ever live.

How great, how wonderful the love
That drew salvation's plan!
How deep, how broad, how far above
The greatest thought of man!

And yet, how plainly 'twas expressed!
I cannot fail to see
The love of God made manifest,
When Jesus died for me.

Carlan S. Messier

REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS

... *From the Editor*

“Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying.....” John 7:28

The word cried literally means to “croak (as a raven) or scream, to call aloud, shriek, cry out.” It does not simply convey an attitude of passive interest or “concern,” but rather passion, and extreme urgency. It is the same word that Jesus used when He “**cried** again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom....” Matt. 27:50,51. Matthew does not tell us what He uttered, but John records that “he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” John 19:30 That was indeed a “cry” of tremendous passion and power. It was, in no wise, an utterance of defeat and resignation, but rather a triumphant and passionate declaration that the war was over, Satan was a defeated foe, and His Own Work of Redemption was complete; indeed His entire mission as the Lowly Sacrificial Lamb was FINISHED!

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Our opening text is the first of two such “cries” in this same chapter and reflects tremendous passion “as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.” This entire chapter centers around the Feast of Tabernacles, and is somewhat a sequel to the healing of the lame man in Ch. 5. Men seemed to be in a real quandary as to whether or not Jesus could be “the very Christ,” (V. 21) because He demonstrated such tremendous power but He had violated the law in healing on the Sabbath. Jesus assailed them for their hypocrisy regarding the Sabbath, in verses 20-24 giving rise to this passionate assertion that He is indeed the Son of God, and has demonstrated His credentials of power to prove it. He put the exclamation point on His claim with these words. “But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.” V. 29

His second cry likewise introduces a subject that is

extremely important to Him, and again should convey tremendous urgency to us. “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and **cried**, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” Some have concluded that Jesus spoke here of initial salvation, and that one is filled with the Holy Spirit when he receives Jesus as Savior. That, however, cannot be, for many of the people, including His disciples were already saved. Jesus was rather announcing a glorious blessing which would not come to pass until AFTER He was glorified, or raised from the dead, the fulfillment of which was realized on the Day Of Pentecost when “.... suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind,....And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire,....And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2;2-4

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The Holy City

Margaret Keener

“AND I JOHN SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN, PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND”—Rev. 21:2.

Heaven is said to be a prepared place for a prepared people; and earth to be our dressing room. Surely all the preparation we will ever make, is being done now. While Jesus prepares our mansion, what a blessing it is to have a part in making our wedding garments. Jesus, like any oriental bridegroom, supplies all of the material at His own expense. How lavish He is with His gifts for adornment, as He beautifies His bride! He, Himself, is the Designer of each garment.

We see the counterpart of this heavenly city in ancient Jerusalem. Small and unesteemed by the world, but of great value to the Lord. Of all the beautiful countries of the earth; Switzerland with her lofty Alps, and sunny Italy abounding in all manner of fruit, with her sky-blue waters and pretty landscapes—yet God chose Palestine as "His land," and Jerusalem to be the "City of the great King." As He chose to "put His name there," our King of kings allows us to be called by His name, or "Christians." God's love for Jerusalem can only be compared with Christ's love for His Church. 20

The history of the Jewish people and Jehovah's dealings with them, parallel that of the Church. Obedience brought blessing to the nation, and disobedience invariably brought stern reproof ; and if unheeded, punishment. God is a wise Father who rules His household well. (See Heb. 12:5-12) No parent inflicts punishment without first warning and trying to reason with a rebellious child. Sterner measures are the last resort. Sin brought reproach upon the whole family of God, as the failure of one member affects the entire Church. Israel was chosen that God might have a witness of Himself in the earth. The Church is to shine as a Light in this dark, ungodly world.

When Israel's behavior brought reproach instead of glory

to His name, God sent prophet after prophet to warn them to turn from their wicked ways or suffer the consequences. He told them exactly what their punishment would be. They would be torn from their homeland, and carried to a country whose language they would not understand. They would be sold into slavery for seventy long years. Refusing to listen, and mistreating every prophet sent to them, led to more stringent measures though He bore long with them. Ten tribes were utterly dispersed, and two tribes (that of Judah and Benjamin), were carried captive into Babylon. The City that was so dear to the heart of God was completely demolished. Instead of being exempt because of God's favor, they were held more accountable. See Ezek. 16:48.

Being fair in all His ways, God told them the exact number of years their punishment would last. After the seventy years were fulfilled, He raised up spiritual leaders to encourage them to return to their homeland, and rebuild their city. One of these outstanding men was Nehemiah. Coming to Jerusalem, he took only a few men into his confidence, as for three days and nights he looked the situation over. He did not make known publicly what his mission was, as enemies were all about. who would use any means to hinder the work of reconstruction. They had no love for the Holy City, nor wanted to see it restored to its former beauty. Riding around the city by night, he viewed the havoc the enemy had wrought. The walls were broken down and the gates burned with fire. Neh. 2:11.

With no barriers whatever, the jackals of the desert, along with every hateful and unclean beast, could roam the city at will. The bars were completely down to the enemy. The gates were consumed with fire, or the judgment of God. They had no bulwark of any kind. Before they could even start to build, there was much rubbish to be cleared out of the way, for the place was littered with refuse. Nehemiah knew that it would take much patience, toil and suffering to make anything of beauty out of such a ruin.

Only the best of material would he use in reconstructing the gates of the city, trees that had grown in the high altitude of the snow-clad mountains of Lebanon. See Ezra 3:7. Lumber that had been well seasoned — which would not swell in wet weather, nor

shrink and pull apart in times of drought. Cedars, (evergreen) trees, that had weathered the storms — illustrative of eternal life that every child of God possesses. The extreme weather produces the most beautiful hardwood.

How like the gates of the Holy City that John saw coming down from God out of heaven. Every entrance was of one huge pearl. The pearl speaks of suffering to the flesh, as the sand around which the pearl is formed, causes constant annoyance to the oyster. The beautiful film is formed as protection, and it is, in no wise, brought about in a day. It is the result of lying many years in the ocean bed. Cultured pearls which are produced by the help of man, never have the luster of those found in the depths of the sea. "Men go down to the sea in ships, and see the wonders of the deep." They have more than surface knowledge — theirs is no shallow experience. The whole secret is in being willing to brave the perils of the deep, and GO DOWN. These pearl divers bring up gems of great value. There is a depth of color that is never produced in those huge vats of cultured pearls. We may be sure that our entrance into the heavenly city is not found in the realm, nor the atmosphere, of the flesh.

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The joy that was manifested at the completion of the Holy City, cannot compare with the happiness that will be ours when we enter the City of God, to be joined to our heavenly Bridegroom. In anticipation we exclaim, with John, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath (past tense) made herself ready." Using the Bible as our mirror, may we do our best to be ready and waiting when He comes.

Praying does not mean that we tell God what to do;
but it signifies that *we* are in harmony
with His will, whether He gives
us what we ask for, or not. Then we get the best.

Faith Versus Unbelief

Katherine Devers

AND TO WHOM SWARE HE THAT THEY SHOULD NOT ENTER INTO HIS REST, BUT TO THEM THAT BELIEVED NOT? SO We See That They Could Not Enter In Because Of Unbelief"—Heb. 3:18, 19.

As we go through the Scriptures, we find two great subjects, Faith and Unbelief. We find that the children of Israel lived much in unbelief. And their failures were used for our benefit and admonition. The majority of them did not enter into the land of Canaan because of unbelief. They had faith to apply the blood of the lamb to the door posts of their houses, to escape out of Egyptian bondage, but it seems strange that they could not appropriate enough grace to enter into the land that was given to them. Unbelief robbed them of God's blessings, and we find that it sometimes reigns in our lives too, robbing us of victory. But it is as we take Christ and overcome that we are enabled to press on and fight the battles that beset us.

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In Numbers 13, we read ^{that} God sent twelve men into the land of Canaan to spy out the ^{land}. The majority of those when they returned, brought an evil report, because they did not have the faith to go on and possess the things of that land. But thank God for the men of faith such as Caleb and Joshua. Their report was that they were "well able to possess," and Caleb wanted to go up immediately. We can compare this earthly Canaan with our heavenly place in Christ Jesus. We read that God has raised us up provisionally with Christ. Many saints do not believe this, and therefore do not take their place with Christ, but fear because of the "inhabitants of the land." We have a great warfare as outlined in Eph. 6, but God has provided an armor for us. It takes faith to put on this armor, in order for us to go against the powers of darkness and possess our heavenly place.

God was very much displeased with the attitude of the children of Israel—Numbers 14. No doubt God feels the same way today with His people who fail to lay hold of what He has so graciously given to them. We want to appropriate faith, and run on and ever be victors. And faith is the victory. A Christian's life seems so fruitless where there is no faith. In chapter 15 of 1 Samuel, we have recorded an example of unbelief. In

the beginning, we find that it was thru unbelief and of course, disobedience, that sin first entered the world. And thus, it has continued down thru the years. But to note the above failure, we read, "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass"-1 Samuel 15:3. Now let us see if Saul obeyed the Lord—"But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep . . . but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they utterly destroyed"--V. 9. He disobeyed the Word of God. I am impressed , as I read this record. that many today have the same experience. Saul saved king Agag, and the best of the flock. We may have a king in our lives that we are sparing. Saul was eager to slay the weak and the vile things, but kept the strong and nice things. Many today are doing likewise. They are willing to have the mean and evil traits of the old creation cut off, and are glad to count them dead, but they keep some characteristics that may seem good, yet are just as repulsive in God's sight. It might be a desire for success in this Christian life—to be progressive, to have someone applaud and exalt us because of our deeds. I believe that some are losing out because of this. They refuse to slay Agag and all the good of the flock. They want everyone to see and applaud what they are doing. But not so with the Apostle Paul. He said, "That no flesh should glory in His sight; but he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Paul took a lowly route, a way that not many value. But some today value his route, for this is the same one that our Lord Jesus trod, and we must go this way if we want to gain the highest place in God's glory.

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Saul took the route that the world would choose. He spared the nice things —the best. When Samuel faced him with the truth, he blamed the people for his actions. He knew he had done wrong, and he tried to shift the blame. (This reminds us of the scene in the garden of Eden, where Adam blamed Eve, and Eve in turn blamed the serpent.) But the Lord said, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams"—v. 22. Many are seemingly walking on with Paul, but are leaving out much of his Gospel. They seem to be victors, but we must run according to the whole counsel of God in order to fully overcome. "To obey is better than sacrifice." To have faith is

to obey God's voice. God said of Saul's disobedience, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." Unbelief brings rebellion. That is what is wrong with the nations of the world today. Also in the people of God, we find much rebellion, and this is because there is unbelief in their hearts. Unbelief dwells in the old creation life, surely not in the new creation life. And that old life was cut off at Calvary, typified by Samuel cutting king Agag in pieces in Gilgal. Gilgal means "a rolling away," and that takes us to Calvary, where the old creation was "rolled away" forever. For us to be victors, we must reckon as God reckons. He does not see us in the old creation, but in the new, and we are to live in that life.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run, with patience the race that is set before us"—Heb. 12:1. For us to run successfully in this race, we must lay aside the sin that does so easily beset us—and that sin is unbelief. This sin upsets us and takes us off the course. Saints today

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are confused and discouraged, and let down from believing the whole counsel of God. But there are others who are believing God's Word, resting in it and on it, while looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith, who makes them overcomers. In Chapter 11 of this same book we have the witness of some worthies of faith who believed God. Enoch walked with God because he had faith. He pleased God by his walk. His name means dedicated, and his life was dedicated entirely to God, and God translated him. Let us walk on with God and be ready for the time when the Lord will translate us. Noah also believed God, because he was warned of the judgments that God was going to send, and he went about to obey what God told him to do. His name means "rest" and he surely rested in God's promises to him, by faithfully preparing the ark which proved to be their deliverance from the flood.

As we continue to appropriate the grace of God and His righteousness, our faith becomes a finished product. Our bodies then are wholly yielded to God. The Word will work for us and in us when we believe what it says.

"Faith is dead to doubt; dumb to discouragement;
blind to impossibilities.

Faith makes the up-look good; the out-look bright;
and the future glorious !"

A Heavenly Contest

Lena Taylor

“WHEREFORE, SEEING WE ALSO ARE COMPASSED ABOUT WITH SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth SO easily beset us, and LET US RUN WITH PATIENCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US.” Heb. 12:1

Recently, I read a book entitled, “How To Win Contests,” and as I read, I was impressed with one certain word in the book—“Qualifier.” According to this book, a qualifier was either a box top or a label necessary to make the entry eligible for participation. Any entry not accompanied with this “proof” that you were acquainted with the product in question, would automatically eliminate your entry.

There is an interesting parallel to this in the Christian life. I am glad to say that we are all, in a heavenly contest, if we know Christ as our Savior. The sad thing is, that many people are disqualified or eliminated from the running, simply because they do not send their proper “qualifier.” Someone may think he can use another’s qualifier, but it will never work. This is one requirement we will never be able to beg, borrow or steal.

The “qualifier” in this contest, is to know Jesus as our Savior, and to know that His precious blood cleanses from all sin. We must put on record that we have met Jesus at the Cross where full provision has been made. And there is no excuse for anyone in the world not qualifying for this place.

Every prayer or petition we ask of our heavenly Father, wings its way upwards, (air mail, if you please), covered and enveloped with the precious blood of Jesus. We know a stamp is needed for mailing an entry, so we put on a special stamp, the stamp of “faith.” Yes, our entry is stamped with faith along with the “qualifier” enclosed and sent air mail special delivery.

Naturally, a winning entry is considered, by most people, to show the individual’s skill or intelligence. But, for this spiritual contest, we don’t have to be “smart.” All we have to do is enclose our “qualifier” stamped with “faith” to assure it is going through. In most contests there is a clause which states that no member of this family or “immediate family” is eligible to even participate. But that is not so with us. Only God’s own children are eligible

to take part! Aren't you *glad* that we are a special people, a peculiar people!

Another thing of importance is, Who makes the rules? Are they fair and impartial? And is the Judge's decision final? These are vital factors in earthly contests, and how much more in this heavenly one. We have a righteous Judge. He judges to see whether we have our "Qualifier", (the blood of His Son), and then passes our entry. Since God only sees us in His Son, it is not our eligibility that counts, but Jesus' eligibility. That makes us automatically eligible with no strings attached. To be eligible for any contest, it is of prime importance, or rather mandatory, to abide by the rules given. In the Christian race, we have been given the finest, most impartial set of rules ever had, yet the most rigid too, the Word of God. No one deprives us of full use of these rules at any time. We know that God is the Maker of the rules. They are clear and easily understood, so that no one will be able to say they did not have a chance. Next, how final is the decision? We might answer, How final is Jesus, or how eternal is eternal?

Many Christians would like to have the best things of the Lord, but still they are not willing to give up entirely to Him. This is one of the rules for running this race, yet some never get the vision of the "Grand Prize" to be won. They are satisfied with minor prizes, and certainly that is infinitely better than none, still, we may all win and win all! God wants us to desire the best prize, and what is more desirable than the "Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"?

The Apostle Paul speaks of this in I Cor. 9:24. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain." And in verse 27, Paul speaks also of keeping under his body that he might not be *a castaway* or disapproved. He dared not risk disqualification in competing for that "Grand Prize" award! Certainly Paul knew the other prizes were already his, and how could he have had the desire to overcome if he thought that *was* all of it? He knew that the "Grand Prize" was still to be won. This Prize is Christ as Bridegroom, for which Paul counted all things refuse and loss, to win. Phil. 3:14 So we too, because of the knowledge and revelation of Paul's Gospel and all the Word of God, run for the Prize! Amen! Jesus is coming! P.S. Get your entry in friends, before the deadline!

ISAIAH 24

Gene Hawkins

This present chapter of Isaiah corresponds with Jeremiah, who is very often called “the weeping prophet.” His writings are filled with many burdens, revealing the cause of his deep seated weeping. Our present text is likewise recorded as a dirge. The entire chapter, is a mournful song of what we might call the consummation of burdens. Both Jeremiah, and this 24th chapter of Isaiah, also prophecy future judgments and the tribulation coming on both the world and Israel. Isaiah’s very weighty message concludes with verse 23, announcing that “...the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.” The same language is also found in Jer. 23:5 “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” His will ultimately be a reign of peace and tranquility, but great tribulation and judgment will precede that glorious utopia even as we read in the very first verse of our present chapter.

“Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.” V. 1 Despite the desperate attempts of humanity to “save the planet,” nothing will stop The Lord from making this earth an absolute shambles. The prophesied devastation upon this earth will come to pass and none can prevent it. Note also that there will be no safe haven throughout the whole world as men will be scattered far and wide. It is quite certain that such a scattering has already begun, even in our day.

“And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.” V. 2-3 These words are undoubtedly a reference to the entire world, but “the people,” along with their priest, especially describe Israel. “The land,” of verse 3 is also indicative of that chosen land, which has always been at the very center of all God’s dealings with the

world. Thus what happens in this land, and to this ancient people, is simply a precursor of what awaits the rest of the world; and for the same reasons. Israel has uniformly rejected Her Messiah and the ways of The Lord and there will be punishment imposed because of it. God would likewise be rather remiss and unjust if He did not impose such judgments on the entire world because they too are guilty of the same offenses. Thus, all walks of life are included in V. 1-2 as The Lord literally “maketh the earth empty and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down,…” The people, the priest, the servant, and his master along with the maid and her mistress, coupled with the buyer, the seller, the lender and the borrower with their respective associations with usury, are all affected by the coming devastation. This world is affected socially, religiously, and economically, which was the special theme in Isa. 23. Not one person will be eliminated from the judgment which is coming and though men today may try to “blame” a great number of contributors to this dilemma, the real reason it all comes to pass is directly because “the LORD hath spoken this word.” V. 3

29

Furthermore, “The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.” There seems to be a distinction made here between the “the earth,” or the “world,” and “the haughty people,” or the inhabitants thereof. Both are said to “languish,” that is, to “droop or to wax feeble,” and we wonder if this may not be a reference to the fact that the earth itself, the very ground of this earth is waxing feeble. God instructed Israel to let the land rest every seven years, but in our day such simply does not happen. Men have discovered that chemicals can be used to make the ground more productive, even though many of those elements are actually health hazards. It seems that there does come a time when even the earth itself will rebel and simply fade away. The people involved languish specifically because they are haughty or proud, which has always been designated as a dangerous path leading to destruction, and any semblance of spirituality is certainly “drooping,” or languishing unabated. This spiritual declension is further amplified as “The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.” V. 5 Men seem to think that they can simply “do as they please,” with

God's "ordinance," or order, but such is not the case. His laws, His Divine Structure, and His Covenants with man, were put in place for a reason. Yet, men have transgressed those laws and restrictions, bringing about the fullness of sin from the time of Adam until now. Men have disregarded God's order for life on this earth and have instead inserted their own agenda, of every man doing that which is right in his own eyes. The Septuagint added the little word "even," in this last phrase, and thus it reads: "because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance '**even**' broken the everlasting covenant." In other words, the changing of God's order in this world is equivalent to breaking His "everlasting covenant." This violation has been done in a variety of ways, but one of the most prominent, which is seen world-wide today, is the ungodly practice of same sex marriage. There just seems to be no restraint in the lengths to which men will go to accomplish their own objective and undoubtedly God will say once again, as He did in Gen. 6, "And GOD 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." 30
Gen. 5:5

The outcome will be exactly the same. "Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." This curse was actually imposed in the Garden of Eden, and each generation has become progressively worse, for sin has become more rampant with the passing of time. The judgment of "fire" is written as though the earth were already "burned and few are left." This is undoubtedly because of the surety announced by these words, which are a graphic description of tribulation days. We know that regardless of the efforts of men, the judgment upon this world, due to the aforementioned curse, will come and none shall stop it. Indeed, it has already begun, and the next few verses, further describe the extent of such devastation from whence none will escape.

"The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it." V. 7-9 Ours is the day when men use all sorts of outside stimuli to get away from reality, for even a very short period of

time. Drugs and alcohol, along with any other concoction men can muster, are used to “drown a multitude of sorrows,” but there will come a time, according to these verses, when none of those vices will, even temporarily, quell the miseries of men. Sadly, there are a great many at this present time who simply laugh and joke about the impending doom of this world, but one day, there will be no escape, reprieve, or relief, from the devastating Hand of God.

“The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.” V. 10 The city, herein described, is undoubtedly Jerusalem, for Israel is at the heart of this entire discourse. This “city of confusion,” very closely resembles the picture which Jesus painted in Matt. 24. “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, . . . stand in the holy place, Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing: Neither let him which is in the field return back And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved. . . .” Matt. 24:15-21 What a contrast to this present time, when multiple factions are literally clamoring to gain some little part of this ancient city! The time to which Isaiah points, is rather a time of extreme and intense misery, and Jesus instructed the inhabitants to flee, rather than try to set up any kind of residence there. Isaiah likewise declares that “There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.” V. 11 There surely will be no celebration of joy, and all mirth, for the entire land, is gone, the reason being that “The gate is smitten with destruction.” (V. 12) This simply means that there will come the time when God Himself will remove all obstacles for the nations to overrun His Own Chosen City. That will actually be an invitation to destruction for those same nations, but He will also use them to punish Israel as indicated by the next verse.

“When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.” V. 13 The “land” is, once again, the land of Israel, and the “people,” are a direct reference to the Jews. The “shaking,” bespeaks the

great judgment that is coming upon them, and Paul used like language in Hebrews 12 as he contrasted the two covenants of Law and Grace. “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.” Heb. 12:25-26 The awesome scene described here, transpired at Mt. Sinai when the law was given, and is just a minute foretaste of the judgment or “shaking” which is yet to come. Note also that Isaiah speaks of “gleaning the grapes when the vintage is done.” It seems to be a reference to the faithful remnant who are the grapes and olives left AFTER the general shaking has taken place. That is, God will preserve that remnant, even through the most destructive days of tribulation. Then shall follow the day of joy waiting for them as “They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.” V. 14 They will indeed “cry aloud from the sea,” for they will know beyond doubt that God has protected them even in the midst of these gentile nations. Thus they are exhorted to “.... glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.” V. 15 Just as God proved Himself to the three Hebrew children who found themselves in the midst of the burning fiery furnace, so also He will preserve these chosen ones during the darkest, and hottest hours of the tribulation. They will also glorify Him because of His protection when they were most assuredly “in the isles of the sea,” or multitudinous nations wherein they were scattered.

“From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.” V. 16 This verse seems to declare two very opposite extremes. It begins with songs of glory “to the righteous.” The “Righteous,” is actually God Himself, Who had every right to “shake” the tree and pour out His righteous judgment. It also reflects the praise due Him for the aforementioned deliverance. The latter part, however, depicts one who is deeply burdened. It is written in the “first person,” as Isaiah declares “I said **My** leanness, **my** leanness, woe unto **me!**” The prophet is here representative of

one indentifying with the great pain of this oppressed and hurting people. Thus in the midst of such praise he recounts the pain and misery which the remnant will ultimately experience in the end time. He had earlier referred to them as “a nation scattered and peeled,” (Isa. 18:2,7) and that description surely seems to apply here.

“Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.” These verses are apparently addressed to the inhabitants of the entire earth, both of Jew and Gentile. They describe the progressive destruction which will characterize the reign of the antichrist. Fear of his ungodly policies will be paramount in that day and threats of imprisonment will be rampant. However, there seems to be great trouble for one who would come “up out of the midst of the pit,” for another snare or “spring net” is waiting for him. The latter seems to be God’s snare “for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.” We cannot even begin to imagine the horror which will be inflicted by the antichrist, but the net of hell will be even worse. Men may escape the various atrocities from the hands of wicked men, but none shall escape the sweeping judgments of God upon this world as Isaiah describes in the following verses. “The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. V. 19-20 None but God is able to move the earth in such a fashion as this, and, as noted here, it “shall not rise again.” Men today are determined to safeguard their planet from so-called “global warming,” and various sources of pollution, but according to these words such efforts will be absolutely futile, for It is God Himself, Who will destroy the earth. He will also bring severe judgment on those who have been “leaders” in both heaven and earth. “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.” The goal of Satan and his host has always been to destroy the masterpiece and handiwork of God.

He has also enlisted the efforts of wicked men, especially ungodly “kings of the earth,” to implement his agenda. He has, without doubt, been very successful in such a venture but “in that day,” God will suddenly put a stop to it. “And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.” V. 21-22 Even Satan himself shall be shut up in the bottomless pit for one thousand years, but when he is loosed, God will visit both he, and all that have followed him, with their final trip to the lake of fire. Then the final chapter for this earth shall be written.

“Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.” This account is very much like what we read in Rev. 21, wherein the eternal state is described. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea..... And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Rev. 21:1 & 23 However, the path to this end will actually begin with the millennial reign of Jesus. This chapter, as is also seen in the book of Jeremiah with which it corresponds, closes with the Majesty of Jesus when He reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords. He will be triumphant, and despite those who would claim Jerusalem as their own, He will “reign in mount Zion and Jerusalem,” being put on display before the whole universe. His will be a kingdom of absolute peace and prosperity but before that can happen, all the judgments and burdens of this chapter, along with all the tremendous “woes” seen throughout Jeremiah, must come to pass.

34

God always gives a better thing
Than that He takes away—
Exceeding gladness tomorrow
For the sadness of today.
Wealth and rarest treasure
For all the varied loss,
Yea a hundred fold blessing—
The great gain of bearing cross.

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Five Much Mores	Not Legislation, Revelation	Wheat and Tares
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The hoary head

is a crown of glory,

if it be found in

the way of

righteousness.

PROVERBS 16:31.